

ALABAMA MISSING SENIOR ALERT PLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the reason for implementing the Alabama Missing Senior Alert (MSA) Plan?

Alabama's elderly population is growing and our state is committed to putting in place tools and technologies to ensure their safety and protection.

The MSA is a standardized and coordinated law enforcement and state agency response to share information with the public to improve the chances of a safe recovery.

What are the criteria?

1. If the missing person have an 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 or older and law enforcement has determined the missing person lacks the capacity to consent and the usage of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) message signs may be the only way to rescue the missing person.
2. The law enforcement agency's investigation must conclude that the disappearance poses a credible threat to the person's welfare and safety;
3. If a vehicle is involved and the statewide messaging system is requested, there must be a description of the vehicle, and a tag number to display on the ALDOT message signs; and
 - Local law enforcement must verify vehicle and tag information;
 - The law enforcement agency must have entered the missing person into the Alabama Crime Information Center and issued a statewide BOLO to other law enforcement/911 centers;
4. Local law enforcement has already requested the Alabama Department of Public Safety (DPS) to issue a local or regional Alert
5. The DPS upon the criteria being met will issue the MSA through media outlets in the missing persons surrounding jurisdiction.

How does the Missing Senior Alert get activated?

If you have a loved one missing you should contact your local law enforcement agency immediately. Only a law enforcement agency may activate a MSA. Local law enforcement will take a report, request a MSA if the criteria are met and in turn, will notify the Alabama Department of Public Safety if the person is driving a vehicle.

How long does a Missing Senior Alert stay activated?

The Local Law Enforcement Agency will determine the status of the Alert. If road signs are used, they will remain activated unless the missing elderly person is rescued, or unless ALDOT is otherwise instructed.



What is the role of the public during a Missing Senior Alert?

The public can play an important role in the rescue of missing elderly persons with a cognitive impairment. According to the Alzheimer's Association, 95% of persons who go missing in these situations are found within a quarter mile from their place or residence or last location seen. When they hear about a Missing Senior Alert in their area, they should actively make note of the description of the person and any additional information provided. If the public encounters or believes they see the vehicle or the missing person they should immediately call 911 or local law enforcement to respond. They should make note of the person's whereabouts, and if applicable, the vehicle tag, direction of travel and location observation (highway/street, city and county).

What is the role of the media?

Media outlets have the option on whether or not to broadcast Missing Senior Alerts information. Large audiences can be reached through the media, thereby enhancing everyone's efforts in safely recovering a cognitively impaired missing person.

Does a caretaker, physician, or psychologist first have to verify or attest that the person has a cognitive impairment?

The reporting party must articulate to the local law enforcement taking the report the fact that the missing person has a diagnosed cognitive impairment. The local law enforcement agency will determine whether the criteria are met before contacting DPS for the MSA.

What are the "extraordinary circumstances: for persons under the age of 60?"

Law enforcement has various search and tracking tools to find missing persons. To maintain integrity of the system and not dilute its effectiveness, the road signs will be used primarily for persons with irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties 60 years and older. However, road signs may be used in rare instances when that is the only viable method to locate a missing person under the age of 60 who otherwise meet criteria.

How does one file a missing person report?

Contact the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction where the missing person was last seen.

Do you use the Emergency Alert System (ESA), as you do with AMBER Alerts?

No, the EAS is restricted to child abductions, and is not used for any other cases involving missing children. However, just like with Missing Child Alerts, television and radio stations will be notified and the information can be broadcasted to the viewing or listening public.

How many seniors in Alabama are diagnosed with Alzheimer's?

According to the Alzheimer's Association, there are approximately 88,000 cases of Alzheimer's in Alabama.

What area(s) does the Missing Senior Alert cover?

The MSA will cover the entire state of Alabama and possibly other states as applicable.

Contact Information:

Missing Senior Alert (Media Alert)
334-353-1172 (8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CST)
800-228-7688 (after hours and weekends; 24/7)