



## FSA - Keeping You Safe

### Emergency Phone Alerts: What You Need to Know

If you own a cell phone and live in Florida, you've probably received an **AMBER Alert**. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) sends emergency phone alerts to Florida citizens through the Emergency Alert System, which also includes disbursement through television, radio and highway signs. It's not just AMBER Alerts, however – you may also have received Silver, Purple and Blue Alerts.

Knowing what the different alerts mean, and more importantly, what you should do with the information, is part of being a responsible citizen. The stakes are high, after all – **acting quickly could save someone's life**. Here's a guide to the different emergency text alerts and what they mean.

#### AMBER Alerts

AMBER Alerts were created to notify the public of a child who is missing and endangered. The system was first created in Texas in 1996, but later spread to other states across the nation. Florida AMBER Alerts were established in 2000 by FDLE, named after a young girl named Amber Hagerman. She was tragically abducted in 1996 and later found deceased, and her case remains unsolved. While AMBER is a tribute to her name, it has also evolved into an acronym: **America's Missing: Broadcasting Emergency Response**.

To be eligible for announcement via an AMBER Alert, a situation must involve the kidnapping of a child under the age of 18 who is believed to be in imminent danger. Another alert, called the **Missing Child Alert**, is used when a child is missing but there is no evidence of abduction.

#### Silver Alerts

According to FDLE, authorities use Silver Alerts to locate missing persons suffering from an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties. Unlike the standards for an AMBER Alert, each agency has their own criteria for activating a Silver Alert. There are, however, general recommendations for each agency to follow. According to these guidelines, a Silver Alert should be activated for an individual who *is either 60 years or older; is 18-59 but lacks the capacity to consent; OR has an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties (for example: Alzheimer's disease or dementia)*.

These alerts were created by Florida Gov. Charlie Crist through an Executive Order signed on October 8, 2008.

#### Purple Alerts

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association's Crime Prevention Tips: [flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention](http://flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention).

Purple Alerts are similar to Silver Alerts but have different criteria for the missing individual. [According to FDLE](#), Purple Alerts are issued for *missing adults who suffer from a mental or cognitive disability that is not Alzheimer's disease or a dementia-related disorder; an intellectual disability or a developmental disability; a brain injury; other physical, mental or emotional disabilities that are not related to substance abuse; OR a combination of any of these and their disappearance poses a credible threat of immediate danger or seriously bodily harm.*

These alerts were enacted in July 2021 by the Florida Legislature and signed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

## **Blue Alerts**

[Blue Alerts](#) serve a different purpose than the other types of emergency phone alerts in Florida. They are issued when a law enforcement officer has been killed, seriously injured or is missing while in the line of duty if the perpetrator is still at large (and considered dangerous to the public). These alerts can help authorities locate a dangerous person more quickly.

Blue Alerts were established by the Florida Legislature in 2011.

## **Know the Facts, Save a Life**

When used effectively, each of these emergency phone alerts can save lives. When you receive an alert, make note of the characteristics of the individuals described. If you see an individual of interest (either a victim or the perpetrator of a crime) or their vehicle, **immediately call 911 or your local law enforcement agency to report the information.**

To stay ahead of emergency situations, keep the contact information for your local sheriff's office on hand. [Click here to access FSA's sheriff directory](#) and locate your sheriff.