

WASHINGTON STATE ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY PLAN September 2015



I. PURPOSE

The Washington State Endangered Missing Person Advisory (EMPA) is authorized by RCW 13.60.010 and 13.60.050. The EMPA is a program of voluntary cooperation among broadcasters; cable systems; local, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies; state agencies; and other participants to enhance the ability to recover a missing and endangered person. Some—but not all—of the AMBER Alert notification resources can be used.

The AMBER Alert Advisory Committee, as established by the Statewide AMBER Alert Plan, shall be responsible for providing administrative oversight to develop, implement, review, and recommend revisions to all aspects of the Washington Statewide EMPA Plan. Such recommendations are made to the State AMBER Alert Manager.

II. ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY CRITERIA

The EMPA is initiated by law enforcement agencies using the following criteria:

- The person is missing under either:
 1. Unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances; and the person is believed to be in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability [as defined in RCW 71A.10.020(5)], or is a vulnerable adult [as defined in RCW 74.34.020(17)], is missing during adverse weather conditions and/or is believed to be unable to return to safety without assistance.
 2. Voluntary circumstances, only if a person, due to mental disability [as defined in RCW 71A.10.020(5)] is in danger because of age or health, during adverse environment or weather conditions and/or is believed to be unable to return to safety without assistance.
- The designated title “Silver Alert” will be used when the endangered missing person is age 60 and over.
- There is enough descriptive information that could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person. (Include as much of the following as possible.)

For missing person - photo; height; weight; age; hair and eye color; hair length; race; any distinguishing physical characteristics; clothing worn when last seen; vehicle, if any, to include color, make, model, license number, approximate year (older, newer); location last seen, etc.).

For possible subjects/suspects - same descriptive information as above.

- The incident has been reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.

III. PROCEDURE FOR AGENCIES TO INITIATE AN ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY

Investigating agency responsibilities include the following. If all criteria are met, initiate the following actions, as appropriate:

WASHINGTON STATE ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY PLAN September 2015



- Prepare an “Endangered Missing Person Advisory” Administrative Message through A Central Computerized Enforcement Service System (ACCESS). Write “Endangered Missing Person Advisory” in the title of the message.
- Contact the Washington State Patrol (WSP) Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit (MUPU) at (800) 543-5678 to verify it received the advisory via ACCESS.
- Enter the information into the WACIC and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) databases using the proper message key: Missing (MNP), Endangered (EME), or Involuntary (EMI). **Note:** Dental records of a person missing 30 days or longer must be provided to the WSP MUPU.
- Obtain a photograph of the missing person and/or suspect as soon as possible and enter it with the missing person record into WACIC and NCIC, then send an e-mail to the WSP MUPU using the address MPU@wsp.wa.gov.
- The investigating agency or its dispatch center must ensure it is prepared to handle a high volume of phone calls. Consider allocating additional resources.
- Appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle the press. Once the advisory has been activated, media coverage may be overwhelming, especially for a small department. The PIO should be constantly updated and encouraged to utilize the media as much as possible and receive the maximum exposure for the case. Activating agencies may contact the Washington State Patrol Government and Media Relations Office to request assistance.
- When a law enforcement agency has determined that an incident qualifies for activation of a statewide EMPA, the agency must notify the WSP. The WSP Communications Center that covers the approving agency area of responsibility will make the entry into the portal. As a back-up or as an advisor the AMBER Alert Coordinator can also make the entry into the portal.

Notes:

1. The EMPA does not preclude any in-house procedures, policies, or practices used by a law enforcement agency.
2. An EMPA may be issued on a local, regional, or statewide basis; however, the Portal allows for statewide activation only. Local or regional advisories need to be handled by traditional methods of contacting the media.

IV. THE FOLLOWING WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE ADVISORY IS ACTIVATED:

- All Washington law enforcement agencies are notified through the ACCESS Administrative Message.
- The Portal will automatically notify all alerting partners and the public (who are subscribed) of the initial advisory and any subsequent updated advisories.

In the event the Portal does not function, or as a manual backup, the investigating agency should notify broadcasters, media, and social media sites of the EMPA. The Washington State Association of Broadcasters has an address list available on its web site for reference. The WSP Government and Media Relations Office also has address (e-mail) groups available for the investigating agency’s use.

WASHINGTON STATE ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY PLAN September 2015



- Upon request of the investigating agency, the WSP MUPU can provide electronic posters with details of the missing person.
- The WSP will notify all of their Ports of Entry of the EMPA.
- The investigating agency should notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-843-5678 if the missing person is 21 years or under.
- Department of Transportation (DOT) Regional Traffic Management Centers (TMCs) will respond to requests to activate an EMPA through notification from the WSP, the portal or upon notification from another Regional TMC. Once the initiating local area WSP District Communications Center has notified the Regional TMC, that TMC is considered the "initiating TMC."
- Where there is only partial vehicle information available, wording on the Variable Message Signs (VMS) and text of the Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) messages will be a joint decision between the TMC Supervisor and the WSP lieutenant or above, in accordance with approved WSDOT Standard Operating Procedures. WSDOT will not convey EMPA information when there is no vehicle information.
- The decision on the geographic location of VMS to be activated will be made in collaboration between the TMC Supervisor, a WSP lieutenant or above or the State AMBER Alert Coordinator.
- The length of time an EMPA will be transmitted via VMS and HAR will be after discussion between the TMC Supervisor and WSP lieutenant or above.

V. CANCELING THE ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY

- The investigating agency must cancel the EMPA by sending another Administrative Message through ACCESS, noting the person has been located, etc.
- The investigating agency must notify the WSP Communications Center of the cancellation for the Portal.

The Portal will automatically notify all alerting partners and the public (who are subscribed) of the cancellation.

In the event the Portal does not function, or as a manual backup, the investigating agency should notify broadcasters, media, and social media sites of the EMPA cancellation. The Washington State Association of Broadcasters has an address list available on its web site for reference. The WSP Government and Media Relations Office also has address (e-mail) groups available for the investigating agency's use.

- The EMPA will not be cancelled in LEAP until the endangered subject is located or the requesting agency determines use of the EMPA within LEAP is no longer effective. Follow up with the investigating agency for active EMPA's will be done by the MUPU Manager as the situation merits to ensure the status of the EMPA remains current.

WASHINGTON STATE ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON ADVISORY PLAN September 2015



VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- WSP MUPU, serving as the Missing Children and Endangered Person Clearinghouse, is available to provide training and/or training materials.
- The WSP Government and Media Relations Office can assist with press releases, training, and broadcaster/media contact information.
- A Child Is Missing will contact residents and businesses in the area where the person was last seen by using an automated telephone system. The service is free and can be used for a missing child, elderly, or disabled person. Call the toll-free number (888) 875-ACIM (888-875-2246).
- Team Adam provides experienced child abduction investigators, technical assistance, and equipment, free of charge, to agencies during investigations involving missing, abducted, or exploited children. Call toll-free (800) THE-LOST (800-843-5678).
- Project Alert provides retired federal, state, and local law enforcement officers who volunteer their time and expertise as unpaid consultants during investigations of missing, abducted, or exploited children. All travel arrangements and costs are paid for by NCMEC. Call toll-free (800) THE-LOST (800-843-5678).
- Laura Recovery Center will help organize community ground searches. The non-profit organization offers its services for free. Call toll-free (866) 898-5723.