

Senior Alert Program

This Act creates a program for local, regional, or statewide notification of a missing senior adult. The bill defines a missing senior adult as an adult who is over 60 years of age, suffers from a cognitive impairment that renders them unable to care for themselves without assistance (including a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s Disease or dementia), and whose whereabouts are unknown and whose disappearance poses a credible threat to their health and safety. The program is similar to the Amber Alert Program for missing children. The bill also provides that no police or sheriff’s department shall establish or maintain any policy that requires a waiting period before a missing senior adult report will be accepted. Such departments are also required, within two hours of receiving such a report, to enter identifying and descriptive information about the missing senior adult into the state Criminal Information Network and the National Crime Information Center Systems, forward the information to the state police, notify other law-enforcement agencies in the areas, and initiate an investigation.

Submitted as:

Virginia

[Chapter 486 of 2007](#)

Status: Enacted into law in 2007.

Suggested State Legislation

(Title, enacting clause, etc.)

1 Section 1. [*Short Title.*] This Act shall be cited as “An Act to Establish a Statewide System
2 for Notification of Missing Senior Adults.”

3
4 Section 2. [*Definitions.*] As used in this Act:

5 (1) “Missing senior adult” means an adult whose whereabouts are unknown and
6 who is over [60 years] of age and suffers a cognitive impairment to the extent that he is unable to
7 provide care to himself without assistance from a caregiver, including a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s
8 Disease or dementia, and whose disappearance poses a credible threat as determined by a law-
9 enforcement agency to the health and safety of the adult and under such other circumstances as
10 deemed appropriate by the [state police].

11 (2) “Missing Senior Adult Report” means a report prepared in a format prescribed
12 by the [Superintendent of State Police] for use by law-enforcement agencies to report missing
13 senior adult information and photograph to the [state police].

14 (3) “Senior Alert Agreement” means a voluntary agreement between law-
15 enforcement officials and members of the media whereby a senior adult will be declared missing,
16 and the public will be notified by media outlets, and includes all other incidental conditions of the
17 partnership as found appropriate by the [state police].

18 (4) “Senior Alert” means the notice of a missing senior adult provided to the public
19 by the media or other methods under a Senior Alert Agreement.

20 (5) “Senior Alert Program” or “Program” means the procedures and “Senior Alert
21 Agreements” to aid in the identification and location of a missing senior adult.

22 (6) “Media” means print, radio, television, and Internet-based communication
23 systems or other methods of communicating information to the public.

24

25 Section 3. [*Establishment of the Senior Alert Program.*]

26 (A) The [state police] shall develop policies for the establishment of uniform standards for
27 the creation of [Senior Alert Programs] throughout this state.

28 (B) The [state police] shall:

29 (1) inform local law-enforcement officials of the policies and procedures to be used
30 for the [Senior Alert Programs];

31 (2) assist in determining the geographic scope of a particular [Senior Alert]; and

32 (3) establish procedures and standards by which a local law-enforcement agency
33 shall verify that a senior adult is missing and shall report such information to the [state police].

34 (C) The establishment of a [Senior Alert Program] by a local law-enforcement agency and
35 the media is voluntary, and nothing in this Act shall be construed to be a mandate that local
36 officials or the media establish or participate in a [Senior Alert Program].

37
38 Section 4. [*Senior Alert Activation.*]

39 (A) No police or sheriff's department shall establish or maintain any policy which requires
40 the observance of any waiting period before accepting a [missing senior adult report]. Upon
41 receipt of a [missing senior adult report] by any police or sheriff's department, the department
42 shall immediately, but in all cases within two hours of receiving the report, enter identifying and
43 descriptive data about the senior adult into the state [Criminal Information Network] and the
44 National Crime Information Center Systems, forward the report to the [state police], notify all
45 other law-enforcement agencies in the area, and initiate an investigation of the case.

46 (B) Upon receipt of a Missing Senior Adult Report from a law-enforcement agency, the
47 [state police] shall confirm the accuracy of the information and provide assistance in the activation
48 of the [Senior Alert Program] as the investigation dictates.

49 (C) [Senior Alerts] may be local, regional, or statewide. The initial decision to make a local
50 [Senior Alert] shall be at the discretion of the local law-enforcement official. Prior to making a
51 local [Senior Alert], the local law-enforcement official shall confer with the [state police] and
52 provide information regarding the missing senior adult to the [state police]. The decision to make
53 a regional or statewide [Senior Alert] shall be at the discretion of the [state police].

54 (D) The [Senior Alert] shall include the missing senior adult information as defined in this
55 Act and any other such information as the law-enforcement agency deems appropriate that will
56 assist in the safe recovery of the missing senior adult.

57 (E) The [Senior Alert] shall be cancelled under the terms of the [Senior Alert Agreement].

58 (F) Any local law-enforcement agency that locates a missing senior adult who is the
59 subject of an alert shall notify the state police immediately that the missing senior adult has been
60 located.

61
62 Section 5. [*Severability.*] [Insert severability clause.]

63
64 Section 6. [*Repealer.*] [Insert repealer clause.]

65
66 Section 7. [*Effective Date.*] [Insert effective date.]