



2024 Purple Alerts Legislative Updates

HB 937 – Purple Alerts

Effective July 1, 2024

On July 1, 2021, the Florida Purple Alert, section 937.0205, Florida Statute, was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis with an effective date of July 1, 2022. The Florida Purple Alert is used to assist in the location of missing adults suffering from a mental or cognitive disability that is not Alzheimer's disease or a dementia-related disorder. It can also be an intellectual disability or a developmental disability; a brain injury; other physical, mental or emotional disabilities that is not related to substance abuse; or a combination of any of these. The disappearance must pose a credible threat of immediate danger or serious bodily harm to the missing person and the situation must indicate they can only be returned to safety through law enforcement intervention.

On April 11, 2024, Governor DeSantis signed House Bill 937 (attached), amending s. 937.0205 with an effective date of July 1, 2024. The new language requires local law enforcement agencies to develop policies for a Local Purple Alert when the missing person is on foot or in an unidentified vehicle. A State Purple Alert may be requested from the Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) when the investigation indicates there is a motor vehicle with an identified license plate or other vehicle information.

FDLE's MEPIC is updating the Purple Alert training to educate and assist Florida law enforcement agencies in the use of Purple Alerts and to highlight the changes due to HB 937. The target audience for this training is local uniformed patrol, investigators, supervisors, and dispatchers. The training module updates are in progress, but the new slides are attached for reference.

If you have any questions regarding Purple Alerts, please contact MEPIC at 888-356-4774 or at mepic@fdle.state.fl.us.

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2 An act relating to the Purple Alert; amending s.
3 937.0205, F.S.; requiring local law enforcement
4 agencies to develop policies for a local activation of
5 a Purple Alert for certain missing adults; specifying
6 requirements for such policies; specifying duties of
7 the Department of Law Enforcement's Missing Endangered
8 Persons Information Clearinghouse in the event of a
9 state Purple Alert; specifying conditions under which
10 a local law enforcement agency may request the
11 clearinghouse to open a case; conforming provisions to
12 changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

13
14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

15
16 Section 1. Section 937.0205, Florida Statutes, is amended
17 to read:

18 937.0205 Purple Alert.—

19 (1) The Legislature finds that a standardized state system
20 is necessary to aid in the search for a missing adult identified
21 in subsection (4) ~~paragraph (4)(a)~~. The Legislature also finds
22 that a coordinated local law enforcement and state agency
23 response with prompt and widespread sharing of information will
24 improve the chances of finding the person.

25 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature to establish the

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26 Purple Alert, to be implemented in a manner that, to the extent
27 practicable, safeguards the privacy rights and related health
28 and diagnostic information of such missing adults.

29 (3) The Department of Law Enforcement, in cooperation with
30 the Department of Transportation, the Department of Highway
31 Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department of the Lottery, and
32 local law enforcement agencies, shall establish and implement
33 the Purple Alert. At a minimum, the Purple Alert must:

34 (a) Be the only viable means by which the missing adult is
35 likely to be returned to safety;

36 (b) Provide, to the greatest extent possible, for the
37 protection of the privacy, dignity, and independence of the
38 missing adult by including standards aimed at safeguarding these
39 civil liberties by preventing the inadvertent or unnecessary
40 broadcasting or dissemination of sensitive health and diagnostic
41 information;

42 (c) Limit the broadcasting and dissemination of alerts and
43 related information to the geographic areas where the missing
44 adult could reasonably be, considering his or her circumstances
45 and physical and mental condition, the potential modes of
46 transportation available to him or her or suspected to be
47 involved, and the known or suspected circumstances of his or her
48 disappearance; and

49 (d) Be activated only when there is sufficient descriptive
50 information about the missing adult and the circumstances

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51 surrounding his or her disappearance to indicate that activating
52 the alert is likely to help locate the missing adult.

53 ~~(4)(a) Under a Purple Alert, a local law enforcement~~
54 ~~agency may broadcast to the media and to persons who subscribe~~
55 ~~to receive alert notifications under this section information~~
56 ~~concerning~~ a missing adult is deemed to be an adult:

57 (a)1. Who has a mental or cognitive disability that is not
58 Alzheimer's disease or a dementia-related disorder; an
59 intellectual disability or a developmental disability, as those
60 terms are defined in s. 393.063; a brain injury; another
61 physical, mental, or emotional disability that is not related to
62 substance abuse; or a combination of any of these;

63 (b)2. Whose disappearance indicates a credible threat of
64 immediate danger or serious bodily harm to himself or herself,
65 as determined by the local law enforcement agency;

66 (c)3. Who cannot be returned to safety without law
67 enforcement intervention; and

68 (d)4. Who does not meet the criteria for activation of a
69 local Silver Alert or the Silver Alert Plan of the Department of
70 Law Enforcement.

71 (5) For a missing adult on foot or in an unidentified
72 vehicle, local law enforcement agencies shall develop their own
73 policies for activation of a local Purple Alert that meets the
74 requirements set forth in s. 937.021 and shall:

75 (a) Contact media outlets in the affected area or

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76 surrounding jurisdictions;

77 (b) Inform all on-duty law enforcement officers of the
78 missing adult report; and

79 (c) Communicate the report to any other law enforcement
80 agency in the county of jurisdiction.

81 (6) A state Purple Alert may be requested from the
82 Department of Law Enforcement's Missing Endangered Persons
83 Information Clearinghouse when the investigation indicates that
84 there is a motor vehicle with an identified license plate or
85 other vehicle information. The clearinghouse shall:

86 (a) Coordinate with the Department of Transportation and
87 the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for the
88 activation of dynamic message signs on state highways and the
89 immediate distribution of critical information to the public
90 regarding the missing adult in accordance with the alert;

91 (b) Coordinate with the Department of the Lottery to have
92 the state Purple Alert broadcast on lottery terminals,
93 including, but not limited to, lottery terminals in gas
94 stations, convenience stores, and supermarkets; and

95 (c) Notify subscribers.

96 (7) If a local or state Purple Alert is determined to be
97 necessary and appropriate, the local law enforcement agency
98 having jurisdiction may also request that a case be opened with
99 the Department of Law Enforcement's Missing Endangered Persons
100 Information Clearinghouse.

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~~(b) If a Purple Alert is determined to be necessary and appropriate, the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction must notify the media and subscribers in the jurisdiction or jurisdictions where the missing adult is believed to or may be located. The local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction may also request that the Purple Alert notification be broadcast on lottery terminals within the geographic regions where the missing adult may reasonably be, including, but not limited to, lottery terminals in gas stations, convenience stores, and supermarkets.~~

~~(c) Under the Purple Alert, the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction may also request that a case be opened with the Department of Law Enforcement's Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse. To enhance local or regional efforts when the investigation indicates that an identifiable vehicle is involved, the clearinghouse must coordinate with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for the activation of dynamic message signs on state highways and the immediate distribution of critical information to the public regarding the missing adult in accordance with the alert.~~

~~(8)(5)~~ The state Purple Alert process must include procedures to monitor the use, activation, and results of alerts and a strategy for informing and educating law enforcement, the media, and other stakeholders concerning the alert.

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126 (9)~~(6)~~ The Department of Law Enforcement may adopt rules
127 to implement and administer this section.
128 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC)



Florida Purple Alert

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Office of Statewide Investigative Services
Enforcement and Investigative Support Bureau



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse



The Florida Purple Alert is used to locate missing adults suffering from one or more of the following:

- A mental or cognitive disability that is not Alzheimer's disease or a dementia-related disorder
- An intellectual disability or a developmental disability
- Brain injury
- Other physical, mental or emotional disabilities that are not related to substance abuse; or a combination of any of these

Has your law enforcement agency's investigation concluded that the disappearance poses a credible threat of immediate danger or serious bodily harm to the missing person and they can only be returned to safety through law enforcement intervention?



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse



2024 Legislative Update – Effective July 1, 2024

- A Statewide Purple Alert may be requested from the Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) when the investigation indicates there is a motor vehicle with an identified license plate or other vehicle information. The Clearinghouse shall:
 - Coordinate with the Department of Transportation and Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for activation of dynamic message signs
 - Coordinate with the Department of Lottery to have the state Purple Alert broadcast on lottery terminals, including, but not limited to, lottery terminals in gas stations, convenience stores, and supermarkets
 - Notify subscribers



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse



2024 Legislative Update – Effective July 1, 2024 (cont'd.)

- Local law enforcement agencies are required to develop policies for activation of a Local Purple Alert when the missing person is on foot or in an unidentified vehicle. The agency shall:
 - Contact media outlets in the affected area or surrounding jurisdictions
 - Inform all on-duty law enforcement officers of the missing adult report
 - Communicate the report to any other law enforcement agency in the county of jurisdiction
 - If desired, request FDLE MEPIC to open an analytical assistance case



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse



Statewide Purple Alert Criteria

- Is the person 18 years of age or older **and does not** qualify for a Silver Alert?
- Has your investigation determined the missing person:
 - **Has any combination of the following:** an intellectual or developmental disability, brain injury; or another physical, mental, or emotional disability that is not related to substance abuse **-and-**
 - **Does not have** Alzheimer's disease or a dementia related disorder?
- Has your law enforcement agency's investigation concluded that the disappearance poses a credible threat of immediate danger or serious bodily harm to the missing person **and** they can only be returned to safety through law enforcement intervention?
- Is there a detailed description of the missing person suitable for distribution?
- Is there a detailed description of the vehicle and a verified tag number to display on the Florida Department of Transportation dynamic message signs?
- Has your agency entered the missing person into the Florida Crime Information Center (FCIC)?
- Does the local law enforcement agency jurisdiction recommend activation?



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse



Statewide Purple Alert Dissemination

- Statewide law enforcement BOLO
- Alert flyer created and posted on FDLE website
- Florida highway road signs are activated
- Information is sent to retailers through Florida lottery machines
- Email and/or text distribution for citizens who sign up at www.missingchildrenalert.com



Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse



Contact

(888) 356-4774

MEPIC@fdle.state.fl.us

Sign up to receive text and email alerts

www.missingchildrenalert.com