

Public Alerts

317.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to members of the Sahuarita Police Department (SPD) for alerting the public to important information and soliciting public aid when appropriate.

317.2 POLICY

- A. Public alerts may be employed using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), local radio, television, social media, press organizations, other groups, and other SPD approved methods and systems to notify the public of incidents and/or enlist the aid of the public, when the exchange of information or actions may enhance the safety of the community.
- B. Various types of alerts may be utilized based upon each situation and the alert system's individual criteria.

317.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

A. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Members of the SPD should notify their supervisor or a superior officer as soon as practicable upon learning of a situation where public notification, a warning, or enlisting the help of the media and/or public could assist in locating a missing person, apprehending a dangerous person, gathering information, or informing the public of a safety issue or threat.

B. SUPERVISOR OR SUPERIOR OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. A supervisor or superior officer apprised of the need for a public alert is responsible to make the appropriate notifications based upon the circumstances of each situation. The supervisor or superior officer shall promptly notify the Chief of Police and command staff via the chain of command, and the Public Information Officer (PIO) team when any public alert is generated.
- 2. The supervisor or superior officer in charge of the investigation or incident associated to the alert is responsible for the following:
 - (a) Causing or ensuring alerts are updated
 - (b) Causing or ensuring alerts are canceled
 - (c) Ensuring all appropriate reports are completed
 - (d) Preparing an after-action evaluation of AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, and Blue Alerts and ensure the associated investigations/reports are forwarded to the Special Services Division (SSD) Investigations Lieutenant and Detective Sergeants.

C. SPECIAL SERVICES DIVISION INVESTIGATIONS LIEUTENANT

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Public Alerts

1. The Chief of Police has designated the SPD SSD Investigations Lieutenant and Detective Sergeants to be the Public Alert Reporting Officers (PARO). They are responsible for:
 - (a) Remaining familiar with the protocols for activating, maintaining, and canceling all applicable public alerts.
 - (b) Being the point of contact with the Arizona AMBER Alert Oversight Committee.
 - (c) Ensuring the SPD has AMBER Alert plan representatives who have completed appropriate training. Training may be provided by the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) or suggested by the Arizona AMBER Alert Oversight Committee.
 - (d) Presenting a briefing to the Arizona AMBER Alert Oversight Committee at the next scheduled meeting following the activation of an Arizona AMBER Alert.

317.4 SPD PUBLIC ALERTS

- A. The SPD utilizes various types of alerts to notify the community of on-going investigations or incidents which could pose a threat to the public, investigations or incidents which require road closures, road blocks or other significant interruptions in traffic, as well as investigations or incidents which generate a large law enforcement presence.
- B. The SPD also utilizes these alerts in situations where the public could assist in locating an individual or in gathering information essential to an investigation.
- C. The SPD recognizes that notifying the community of these events help with community trust, transparency and mitigating inconvenience.
- D. The SPD routinely utilizes a community based messaging system (Nixle) to alert the community to different types of alerts, which allows immediate notification to community members who have chosen to participate in the alert system.
 1. Nixle Regular-Operational Hours: 0530 - 2130 hours for all regular or significant emergency community alerts.
 2. Nixle Extended-Operational Hours: 2130 - 0530 hours for communicating significant emergency information (i.e., natural disasters, immediate danger to life, escaped suspects/arrestees, shelter in place advisement, etc.).
- E. The on-scene supervisor or a superior officer is typically responsible for distribution of an alert. However, the on-scene supervisor or superior officer may defer these actions to another member while they address immediate logistical needs associated with the policing incident or action.

317.5 AMBER ALERTS

- A. The Arizona AMBER Alert is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and local broadcasters to rapidly disseminate an emergency alert to the

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Public Alerts

public when a child is abducted or missing under emergency circumstances and the child may be in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

B. CRITERIA FOR ACTIVATION OF AN AMBER ALERT (This criteria must be met):

1. An abduction of a child (under 18) has occurred.
2. The abduction poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily injury or death to the child.
3. The child is not a runaway and has not been abducted as a result of a child custody dispute, unless the dispute poses a credible or specific threat of serious bodily injury or death to the child.
4. There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, abductor, and the circumstances surrounding the abduction to indicate that an AMBER Alert will help locate or assist in the recovery of the child and/or apprehension of the suspect.

C. PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVATION OF AN AMBER ALERT

1. A member who receives a report of an abduction of a child shall promptly advise the on-scene or on-duty supervisor or a superior officer. If the above criteria is met to activate an AMBER Alert, the supervisor or superior officer shall promptly contact or cause a PARO to be contacted. The PARO will review the information to ensure that alert criteria are met and will be responsible for:
 - (a) Calling the AMBER Alert Hotline at the Arizona DPS Duty Office and causing the following to occur:
 1. Calling the appropriate AMBER Alert broadcast station and providing the necessary information to activate the EAS.
 2. Entering the appropriate information into the AMBER Alert system.
 - i. The information entered into the system may be updated by DPS or the PARO.
 3. Promptly entering the missing child and crucial information surrounding the AMBER Alert and an AMBER Alert flag into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.
 4. Promptly forwarding the alert information to all Arizona law enforcement agencies through the Arizona Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (ALETS) or other appropriate databases.
 - (b) Ensuring that the appropriate telephone numbers for contact and follow-up are entered, including:
 1. A telephone number for the public to provide tips and information on the missing child.
 2. A confidential number restricted to other law enforcement agencies and the media to contact the PIO for follow-up and updates as an alternative to the 9-1-1 system.

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Public Alerts

3. A confidential number restricted to other law enforcement agencies to quickly provide information that could be crucial to the investigation or the safety of the victim.
 - (c) Obtaining a photograph of the missing person and/or suspect as soon as practicable and disseminating it to appropriate entities.
2. The PIO should be constantly updated as it may assist in utilizing the media and obtain additional public exposure for the case.
3. Involved personnel will continually provide the PARO or the authorized designee and the PIO with any updated information.

317.6 ENDANGERED PERSON ALERTS (NCIC ALERT AND ENTRIES)

- A. An Endangered Person Alert is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement and local broadcasters designed to rapidly disseminate information about missing and endangered persons to law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, and the public.
- B. CRITERIA FOR ISSUING AN ENDANGERED PERSON ALERT:
 1. The missing person is 18 years old or older.
 2. The person is missing under unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances.
 3. The person is believed to be in danger of death or serious bodily injury because of his/her health, a medically diagnosed mental or physical disability, the environment or weather conditions, because he/she is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or some other factor that may put the person in danger.
 4. There is information that could help the public to assist in the recovery of the missing person.
- C. PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVATING A NCIC ENDANGERED PERSON ALERT
 1. A member who receives a report of a missing and endangered person shall promptly advise the on-scene or on-duty supervisor or a superior officer.
 2. The investigating officer will review all possible alert information. If alert criteria is met, the investigating officer is responsible for forwarding such information to Communications/Terminal Operations.
 3. The investigating officer will work to obtain a photograph of the missing person and/or suspect as soon as practicable and cause it to be disseminated to the appropriate entities.
 4. The PIO should be constantly updated as it may assist in utilizing the media and obtain additional public exposure for the case.
 5. Involved personnel should continually provide the PIO with any updated information.

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Public Alerts

317.7 BLUE ALERTS

- A. Blue Alerts™ are part of a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a violent criminal who has seriously injured or killed a local, state, or federal law enforcement officer (ARS 41-1726).
- B. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING IF A BLUE ALERT SHOULD BE ISSUED:
 - 1. A law enforcement officer has been killed or seriously injured by an offender.
 - 2. The investigating law enforcement agency has determined that the offender poses a serious risk or threat to the public and other law enforcement personnel.
 - 3. A detailed description of the offender's vehicle, vehicle tag, or partial tag is available for broadcast to the public.
 - 4. Public dissemination of available information may help avert further harm or accelerate apprehension of the suspect.
- C. PROCEDURE FOR INITIATING A BLUE ALERT:
 - 1. Upon confirmation of the Blue Alert criteria, a PARO shall ensure that procedures consistent with the DPS guidelines for activation and cancellation are followed.

317.8 SILVER ALERTS

- A. Silver Alerts are part of a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person who is 65 years of age or older or who has a developmental disability as described in ARS 36-551, Alzheimer's disease, or dementia (ARS 41-1728).
- B. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING IF A SILVER ALERT CAN BE ISSUED (ALL OF THE BELOW SHALL BE MET):
 - 1. The missing person is 65 years of age or older or has a developmental disability (ARS 36-551), Alzheimer's disease, or dementia AND
 - 2. All available local resources have been utilized (ATL, BOLO, GPS (vehicle and cell phone, if applicable), checked jails and hospitals, distributed flyers, contacted family/friends, etc.) AND
 - 3. A determination has been made that the person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances AND
 - 4. The missing person is in danger due to any ONE of the following:
 - (a) age
 - (b) health
 - (c) mental or physical disability
 - (d) environment or weather conditions
 - (e) The missing person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person
 - (f) other factors indicating the missing person may be in peril.

Sahuarita Police Department

Policy Manual

Public Alerts

5. Public dissemination of available information could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.
- C. PROCEDURE FOR INITIATING A SILVER ALERT:
1. Upon confirmation of the Silver Alert criteria, a PARO shall ensure that procedures consistent with the DPS guidelines for activation and cancellation are followed.

317.9 POLICY ISSUANCE OR REVIEW

07/01/2024 - Reviewed by Chief John D. Noland SP002