



Ohio's Missing Adult Alert Program

Summary for Ohio Radio & Television Stations *Provided by the Ohio Association of Broadcasters*

Background

The Ohio General Assembly recently enacted Senate Bill 87, which creates the Ohio Missing Adult Alert, a statewide alert program to aid in the identification and location of missing adults who have a mental impairment or are sixty-five years of age or older.

The Missing Adult Alert was developed in response to several incidents involving older adults or adults with mental impairments who went missing. The program is designed to coordinate information about the missing adult and distribute the information to the media and public in a timely manner.

The alert must be requested by a law enforcement agency, and must be activated through the Ohio Attorney General's office.

Missing Adult Alert Criteria

The Missing Adult Alert may be activated in cases meeting the following criteria:

- Local investigating law enforcement agency confirms the individual is missing.
- The individual is 65 years of age or older, or has a mental impairment
- The disappearance of the individual poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual
- There is sufficient descriptive information about the individual and the circumstances surrounding the individual's disappearance to indicate that activation of the Missing Adult Alert will help locate the individual.

Activation of the Missing Adult Alert

When the local law enforcement agency determines that a case meets the criteria for a Missing Adult Alert, it can request the alert to be activated. The missing person is entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), which notifies the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Identification & Investigation.

Activation of the alert triggers the following activities:

- A toll-free telephone line for tips and alert information is activated – 1-866-693-9171.
- Media outlets throughout the state are notified about the alert via email and fax.
- The alert is posted on Ohio Department of Transportation signboards and electronic billboards in the local area of the alert.
- All law enforcement agencies in the state receive information about the alert.
- The Truckers' Alert system is activated to notify all truckers in the area of the alert.
- The alert is posted on all Ohio Lottery terminals.
- Special law enforcement response teams and programs are offered to assist in the search for the missing person.

Broadcasters' Role in Missing Adult Alert Program

Broadcasters will be notified of a Missing Adult Alert via email or fax from the Ohio Attorney General's office. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) will *NOT* be activated in these cases.

The email and fax will provide a description of the missing person, relevant information about the circumstances surrounding the disappearance, as well as the phone number that the public can call to report information about the missing individual.

Participating radio and television stations are encouraged to inform their listeners and viewers as soon as possible about the Missing Adult Alert. Station management should use its discretion about how often to repeat the alert, and how to communicate updates to the alert.

While the initial alert and significant updates will be distributed via email and fax, most updates and cancellations will come directly from the issuing law enforcement agency. Contact information for this agency will be provided in the initial alert, and stations should contact the agency for any updates and cancellations.

Additionally, a special website for the Ohio Missing Adult Alert Program – www.missingadults.ohio.gov – has been created. The website will provide the initial information about the alert, along with photos if available. Updates and cancellations will also be posted on this website.

Registering to Receive Missing Adult Alerts

Missing Adult Alerts will be distributed to the media via email and fax. The Missing Child Alert database (not the AMBER Alert database) will be used for distribution of Missing Adult Alerts. To ensure that your station is registered to receive these alerts, please contact Vicki Germann at the Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse at vgermann@ag.state.oh.us or toll-free at 800-325-5604.

If you have questions about the Ohio Missing Adult Alert Program, or need additional information, please contact the Ohio Association of Broadcasters at oab@oab.org or toll-free at 866-OAB-5794.