

<b>MESA POLICE</b>  Department Policy Manual	<h1>Alerts &amp; Media Releases</h1>	<b>DPM 2.6.35</b> Effective 08/24/2016 Revised 03/05/2026
Approved by: <b>Chief of Police</b>	Chapter: Major Incident Response	Page: <b>1 of 6</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with guidelines for activating and managing Amber, Blue, SAFE, and Turquoise Alerts, as well as protocols for Tier 1, 2, and 3 media releases.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Endangered Missing Person:** A missing person who is subject to immediate danger, and/or who is a danger to others, due to one or more exigent conditions listed in [DPM 3.1.60 Missing Persons Investigations](#).

**Exhaustion of All Available Resources:** Includes missing person report entry in NCIC (NCIC entry may be pending if the person was abducted), BOLOs, bulletins, flyers with pictures of missing person, checked areas (alternate residences, hospitals (including VA if applicable), cell phone location systems (including carrier) and in-vehicle location systems, contacting other family members and friends they may be staying with, and contacting social worker if applicable.

**Local Social Media:** Non-major, local social media applications such as Nextdoor, Ring, etc.

**Major Social Media:** Official Department pages on major social media applications such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, etc.

**News Media:** Traditional news media such as television, radio, etc.

**Tier System:** A method of triaging incidents from most urgent (Tier 1) to least urgent (Tier 3).

## 3. TIER SYSTEM

### 3.1 General

- A. Incidents are triaged using a tiered system.
- B. The tiers include Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3, with Tier 1 being the most urgent and Tier 3 being the least urgent.
- C. Each tier includes specific notifications/approvals and media release guidelines.

### 3.2 Tier 1

- A. Includes all Amber, Blue, SAFE, and Turquoise Alerts.

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- B. News media, major social media, and local social media releases are authorized through the Media Relations Office (MRO) with lieutenant approval.

### 3.3 Tier 2

- A. Includes endangered missing persons as defined in [DPM 3.1.60 Missing Persons Investigations](#).
- B. News media and local social media releases are authorized through the MRO with lieutenant approval.
  - 1. Major social media releases require commander approval.

### 3.4 Tier 3

- A. Includes attempt to locates (ATLs) as defined in [DPM 3.1.60 Missing Persons Investigations](#).
- B. News media releases are authorized through the MRO at the discretion of a supervisor.
- C. Major and local social media releases are not authorized.

## 4. TIER 1: AMBER, BLUE, SAFE & TURQUOISE ALERTS

### 4.1 Alert Systems

- A. The Arizona Department of Public Safety (AZ DPS) manages several statewide alert systems designed to assist in the safe recovery of missing persons or the apprehension of dangerous suspects:
  - 1. **Amber Alert:** Provides immediate information to the public following a child abduction. The goal of the Amber Alert is to locate the abducted child and/or the suspect through efficient information dissemination and communication that results in safe and expedient recovery.
  - 2. **Blue Alert:** Broadcasts information to aid law enforcement in the rapid apprehension of an at large, missing suspect. The missing suspect potentially poses an imminent threat to the public and/or other law enforcement personnel after threatening with a deadly weapon or causing serious injury or death to any law enforcement officer.
  - 3. **SAFE Alert:** Activated when a person is 65 years of age or older or has been diagnosed with a developmental disability as outlined in [ARS 36-551.20](#), or a cognitive disability as outlined in [ARS 36-551.15](#) or Alzheimer's disease or dementia.
  - 4. **Turquoise Alert ("Emily's Law"):** Issued when there is a report of a missing endangered person, including tribal members, under the age of 65, and specific activation criteria are met.

### 4.2 Alert Criteria

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- A. Alerts are activated only when specific statutory criteria are met and are disseminated through law enforcement, media, and public communication channels. Criteria for each alert is as follows:
1. **Amber Alert:** AZ DPS will issue an Amber Alert when **all five** of the following criteria have been met:
    - a. A child under 18 has been abducted.
    - b. Law enforcement has determined the child is not a runaway and a custody dispute is not the sole reason for requesting an activation unless the dispute poses a credible and/or specific threat of serious bodily harm or death to the child.
    - c. The abduction poses a credible threat of imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death to the child.
    - d. There is enough descriptive detail about the child, the abductor, and the abduction circumstances that an Amber Alert activation will locate the child and/or suspect.
    - e. There is information available to disseminate to the public, which could assist in the safe recovery of the child and/or apprehension of the suspect.
  2. **Blue Alert:** AZ DPS will issue a Blue Alert when the following criteria outlined in [ARS 41-1726](#) have been met:
    - a. A law enforcement officer has been killed, suffered serious bodily injury, or has been assaulted with a deadly weapon and the suspect has fled the scene of the offense.
    - b. A law enforcement agency investigating the offense has determined the suspect poses an imminent threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.
    - c. A detailed description of the suspect's vehicle or license plate is available for broadcast.
    - d. Public dissemination of available information may help avert further harm or accelerate apprehension of a suspect.
  3. **SAFE Alert:** AZ DPS will issue a SAFE Alert when the investigating law enforcement agency submits a request and the following criteria outlined in [ARS 41-1728](#) have been met:
    - a. The person is 65 years of age or older or has been diagnosed with a developmental disability as outlined in [ARS 36-551.20](#) or a cognitive disability as outlined in [ARS 36-551.15](#) or Alzheimer's disease or dementia.
    - b. The law enforcement agency investigating the missing person report has used all available local resources.
    - c. Has determined that the person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.

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- d. Believes that the missing person is in danger because of any of the following:
    - Age
    - Health
    - Mental or physical disability
    - Environment or weather conditions
    - In the company of a potentially dangerous person
    - Or other factors that indicate peril
  - e. There is enough information, if disseminated to the public, that could assist in safe recovery.
4. **Turquoise Alert:** As prescribed by [ARS 41-1728.01](#), the investigating law enforcement agency may request a Turquoise Alert when it believes specific criteria are met as established in statute. AZ DPS will issue a Turquoise Alert when all five of the following criteria have been met:
- a. The missing person is under the age of 65.
  - b. The law enforcement agency investigating the missing person report has used all available local resources.
  - c. The person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
    - A law enforcement agency has determined that the person is not a runaway as the only reason they went missing.
    - There is an exception if there are articulable facts that the person is missing and endangered due to aggravating factors.
  - d. Believes that the missing person is in danger, is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the missing person may be in peril.
  - e. There is information that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

### 4.3 Responsibilities & Procedures

#### A. Officer Responsibilities

1. Follow [DPM 3.1.60 Missing Persons Investigations](#).
2. If incident meets alert activation criteria, notify your supervisor immediately.
3. Obtain photos and descriptive information as applicable.

#### B. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Confirm criteria are met for the specific alert type.
2. Notify on-duty Patrol Lieutenant.
3. Request Communications notify the Media Relations Office (MRO).
4. Notify appropriate specialized unit (e.g., SVU Sergeant for Amber/SAFE/Turquoise Alert, CIU Sergeant for Blue Alert).

#### C. Specialty Unit Responsibilities

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1. Complete the respective AZ DPS Alert Criteria Checklist for the alert type:
  - a. [Amber Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
  - b. [Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
  - c. [SAFE Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
  - d. [Turquoise Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
2. Create the alert bulletin with current photos/details.
3. Submit the checklist and bulletin to the MRO.
4. If the missing person or suspect is located, complete and forward the corresponding AZ DPS Alert Deactivation Request to the MRO:
  - a. [Amber Alert Deactivation Request](#)
  - b. [Blue Alert Deactivation Request](#)
  - c. [SAFE Alert Deactivation Request](#)
  - d. [Turquoise Deactivation Request](#)

#### **D. MRO Responsibilities**

1. With approval from the Patrol or Specialty Unit Lieutenant:
  - a. Submit the completed alert checklist to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper via email at [Doffice@AZDPS.gov](mailto:Doffice@AZDPS.gov) to request alert activation.
  - b. Call the AZ DPS Trooper at **(602) 223-2444** for Amber Alerts, and **(602) 223-2212** for all other alerts, to verify information (mandatory).
2. Upon AZ DPS approval:
  - a. Immediately initiate CAD page through Communications.
  - b. Disseminate the alert bulletin to news media, major social media, and local social media.
3. When the missing person or suspect is located, forward the corresponding Alert Deactivation Request to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper for alert cancellation.

### **8. TIER 2: ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON**

- A. For incidents involving endangered missing persons that do not qualify as Tier 1, the Missing Persons Unit will develop a bulletin and request through the MRO:
  1. A news media release; and
  2. Local social media release.
  3. A Missing Endangered Person Advisory (MEPA) may be requested from AZ DPS through the MRO if an endangered juvenile or adult is missing yet does not meet the criteria for an Amber or SAFE Alert. The Missing Persons Unit completes [AZ DPS Missing Endangered Person Advisory Checklist](#) and submits to the MRO.
    - a. The MRO contacts the AZ DPS Office Trooper at **(602) 223-2212** for assistance.

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- B. If the missing person is located, the Missing Persons Unit will complete and forward [AZ DPS Missing Endangered Person Deactivation Request](#) to the MRO, who will forward to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper for advisory cancellation.
- C. Major social media releases are generally reserved for Amber, Blue, SAFE, and Turquoise Alerts. A major social media release for an endangered missing person requires the approval of a Division Commander or Command Duty Officer (CDO).

## 9. TIER 3: ATTEMPT TO LOCATE

- A. For ATL incidents, the Missing Persons Unit may develop an ATL bulletin and request through the MRO, when appropriate, a news media release.
  - 1. Social media releases are not authorized.

## REFERENCES

- [ARS 36-551 Definitions](#)
- [ARS 41-1726 Blue alert notification system; requirements](#)
- [ARS 41-1728 Silver alert notification system; requirements](#)
- [AZ DPS Amber Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
- [AZ DPS Amber Alert Deactivation Request](#)
- [AZ DPS Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
- [AZ DPS Blue Alert Deactivation Request](#)
- [AZ DPS Missing Endangered Person Advisory Checklist](#)
- [AZ DPS Missing Endangered Person Deactivation Request](#)
- [AZ DPS SAFE Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
- [AZ DPS SAFE Alert Deactivation Request](#)
- [AZ DPS Turquoise Alert](#)
- [AZ DPS Turquoise Alert Deactivation Request](#)