

OHIO AMBER ALERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Live In-Person Meeting
2855 W. Dublin-Granville Road
Columbus, Ohio 43235
July 17, 2025

Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee member, Brent Currence, called to order the July 17, 2025 meeting of the Ohio AMBER Alert Advisory Committee at approximately 10:06 am. The first order of business was the roll call taken by Jackie Bonner.

I. ROLL CALL - PRESENT

IN-PERSON

Ohio AG's Office/Ohio Missing Persons' Clearinghouse	Brent Currence
Ohio State Highway Patrol	Captain Ron Raines
Community Member	Harry Trombitas
Ohio Emergency Management Agency	Brian Castner
State Emergency Communications Committee	Paul Jellison
Victim's Advocate	Kathryn (Ryn) Wolfe Farmer
Ohio Department of Aging	Erin Pettegrew
Ohio Department of Transportation	Leslie Prater
Ohio Association of Broadcasters	Chad Budreau
Local/Regional AMBER Plan	Jacquelynn (Jacque) Costa
Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police	Chief Matt Delp

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ohio State Highway Patrol	Staff Lieutenant Melanie Provenzano
Ohio State Highway Patrol	Arin Smith
Ohio State Highway Patrol	Jacqueline (Jackie) Bonner
Ohio DODD	Russell Blank
DAS 911 Program Office	Patrick Brandt
Ohio DAS	Angie Canepa
Delaware County Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Jeffrey (Jeff) Balzer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE (via Bridge Call)

FBI Ret.	Sandra Berchtold
Marion County Sheriff's Office	Lydia Frey

II. APPROVAL OF THE April 17, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Brent Currence asked the Ohio Amber Alert Advisory Committee to review the minutes from the April 17, 2025 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Jacque Costa, Chad Budreau seconded. Motion carried by all. Minutes approved.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of AMBER Alerts:

Staff Lieutenant Melanie Provenzano reported there were three (3) AMBER Alert activations in the second quarter. She gave a brief summary of each incident.

1. April 1, 2025 – requested by Trotwood Police Department
2. May 23, 2025 – requested by Whitehall Police Department
3. June 28, 2025 – requested by Columbus Police Department

In the May 23, 2025 incident, there was a delay in sending out the IPAWS message due to issues logging into the EMA computer to access the IPAWS system. EMA personnel assisted the OSHP dispatchers and sent out the IPAWS message for them.

B. Review of Blue Alerts:

There were no Blue Alerts in the second quarter of 2025.

C. Review of Endangered/Missing Child Alerts:

There were four (4) Endangered/Missing Child Alert activations in the first half of 2025. Brent Currence gave a brief summary of each incident.

1. January 8, 2025 – requested by Shelby County Sheriff's Office
2. February 9, 2025 – requested by Hocking County Sheriff's Office
3. May 12, 2025 – requested by Franklin County Sheriff's Office
4. May 31, 2025 – requested by Sewickley Police Department

Brent Currence informed the committee of two (2) recent alert activations that were not included in his report. These incidents were caused by online child enticement. He gave a brief summary of both incidents and commemorated the intelligence gathered that led to the successful recovery of both children.

D. Review of Endangered/Missing Adult Alerts:

There were forty-four (44) Endangered/Missing Adult Alert activations in the second quarter of 2025. Brent Currence highlighted the need for this alert.

Erin Pettegrew shared a story of a recent successful recovery of an endangered/missing adult who was located by the use of a search and rescue K9.

E. Alerts Training Update:

Captain Raines advised there were four (4) regional training sessions in the second quarter of 2025. A combined total of one hundred and one (101) individuals attended the second quarter training sessions adding to the yearly training total of one hundred and sixteen (116) individuals. There are three (3) additional training sessions scheduled in the remainder of the year.

F. 2025 AMBER Alert Symposium:

Jacque Costa updated the Committee of the planning logistics of this year's Symposium. Ryn Wolfe Farmer went over the agenda, and Captain Raines informed everyone that the registration for the Symposium is available through the Ohio Public Safety Training Campus. The Symposium's flyer and agenda is almost complete. Once finalized, it will be distributed to law enforcement agencies across the State throughout different communication channels.

G. New MEP Code – Subcommittee Update:

Paul Jellison informed the Committee of recent discussions of the Subcommittee. The new MEP code will be available for use on September 8, 2025. But by legislation, agencies are not mandated to use it.

Members of the Subcommittee are concerned with the potential of desensitizing the public to missing persons alerts and have discussed ways in which to prevent desensitization. The idea and functionality of utilizing geofencing to issue WEA and EAS to smaller local areas have been discussed in a favorable way. Brian Castner informed the Committee that geofencing may now be available with their EAS system. He is awaiting clarification from the vendor regarding system formats for coordinates and available training aids. Other ideas that were discussed by the Subcommittee included a silent alarm and parameters of the time of day that notifications would be activated.

Chad Budreau informed the Committee of a study conducted by IPAWS in 2024. The results showed after every alert activation, 18% of Ohioans opted out of receiving alert notifications on their phone. The FCC is working to improve that statistic by exploring a silent alarm notification. The FCC is expected to have the silent alarm available to all carriers by March 18, 2028.

Other issues related to the MEP code are still in discussion by the Subcommittee. The final recommendations may not be decided until 2026.

H. Governor’s Missing Persons Workgroup:

Captain Raines informed the Committee that the workgroup made several recommendations to the governor to improve the recovery of missing persons. He gave a few examples of some of the recommendations and highlighted two (2) specific recommendations that relates to the AMBER Alert Committee:

1. LEADS is on track to implement a “JA” code for a juvenile alert. This code will automatically notify Ohio BCI of an endangered/missing child.
2. An amendment to ORC 5502 to codify a Missing/Endangered Child Alert was recommended. Ohio Legislation is discussing this amendment.

I. Ohio Alerts Plan Revision:

Captain Raines informed the Committee that the Ohio Alerts Plan revision is still undergoing. The Subcommittee is awaiting feedback from Ohio BCI regarding the section covering Endangered/Missing Child Alerts and Endangered/Missing Adult Alerts. The recent recommendations from the Governor’s Missing Persons Work Group may cause an additional revision to the Ohio Alerts Plan once the recommendations are fully implemented.

J. IPAWS Message Design Dashboard Evaluation:

Captain Raines informed the committee about FEMA’s dashboard that would create an auto script for EAS, which may be applicable to EMA. The OSHP Watch Desk has a similar template that auto populates a script for AMBER Alert activations and would not benefit from utilizing FEMA’s Dashboard. However, Captain Raines highlighted information that was provided from a study conducted by FEMA regarding descriptive information that is not important to the

general public when receiving an alert. The OSHP Watch desk has looked into the results of this study and has updated their EAS script to eliminate unnecessary information.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Descriptive Information Review for Endangered Missing Adult Alerts:

Erin Pettegrew and Brent Currence discussed a recent Endangered/Missing Adult Alert that included an excessive amount of medical information of the missing adult. The alert was initiated by a newer employee who was unaware of what pertinent information to include when issuing an alert. This issue has since been fixed.

Erin presented a draft flyer to the Committee that includes information and resources for families with individuals who wonder away from the home. The Committee liked the idea of the flyer and discussed different ways to distribute the flyers to families, caregivers, and law enforcement agencies.

B. HB 359:

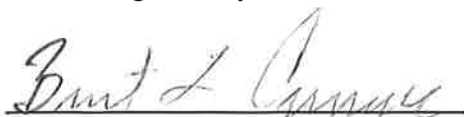
Captain Raines informed the Committee that the Ohio State Highway Patrol's legislative liaison reached out to him for feedback on the proposed Ohio House Bill 359. The bill proposed a new missing person's alert called the "Joshua Alert", which would be an alert issued for missing persons with autism. The committee discussed concerns with having multiple alerts that are limited to specific criteria. The current Missing/Endangered Child and Adult alerts include mental and developmental disabilities which includes, but is not limited to, autism. The general consensus of the Committee was to suggest adding specific language to the current ORC for Missing/Endangered Child and Adult Alerts to highlight autism instead of creating a new alert.

C. New Business from Committee Members:

There was no new business from the committee members. Retired FBI Agent Sandra Berchtold notified the Committee and those in attendance that she is now associated with Team Adam through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). She is available to provide NCMEC resources and assistance to those who need it.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Ryn Wolfe Farmer and seconded by Harry Trombitas. Meeting was adjourned.


Brent Currence, Chairperson


Date