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## The Silver Alert Program

To help protect an increasing population of individuals that suffer from dementia or other cognitive impairment, North Carolina developed the Silver Alert program to quickly locate missing persons who may be endangered.



The Silver Alert program was designed to quickly disseminate descriptive information about the missing adult, so that citizens in the affected area can be on the lookout for the endangered person and notify local law enforcement with any relevant information. The program is a cooperative effort among local and state law enforcement and the N.C. Center for Missing Persons, with voluntary participation by radio and television broadcasters and the N.C. Department of Transportation.

Specific health information about the missing person is not publicized through the alert, or otherwise, in order to protect the missing from potential abuse, harm or exploitation.

Although a few other states have implemented similar programs to locate missing endangered adults, the Silver Alert program is unique to North Carolina and only one of three designed to help cognitively impaired adults. The North Carolina General Assembly formally established the program in 2007 by General Statute § 143B-499.8; it is operated through the N.C. Center for Missing Persons.

### Criteria

ALL of the following statutory criteria must be met before the N.C. Center for Missing Persons will activate a Silver Alert:

- The person is 18 years old or older
- The person is believed to be suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairment
- The person is believed to be missing – regardless of circumstance
- A legal custodian of the missing person has submitted a missing person's report to the local law enforcement agency where the person went missing
- Law enforcement reports the incident to the NC Center for Missing Persons

**The North Carolina Center for Missing Persons is the only agency that can activate a Silver Alert and will do so ONLY at the request of an investigating law enforcement agency.** It is then the responsibility of the center to determine whether there is sufficient identifying data to justify a Silver Alert activation.

### Procedures

#### Step 1 - Local Law Enforcement Investigates

When a family member or caregiver calls local law enforcement to report their missing loved one, the law enforcement agency must first investigate the case and determine if the criteria warrant a request for a Silver Alert. According to North Carolina law, a Silver Alert can only be issued if all of the criteria are met (see above).

#### Step 2 - Local Law Enforcement Calls NC Center for Missing Persons

After completing the investigation and determining the case meets the qualifying criteria, law enforcement will call the NC Center for Missing Persons (an agency within the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety) to request a Silver Alert. The law enforcement agency will send completed Silver Alert forms to the center outlining the necessary information about the missing person.

#### Step 3 - NC Missing Persons Center Issues Silver Alert

The center and investigating law enforcement agency work together to notify the surrounding community about the missing person.

#### Law Enforcement Responsibilities

- Enter information into the National Criminal Information Center system
- Initiate a statewide "be on the lookout" bulletin to all appropriate law enforcement agencies
- Provide a 24-hour phone number to receive calls during the investigation
- Activate phone calls in the immediate area using a type of reverse 911 calling system. (Using the A Child

- is Missing program, law enforcement can notify 1,000 businesses and/or residents each minute)
- Notify the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (if the person is 21 or younger)

#### NC Center for Missing Persons Responsibilities

- Update information on the department's web site
- Notify the local media about the missing person (including pictures when possible)
- Request the NCDOT to activate highway message signs (if appropriate)

Once the missing person has been located, the local law enforcement agency will notify the NC Center of Missing Persons, who will cancel the Silver Alert.

## **Publications**

[Silver Alert brochure](#)

## **Forms**

[Silver Alert Information Form](#)

[Silver Alert Release of Information](#)

## **Links**

[NC Division of Aging](#)

[The Area Agency on Aging Map](#)

[NC Family Caregiver Support Program](#)

[NC Alzheimer's Support Program](#)

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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2007**

**SESSION LAW 2007-469  
HOUSE BILL 38**

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A PUBLIC ALERT TO BE ISSUED WHEN A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA OR OTHER COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT IS REPORTED MISSING, TO INCLUDE CAREGIVERS AMONG THOSE WHO CAN REPORT AN INDIVIDUAL MISSING, TO MAKE TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING CHANGES TO THE PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS, AND TO EXEMPT EMS WORKERS LOCATING MISSING PERSONS FROM THE PRIVATE PROTECTIVE SERVICES ACT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 143B-499 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 143B-499. Submission of missing person reports to the Center.**

Any parent, spouse, guardian, ~~or~~ legal custodian, or person responsible for the supervision of the missing individual may submit a missing person report to the Center of any missing child or missing person, regardless of the circumstances, after having first submitted a missing person report on the individual to the law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction of the area in which the individual became or is believed to have become missing, regardless of the circumstances."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 143B-499.1 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 143B-499.1. Dissemination of missing persons data by law-enforcement agencies.**

A law-enforcement agency, upon receipt of a missing person report by a parent, spouse, guardian, ~~or~~ legal custodian, or person responsible for the supervision of the missing individual shall immediately make arrangements for the entry of data about the missing person or missing child into the national missing persons file in accordance with criteria set forth by the FBI/NCIC, immediately inform all of its on-duty law-enforcement officers of the missing person report, initiate a statewide broadcast to all appropriate law-enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for the individual, and transmit a copy of the report to the Center. No law enforcement agency shall establish or maintain any policy which requires the observance of any waiting period before accepting a missing person report.

If the report involves a missing child and the report meets the criteria established in G.S. 143B-499.7(b), as soon as practicable after receipt of the report, the law enforcement agency shall notify the Center and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children of the relevant data about the missing child."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 143B-499.3 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 143B-499.3. Duty of individuals to notify Center and law-enforcement agency when missing person has been located.**

Any parent, spouse, guardian, ~~or~~ legal custodian, or person responsible for the supervision of the missing individual who submits a missing person report to a law-enforcement agency or to the Center, shall immediately notify the law-enforcement agency and the Center of any individual whose location has been determined. The Center shall confirm the deletion of the individual's records from the FBI/NCIC's missing person file, as long as there are no grounds for criminal prosecution, and follow up with the local law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction of the records."

**SECTION 4.** G.S. 143B-499.5 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 143B-499.5. Provision of toll-free service; instructions to callers; communication with law-enforcement agencies.**

The Center shall provide a toll-free telephone line for anyone to report the disappearance of any individual or the sighting of any missing child or missing person. The Center personnel shall instruct the caller, in the case of a report concerning the disappearance of an individual, of the requirements contained in G.S. ~~143B-499~~~~143B-499.3~~ of first having to submit a missing person report on the individual to the law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction of the area in which the individual became or is believed to have become missing. Any law-enforcement agency may retrieve information imparted to the Center by means of this phone line. The Center shall directly communicate any report of a sighting of a missing person or a missing child to the law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the area of disappearance or sighting."

**SECTION 5.** Part 5A of Article 11 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 143B-499.8. North Carolina Silver Alert System established.**

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the Silver Alert System. The purpose of the Silver Alert System is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairment.

(b) If the Center receives a report that involves a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairment, for the protection of the missing person from potential abuse or other physical harm, neglect, or exploitation, the Center shall issue an alert providing for rapid dissemination of information statewide regarding the missing person. The Center shall make every effort to disseminate the information as quickly as possible when the missing person is 18 years of age or older, and the person's status as missing has been reported to a law enforcement agency.

(c) The Center shall adopt guidelines and develop procedures for issuing an alert for missing persons believed to be suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairment and shall provide education and training to encourage radio and television broadcasters to participate in the alert. The guidelines and procedures shall ensure that specific health information about the missing person is not made public through the alert or otherwise.

(d) The Center shall consult with the Department of Transportation and develop a procedure for the use of overhead permanent changeable message signs to provide information on the missing adult meeting the criteria of this section when information is available that would enable motorists to assist in the recovery of the missing person. The Center and the Department of Transportation shall develop guidelines for the content, length, and frequency of any message to be placed on an overhead permanent changeable message sign."

**SECTION 6.** G.S. 74C-3(b) reads as rewritten:

- "(b) "Private protective services" shall not mean any of the following:
- (1) Licensed insurance adjusters legally employed as such and who engage in no other investigative activities unconnected with adjustment or claims against an insurance ~~company~~; company.
  - (2) An officer or employee of the United States, this State, or any political subdivision of either while such officer or employee is engaged in the performance of his official duties within the course and scope of his employment with the United States, this State, or any political subdivision of ~~either~~; either.
  - (3) A person engaged exclusively in the business of obtaining and furnishing information as to the financial rating or credit worthiness of persons; and a person who provides consumer reports in connection with:
    - a. Credit transactions involving the consumer on whom the information is to be furnished and involving the extensions of credit to the consumer,
    - b. Information for employment purposes,
    - c. Information for the underwriting of insurance involving the consumer,
    - d. Information in connection with a determination of the consumer's eligibility for a license or other benefit granted by a governmental instrumentality required by law to consider an applicant's financial responsibility, or
    - e. A legitimate business need for the information in connection with a business transaction involving the ~~consumer~~; consumer.
  - (4) An attorney at law licensed to practice in North Carolina while engaged in such practice and his agent, provided said agent is performing duties only in connection with his principal's practice of ~~law~~; law.
  - (5) The legal owner or lien holder, and his agents and employees, of personal property which has been sold in a transaction wherein a security interest in personal property has been created to secure the sales transaction, who engage in repossession of said personal ~~property~~; property.
  - (6) Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 759, s. 3.
  - (7) Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 807, s. 1.

- (8) Employees of a licensee who are employed exclusively as undercover agents; provided that for purposes of this section, undercover agent means an individual hired by another person, firm, association, or corporation to perform a job for that person, firm, association, or corporation and, while performing such job, to act as an undercover operative, employee, or independent contractor of a licensee, but under the supervision of a ~~licensee;~~ licensee.
- (9) A person who is engaged in an alarm systems business subject to the provisions of Chapter 74D of the General ~~Statutes;~~ Statutes.
- (10) A person who obtains or verifies information regarding applicants for employment, with the knowledge and consent of the applicant, and is (i) engaged in business as a private personnel service as defined in G.S. 95-47.1 or engaged in business as a private employer fee pay personnel service, (ii) engaged in the business of obtaining or verifying information regarding applicants for employment, or (iii) an employer with whom the applicant has applied for ~~employment;~~ employment.
- (11) A person who conducts efficiency studies. An efficiency study is an analysis of an employer's business, made at the request of the employer, to determine one or more of the following:
- a. The most efficient procedures by which an employee of the business can perform the employee's assigned duties.
  - b. The adequacy of an employee's performance of the employee's assigned duties that require interaction with a client or customer of the business.
- If a person making an efficiency study observes an instance of theft or another illegal act committed by an employee of the business, the person may report the instance to the employer without violating G.S. 74C-3(a)(8).
- (12) Research laboratories and consultants who analyze, test, or in any way apply their expertise to interpreting, evaluating, or analyzing facts or evidence submitted by another in order to determine the cause or effect of physical or psychological occurrences, and give their opinions and findings to the requesting source or to a designee of the ~~requestor;~~ requestor.
- (13) A person who works regularly and exclusively as an employee of an employer in connection with the business affairs of that employer. If the employee is an armed security guard and wears, carries, or possesses a firearm in the performance of his duties, the provisions of G.S. 74C-13 ~~apply;~~ apply.
- (14) An employee of a security department of a private business that conducts investigations exclusively on matters internal to the business affairs of the ~~business;~~ or business.
- (15) Representatives of nonprofit organizations funded all or in part by business improvement districts who provide information and directions

to local tourists and residents, engage in street cleaning and beautification services within the business improvement districts, and notify local law enforcement of any illegal activity observed by the representatives within the business improvement districts.

- (16) Emergency medical services personnel credentialed under Article 7 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes who engage in search and rescue activities at the request of either the State, a political subdivision of the State, or one of the following types of facilities: an adult care home licensed under Chapter 131D of the General Statutes, a health care facility or agency licensed under Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, or a facility licensed to offer mental health, developmental disabilities, or substance abuse services under Chapter 122C of the General Statutes. For the purposes of this subdivision, 'search and rescue' means activities and documents relating to efforts to locate an individual following the individual's disappearance. This exemption shall not apply if the emergency medical services provider provides services beyond emergency search and rescue and said activities meet the definition of private protective services as defined in G.S. 74C-3."

**SECTION 7.** This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 31<sup>st</sup> day of July,

2007.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue  
President of the Senate

s/ Joe Hackney  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley  
Governor

Approved 3:31 a.m. this 29<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2007