

<p>MESA POLICE</p> <p>Department Policy Manual</p>	<p>Amber, Silver & Blue Alerts & Media Releases</p>	<p>DPM 2.6.35 Effective 08/24/2016 Revised 12/06/2023 Revised 02/06/2024</p>
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1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with guidelines for activating and managing Amber, Blue and Silver 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](#).

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

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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 ALERT

4.1 Amber Alert Activation Criteria

- A. The purpose of the Amber Alert is to provide 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.
- B. DPS will issue an Amber Alert when **all five** of the following criteria have been met:
 - 1. A child under 18 has been abducted.
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. The abduction poses a credible threat of imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death to the child.
 - 4. 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.
 - 5. 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.

4.2 Officer Responsibilities

- A. Follow procedures in [DPM 3.1.60 Missing Persons Investigations](#).

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- B. If incident meets requirements for activation of the Amber Alert, notify supervisor.
 - 1. Upon approval from supervisor, notify on-call Special Victims Unit (SVU) Sergeant.

4.3 Patrol Supervisor Responsibilities

- A. Confirm that the incident meets the requirements for activation of an Amber Alert per **Section 4.1**. When criteria are met:
 - 1. Notify an on-duty Patrol Lieutenant.
 - 2. Request Communications notify the MRO.

4.4 Missing Persons Unit Responsibilities

- A. The SVU Sergeant will notify the Mesa Family Advocacy Center (MFAC) Lieutenant.
- B. The Missing Persons Unit will:
 - 1. Complete the [Arizona Department of Public Safety \(AZ DPS\) Amber Alert Criteria Checklist](#);
 - 2. Create the Amber Alert bulletin; and
 - 3. Send the completed [Amber Alert Criteria Checklist](#) and Amber Alert bulletin to the MRO.
 - 4. If the missing person is located, the Missing Persons Investigator assigned to the case will complete the [Alert Deactivation Request](#) and forward it to the MRO.

4.5 MRO Responsibilities

- A. Upon completion of the [Amber Alert Criteria Checklist](#) by the Missing Persons Unit, and with approval of the Patrol Lieutenant or MFAC Lieutenant, the MRO will:
 - 1. Submit the completed [Amber Alert Criteria Checklist](#) to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper via e-mail at Doffice@AZDPS.gov to request activation of the Arizona Amber Alert.
 - a. Contact the AZ DPS Office Trooper at **(602) 223-2444** to verify the information. This step is mandatory prior to activation of the alert.
- B. Once the alert has been approved by AZ DPS, the MRO will initiate a CAD page without delay through the Communications Shift Supervisor.
- C. MRO will disseminate the Amber Alert bulletin, prepared by the Missing Persons Unit, to news media, major social media, and local social media.
- D. If the missing person is located, the Missing Persons Investigator assigned to the case will complete the [Alert Deactivation Request](#) and forward it to the

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MRO who, in turn, will email it to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper at Dofficer@AZDPS.gov and request deactivation of the Amber Alert.

5. TIER 1: SILVER ALERT

5.1 Silver Alert Activation Criteria

- A. A Silver Alert is activated when a person with specific cognitive or developmental disabilities, as defined by statute, or a person age 65 or older goes missing. The goal of the Silver Alert is to locate the missing person through efficient information dissemination and communication that results in safe and expedient recovery.
- B. AZ DPS will issue a Silver Alert when the following criteria outlined in [ARS 41-1728](#) have been met:
 1. The investigating agency has taken a missing person report and determined all of the following:
 - a. The missing person is 65 years or older **or** has been diagnosed with a developmental disability as outlined in [ARS 36-551](#) (e.g., child with autism, down syndrome, epilepsy, etc.), Alzheimer’s disease, or dementia.
 - b. All available local resources in locating the missing person have been exhausted (includes BOLOs, flyers with pictures of the missing person, bulletins, checked area hospitals, VA hospitals, behavioral health hospitals, hotels, motels, and jails, contacted other family members and friends, checked in-vehicle location system, cell phone location tracking through carrier, and other places of residence).
 - The flyer/bulletin/ATL to media/social media/the public has to disseminate for 60 minutes.
 - c. Missing person disappeared under unexplained or suspicious circumstances; **AND**
 - d. The missing person is in danger due to any one of the following:
 - Age.
 - Health.
 - Mental or physical disability.
 - Environment or weather conditions.
 - In the company of a potentially dangerous person.
 - Other factors that indicate peril.
 - e. There is enough information, if disseminated to the public, that could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

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5.2 Officer Responsibilities

- A. Follow procedures in [DPM 3.1.60 Missing Persons Investigations](#).
- B. If incident meets requirements for activation of the Silver Alert, notify supervisor.
 - 1. Upon approval from supervisor, notify on-call SVU Sergeant.

5.3 Patrol Supervisor Responsibilities

- A. Confirm that the incident meets the requirements for activation of a Silver Alert per **Section 5.1**. When criteria are met:
 - 1. Notify an on-duty patrol Lieutenant.
 - 2. Request Communications notify the MRO.

5.4 Missing Persons Unit Responsibilities

- A. The SVU Sergeant will notify the MFAC Lieutenant.
- B. The Missing Persons Unit will:
 - 1. Complete the [AZ DPS Silver Alert Criteria Checklist](#);
 - 2. Create the Silver Alert Bulletin; and
 - 3. Send the completed [Silver Alert Criteria Checklist](#) and Silver Alert bulletin to the MRO.
 - 4. If the missing person is located, the Missing Persons Investigator assigned to the case will complete the [Alert Deactivation Request](#) and forward it to the MRO.

5.5 MRO Responsibilities

- A. Upon completion of the [Silver Alert Criteria Checklist](#) by the Missing Persons Unit, and with approval of the Patrol Lieutenant or MFAC Lieutenant, the MRO will:
 - 1. Immediately disseminate the Silver Alert Bulletin (or photo and information) via news media, major social media, and local social media and allow to disseminate for 60 minutes; then
 - 2. Submit the completed [Silver Alert Criteria Checklist](#) to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper via email at Doffice@AZDPS.gov to request activation of the Silver Alert.
 - a. Contact the AZ DPS Office Trooper at **(602) 223-2444** to verify the information. This step is mandatory prior to activation of the alert.
- B. Once the alert has been approved by AZ DPS, the MRO will initiate a CAD page without delay through the Communications Shift Supervisor.
- C. If the missing person is located, the Missing Persons Investigator assigned to the case will complete the [Alert Deactivation Request](#) and forward it to the

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MRO, who in turn will email it to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper at Doffice@AZDPS.gov and request deactivation of the Silver Alert.

6. TIER 1: BLUE ALERT

6.1 Blue Alert Activation Criteria

- A. The purpose of the Blue Alert is to broadcast 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.
- B. AZ DPS will issue a Blue Alert when the following criteria outlined in [ARS 41-1726](#) have been met:
 1. 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.
 2. A law enforcement agency investigating the offense has determined the suspect poses an imminent threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.
 3. A detailed description of the suspect's vehicle or license plate is available for broadcast.
 4. Public dissemination of available information may help avert further harm or accelerate apprehension of a suspect.

6.2 Officer Responsibilities

- A. Notify supervisor if incident meets requirements for activation of the Blue Alert.
- B. Obtain recent photo of the suspect, if possible, to provide to assigned detective.

6.3 Patrol Supervisor Responsibilities

- A. Confirm that the incident meets the requirements for activation of a Blue Alert per **Section 6.1**. When criteria are met:
 1. Notify an on-duty Patrol Lieutenant.
 2. Request Communications notify the MRO.
 3. Notify the appropriate Criminal Investigations Sergeant to assign a detective to the case.

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6.4 Detective Responsibilities

- A. The detective assigned will:
1. Complete the [AZ DPS Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#);
 2. Develop a public version of an attempt to locate (ATL) bulletin to include a current photograph of the suspect if available; and
 3. Send the completed [Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#) and ATL bulletin to the MRO.
 4. If the suspect is located, the detective assigned to the case will complete the [Alert Deactivation Request](#) and forward it to the MRO.

6.5 MRO Responsibilities

- A. Upon completion of the [Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#), and with approval of the Patrol Lieutenant or Criminal Investigations Lieutenant, the MRO will:
1. Disseminate the public version of the ATL bulletin via news media, major social media, and local social media; then
 2. Submit the completed [Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#) to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper via email at Doffice@AZDPS.gov to request activation of the Blue Alert.
 - a. Contact the AZ DPS Office Trooper at **(602) 223-2444** to verify the information. This step is mandatory prior to activation of the alert.
- E. Once the alert has been approved by AZ DPS, the MRO will initiate a CAD page without delay through the Communications Shift Supervisor.
- F. If the suspect is located, the detective assigned to the case will complete the [Alert Deactivation Request](#) and forward it to the MRO, who in turn will email it to the AZ DPS Duty Office Trooper at Doffice@AZDPS.gov and request deactivation of the Blue Alert.

7. 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 Silver Alert. The Missing Persons Unit completes [AZ DPS Missing Endangered Person Advisory Checklist](#) and submits to the MRO.

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- a. The MRO contacts the AZ DPS Office Trooper at **(602) 223-2444** for assistance.
- B. Major social media releases are generally reserved for Amber, Silver, and Blue Alerts. A major social media release for an endangered missing person requires the approval of a Division Commander or Command Duty Officer (CDO).

8. 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

- [Alert Deactivation Request](#)
- [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 Blue Alert Criteria Checklist](#)
- [AZ DPS Missing Endangered Person Advisory Checklist](#)
- [AZ DPS Silver Alert Criteria Checklist](#)