



Florida Department of
Law Enforcement

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Commissioner

Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 2, 2008
TO: All Florida Police Chiefs and Sheriffs
FROM: Donna Uzzell, Director
Criminal Justice Information Services
SUBJECT: Florida's Silver Alert Plan

The Florida Chiefs and Sheriffs, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA), Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), and Florida legislators have worked in conjunction with concerned citizens/organizations to develop Florida's Silver Alert Plan.

On September 30, 2008, Pinellas County released its Silver Alert Program at a press event in Largo, Florida. The statewide plan is modeled after the program in Pinellas County and will be part of an Executive Order that will be signed by the Governor at a press event in Tallahassee tentatively scheduled for next week.

The Statewide Silver Alert is a plan to aid local law enforcement in the rescue or recovery of a missing elderly person who suffers from irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties. The Silver Alert Plan recognizes that the most effective response to a missing senior citizen leverages community resources for the search to augment the investigative response by the local law enforcement agency. The Plan further acknowledges Silver Alerts should be activated through the investigating local law enforcement agency which is in the best position to notify the media and disseminate the information through avenues such as neighborhood telephone alerts and other technologies the agency may have to communicate with its citizens.

Local agencies are encouraged to adopt the below standardized criteria and incorporate it into their local plan and to add any other specific community resources available in the event of an activation. Local law enforcement agencies should develop policies and procedures that will work best in their respective jurisdictions to broadcast information about missing endangered persons to the public and the media. As a part of our statewide initiative, the use of A Child is Missing, Inc. and Media Alert are available at no charge to local agencies for Silver Alerts. Additionally, the FDLE Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse may also be contacted for assistance and to open a case.

In the event that a vehicle is used in the Silver Alert incident, the statewide messaging system may also be activated. This is accomplished by using FDOT's highway dynamic message signs and other highway advisory methods. This Alert will enhance and supplement the local agency response by broadcasting vehicle information about the missing person to motorists and the general public.

The standardized criteria for the Florida Silver Alert Plan are as follows:

1. ¹Missing person must be 60 years or older and there must be a clear indication that the individual has an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties (i.e., dementia). This must be verified by law enforcement or; under extraordinary circumstances when a person age 18 to 59 has irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties and law enforcement has determined the missing person lacks the capacity to consent, and that the use of dynamic message signs may be the only possible way to rescue the missing person.

The primary criteria for FDOT/FHP/FDLE dynamic message sign activation, in which all criteria must be met, in addition to the above are:

- Local law enforcement has already activated a local or regional alert by contacting media outlet in theirs and/or surrounding jurisdictions;
- The law enforcement agency's investigation must conclude that the disappearance poses a credible threat to the person's welfare and safety;
- There must be a description of the vehicle, and a tag number to display on the Florida Department of Transportation dynamic message signs;
- Local law enforcement must verify vehicle and tag information;
- Local law enforcement agency must have entered the missing person into the Florida Crime Information Center and issued a statewide BOLO to other law enforcement/911 centers.

The activation process will require that the local law enforcement agency contact the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) at 1-888-356-4774. The Clearinghouse will confirm that the case facts meet the criteria using a questionnaire specifically designed for the Silver Alert Plan activation.

The following additional resources are available to local law enforcement to aid in the rescue or recovery of cognitively impaired missing persons.

- **Media Alert (813) 282-8612 (voice mail)** - Media Alert is a conduit between the Public Information Officer and television, radio, and newspaper editors to provide important news to the public. This service is provided to local law enforcement agencies free of charge. Media Alert is an Internet technology based system that requires an entry, log-in, and password code. An assigned person within the agency can log on and enter the information to be broadcast to media outlets. This system also allows for photographs. For access to this system, go to www.mediaalert.com and click on the "PIO Sign up sheet", and follow the instructions listed.
- **A Child Is Missing, Inc. (1-888) 875-2246 www.achildismissing.org** – A Child is Missing, Inc. offers free assistance to law enforcement to aid in the recovery of missing persons (including children, teens, and elderly). Provides immediate neighborhood telephone alerts to the surrounding community. Local law enforcement will contact A Child Is Missing, Inc. with the missing person's information, and a recorded message will be developed and sent to homes and businesses within the requested radius.
- **Florida Department of Elder Affairs (850) 414-2000** – The Florida Department of Elder Affairs can provide an e-mail alert notification through the Aging Services Network, which includes area agencies on aging, community care lead agencies, providers and volunteers. Local law enforcement can provide the Department of Elder Affairs with the missing persons' flyer or information via SilverAlert@elderaffairs.org.

¹ Law enforcement shall require the parent, spouse, guardian, legal custodian, or person responsible for the supervision of the missing person to provide specific information which may, but not necessarily shall, include documentation from medical or mental health professional of the person's condition.

- **Project Lifesaver** <http://www.projectlifesaver.org/members/members.aspx?state=FL> – Project Lifesaver is a Plan aiding the victims and families suffering Alzheimer's disease and related disorders such as Down's Syndrome and Autism. Project Lifesaver uses state-of-the-art technology employing wristband transmitters to locate wandering and lost adults and children.

If you have any questions regarding the Florida's Silver Alert Plan, please contact Donna Hodges at 1-888-356-4774.