

**Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue
Alert Act**

REPORT TO CONGRESS

May 2019

**United States Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services**

Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act

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I. Purpose

Pursuant to the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-12 (Blue Alert Act or Act), the United States Department of Justice (DOJ or Department) provides this annual report to Congress.

II. Background

The Blue Alert Act was enacted to “encourage, enhance, and integrate” Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in coordination with states, units of local government, law enforcement agencies, and other appropriate entities (34 U.S.C. § 50502).¹ Named for two fallen New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers who were ambushed, the Act is intended to facilitate rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public that will aid in (1) apprehending violent criminals who have killed or seriously injured a law enforcement officer in the line of duty; (2) finding an officer when he or she is missing in connection with his or her official duties; or (3) sharing notice of an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer.

Officer safety and wellness remains a top priority for the Department. The Department is committed to implementing the Blue Alert Act to protect the lives of the men and women who bravely serve in law enforcement. Attorney General William Barr has consistently recognized the uniquely dangerous nature of police work and reiterated the Department’s strong support of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement.

The Department assigned the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) with the honor of overseeing implementation of the Blue Alert Act and to create the National Blue Alert Network, based on its extensive work on officer safety and wellness issues.

III. Coordinator Duties/Activities

The Blue Alert Act requires an annual report to Congress on the activities of the National Blue Alert Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of Blue Alert plans that are in effect or being developed. The COPS Office dedicated significant time and effort to implement the Blue Alert Act and reports the following activities:

¹ While the legislation does not specifically mention Tribes, the COPS Office is working with Tribal law enforcement as well.

A. Designation of National Coordinator and Deputy National Coordinator. The Blue Alert Act requires the Attorney General to assign an existing officer of the Department to act as the national coordinator of the Blue Alert communications network to serve as the nationwide point of contact for the development of a network and regional coordination of Blue Alerts through the network (34 U.S.C. § 50503(a)).

As noted in previous Reports to Congress, the Attorney General designated the Director of the COPS Office as the National Blue Alert Coordinator (Coordinator). In April 2018, the Attorney General appointed Phillip E. Keith as the Director of the COPS Office. Director Keith has more than 47 years of experience in the fields of criminal justice, public safety, and business administration. Thirty-four of those years were spent in active law enforcement service, including 17 years as Chief of Police of the Knoxville, Tennessee, Police Department. In addition to his service as a law enforcement officer, Mr. Keith has significant policy and administrative experience, including working directly with the COPS Office.

The Coordinator designated an existing COPS Office staff member, Vince Davenport, who has significant law enforcement experience as the Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator (Deputy Coordinator) to assist in implementing the Blue Alert Act. The Coordinator also established the COPS Office Blue Alert Team consisting of existing federal staff with a broad range of expertise. This team meets regularly to discuss implementation strategies, timelines, and deliverables. Select members of the team have been trained to provide technical assistance to states and local and tribal law enforcement agencies seeking to establish Blue Alert plans or enhance an existing Blue Alert plan.

B. Establishment of Advisory Group and Quarterly Meetings. Pursuant to the Blue Alert Act, the Coordinator is required to establish an Advisory Group to assist states, local governments, and other involved entities with initiating, facilitating, and promoting Blue Alert plans (34 U.S.C. § 50503(b)(5)). The Act requires the group to have geographically diverse representation and include the following representatives:

- A law enforcement organization representing rank-and-file officers
- Other law enforcement agencies and public safety communications
- Broadcasters, first responders, dispatchers, and radio station personnel
- Other individuals and organizations the Coordinator determines are necessary for the success of the network

As previously reported, the Coordinator established an Advisory Group that satisfies each of the statutory requirements. Today, there are sixteen members representing the following organizations:²

² The COPS Office has identified a Tribal law enforcement representative to join the Advisory Group and is finalizing arrangements.

- Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)
- National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO)
- Blue Alert Foundation, Inc.
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
- National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)
- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)
- Concerns of Police Survivors
- Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- National Fusion Center Association (NFCA)
- First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)

The Advisory Group meets on a quarterly basis. To date, Advisory Group members have provided valuable individual feedback to the COPS Office on our guidance and recommendations to states and local governments in developing or enhancing their Blue Alert plans. The COPS Office will add additional Advisory Group members or amend the frequency of meetings, as appropriate, consistent with the discretion granted to the Coordinator by the Blue Alert Act.

C. Development of Voluntary Guidelines and Protocols. The Blue Alert Act requires the Coordinator to establish voluntary guidelines for states and local governments to use in developing Blue Alert plans. The guidelines must include a list of resources necessary to establish Blue Alert plans; criteria and guidelines for issuing Blue Alerts; guidelines to protect privacy and civil liberties; and guidelines aligned with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and any other relevant crime information repository (34 U.S.C. § 50503).

The Department has developed voluntary guidelines that address two complementary yet separate components of the Blue Alert Act: public alerts and law enforcement sensitive (LES) alerts. Public alerts directed at media outlets and affected communities provide suspect or missing officer information that is appropriate for public dissemination. LES alerts directed at affected law enforcement agencies provide sensitive information that is accessible only to law enforcement personnel. Public and LES alerts are often sent concurrently.

Unlike public Blue Alerts, LES Blue Alerts are limited to situations when an investigating agency needs to share information with other state or law enforcement agencies but has elected not to make suspect information publicly known. LES alerts are used when the investigating agency believes that making suspect information known publicly could jeopardize the criminal investigation or when the investigating agency believes that public alerting is not

prudent given the facts known at the time. LES alerts are also used when there is a known credible threat to law enforcement in a particular jurisdiction and the investigating agency wishes to alert other law enforcement personnel in the affected jurisdictions or geographical area without making the threat known publicly.

To meet its statutory mandate to establish voluntary guidelines, the COPS Office issued *Alert Guidelines* (https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/blue-alert/blue_alert_guidelines.pdf) to provide general information on when a law enforcement agency should issue Blue Alerts consistent with the statutory criteria as set forth in the Blue Alert Act. Blue Alerts may be issued when one of the following sets of threshold criteria are met: (1) death or serious injury of a law enforcement officer in the line of duty; (2) law enforcement officer missing in connection with official duties; or (3) threat to cause death or serious injury to a law enforcement officer.

To supplement the *Alert Guidelines*, the COPS Office developed *Effective Blue Alert Plans: Guidance and Recommendations* to help states and local agencies through the development process of Blue Alert plans; enhance and standardize existing state and local Blue Alert plans; and promote nationwide compatibility of Blue Alert plans. This comprehensive guidance identifies and addresses eight key elements to consider in developing new or updating existing Blue Alert plans: (1) activation criteria for alerts; (2) requesting alerts; (3) writing effective alerts; (4) geographic scope of alerts; (5) interstate and intrastate coordination of alerts; (6) duration of alerts; (7) officer privacy protection; and (8) suspect apprehension efforts.

The COPS Office has worked closely with partners at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to establish the most effective way to deliver targeted alerts within the existing alerting infrastructure. We will also continue to work with law enforcement stakeholders and Advisory Group members to increase the effectiveness of our guidance.

D. Information Repositories and Delivery of Technical Assistance. Since October 2016, the COPS Office has maintained a dedicated webpage on our website at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert> to promote Blue Alerts and provide educational materials. This National Blue Alert Network webpage serves as a centralized resource center to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015
- Blue Alert map indicating those states and territories with Blue Alert plans
- Alert Guidelines
- National Blue Alert Network factsheet
- Blue Alert Legislation Compendium
- State Blue Alert Officials Directory (public contact information)
- Information on who is eligible and how to access our secure controlled access information sharing platform

- Annual Reports to Congress

Since January 2017, the COPS Office has provided a secure web-based data repository maintained on the FBI Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP) that provides controlled access to states, local governments, law enforcement agencies, and other qualified stakeholders as determined by the Coordinator. Individuals with existing LEEP or LEO.gov accounts can access the National Blue Alert Network Special Interest Group (SIG) directly at https://leo.cjis.gov/leoContent/sigs/blue_alert/. The National Blue Alert SIG provides curated information that may not be appropriate for public dissemination to include, but not limited to, the following:

- State Blue Alert Officials Directory (24-Hour emergency contact information)
- National Blue Alert Network PowerPoint Presentation
- Effective Blue Alert Plans: Guidance and Recommendations
- Sample Blue Alert Policies

The COPS Office will continue to enhance the National Blue Alert Network webpage and SIG with updated and new information on a regular basis.

Notably, the Blue Alert Act prohibits the Coordinator from lobbying any state officer regarding the funding or implementation of a Blue Alert plan. The COPS Office does offer free informational resources and technical assistance to any state or local agency wishing to establish or modify its Blue Alert plans. Upon request by the state or local agency, trained COPS Office Blue Alert Team members will review Blue Alert plans and provide feedback to ensure compliance with the voluntary guidelines and protocols.

E. Engagement with Stakeholders. The COPS Office maintains active partnerships with varied stakeholders representing law enforcement and emergency communications in order to administer and expand the National Blue Alert Network. Stakeholder organizations play a key role in ensuring that the COPS Office is aware of relevant issues affecting officer safety and alerting technologies.

The COPS Office continues to work with FirstNet, an independent authority within the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration. FirstNet's mission is to build, operate, and maintain the first high-speed nationwide wireless broadband network for interoperable public safety communications.

The Attorney General is statutorily designated as a member of the FirstNet Board. The Executive Assistant Director of the FBI's Science and Technology Branch serves as the Attorney General's designee on the Board. In light of the similar equities between FirstNet and the Blue Alert Act, the COPS Office consulted with the now former President of FirstNet, whose expertise has been valuable in the development of the COPS Office's national Blue Alert Act

strategy. FirstNet helps to streamline communications interoperability for states and tribes, thus further facilitating nationwide Blue Alert coordination.

The COPS Office will continue to work with stakeholders individually and collectively to develop and enhance our national strategy for the Blue Alert Act. We will also identify additional stakeholders as needed.

F. Cooperation with Other Federal Agencies. The Act requires the Coordinator to cooperate with the FCC, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and other DOJ offices as appropriate (34 U.S.C. § 50503(d)). As previously reported, the COPS Office established a point of contact with each of the identified federal agencies and the FBI. We have since forged strong working relationships with several key federal partners, most notably, the FCC and FEMA.

The FCC oversees the national Emergency Alert System (EAS) used to deliver important emergency information, such as AMBER alerts and weather information targeted to specific areas. The FCC plays a key role in alerting as it establishes the technical standards, activation procedures, and testing protocols. The FCC has sole authority to create fixed three-letter EAS event codes used to define alerts and the corresponding actions by broadcasters, cable system operators, wireless carriers, and other parties responsible for alerting the public.

On December 14, 2017, the FCC voted unanimously to approve the creation of a special three-letter EAS event code to be used by alerting authorities when issuing Blue Alerts – BLU. The new FCC rule constitutes a major advancement in alerting capabilities and will benefit all 50 states and US territories, to include Tribal lands. The rule takes effect in two phases. The use of the BLU event code for alerts issued via television and radio went into effect on January 18, 2019. The use of BLU for Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) becomes effective on July 18, 2019.

In tandem with the FCC's role in alerting, the DHS's FEMA is responsible for maintaining and operating the national Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). In order to ensure that alerting capabilities keep up with current and emerging technologies, FEMA partners with various stakeholders from the public and private sectors representing broadcasting, mobile device manufacturers, and other interested industries.

States and many jurisdictions rely on IPAWS to utilize EAS and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) to alert the public. IPAWS allows alerting authorities to write their own emergency alerts using commercially available software applications approved by FEMA and compliant with common alerting protocols. Alerts are authenticated and delivered simultaneously through multiple communication pathways to quickly reach the public.

The COPS Office will continue its ongoing coordination efforts with FEMA to advance the integration of Blue Alert Plans into IPAWS. The COPS Office will also continue to seek

consultation with, and ongoing advice from, our federal partners. We will also identify new federal partners as needed.

G. Promotion of the Blue Alert Act. Notably, the Blue Alert statute prohibits the Coordinator from conducting any official travel or hosting a conference for the sole purpose of implementing the Blue Alert Act (34 U.S.C. § 50503(e)(3)). These restrictions have not prevented the COPS Office from promoting the Blue Alert Act, and we have undertaken a number of measures to raise awareness of the Blue Alert Act.

During this reporting period, the National Blue Alert Coordinator set forth a ‘battleplan’ targeted at the 19 states that have not yet adopted Blue Alert plans or systems. COPS Office staff partnered with U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in the affected states to identify select groups of law enforcement stakeholders who could assist with information sharing regarding the benefits of Blue Alerts and the resources of the National Blue Alert Network. The results led to the creation of ‘working coalitions’ of concerned stakeholders in the targeted states.

Many of these coalitions have gone on to promote Blue Alert legislation and other actions that could lead to the adoption of Blue Alert plans or systems. As of May 2019, Blue Alert legislation has been introduced in seven states while an eighth state is planning to take executive action to implement a Blue Alert plan.³ In every case, the COPS Office has provided guidance and resources.

The Department promoted awareness of the Blue Alert Act at various national law enforcement conferences, including the IACP, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, and the NSA. These conferences provide the potential outreach to promote the Blue Alert Act to tens of thousands of law enforcement officers and agencies. The Department also responded to multiple requests from various state law enforcement agencies for additional information about the Blue Alert Network. For instance, the Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator traveled to Des Moines, Iowa at the request of the Iowa Peace Officers Association to provide information and answer questions from state officials who were considering the adoption of a statewide Blue Alert plan.

H. Coordination with United States Attorneys’ Offices. In addition to the ‘battleplan’ coordination described above, the COPS Office continues to expanded its partnerships with US Attorneys’ Offices throughout the nation to promote the National Blue Alert Network. In addition to direct coordination with US Attorneys, COPS Office staff share information with Law Enforcement Coordinators (LECs) about issues affecting officer safety and Blue Alert related news. The Executive Office for United States Attorneys has been instrumental in facilitating coordination between The COPS Office and LECs.

³ The following seven states have introduced Blue Alert legislation: Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Vermont is planning to adopt Blue Alert via executive action.

IV. Blue Alerts Issued

There are two known instances where Blue Alerts were issued during this reporting period.

- May 30, 2018 – Dickson County, TN Sergeant Daniel Baker was shot and killed while responding to a call about a suspicious vehicle. Dispatchers lost contact with Sergeant Baker after he arrived at the scene and other officers were sent to make contact with him. His vehicle was tracked by GPS and located several miles away by an officer from another agency. His body was located inside of the vehicle.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation issued a Blue Alert for the suspect. The suspect was located and taken into custody two days later. It is unclear how the Blue Alert may have impacted locating and apprehending the suspect.

- December 26, 2018 – Newman, CA Police Corporal Ronil Singh was shot and killed while conducting a vehicle stop before 1:00 am. Approximately three minutes after initiating the stop he radioed dispatch that shots had been fired. Responding officers found Corporal Singh at the scene suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. He was transported to a local hospital where he died.

The California Highway Patrol issued a Blue Alert for the suspect, who was finally located two days later in Bakersfield, California. The California Highway Patrol reported that the Blue Alert was instrumental in identifying the suspect's whereabouts and subsequent capture.

V. Effectiveness and Status of Blue Alert Plans

In addition to reporting on the activities of the Coordinator, the Blue Alert Act also requires the annual report to Congress to include the effectiveness and status of Blue Alert plans (34 U.S.C. § 50503(f)). The effectiveness of existing Blue Alert plans is difficult to gauge at this time due in part to the disconnected nature of plans from state to state. There is no evidence, as of yet, that any of the states with Blue Alert plans have conducted research around this question. The COPS Office has begun collecting data as it becomes available in order to evaluate the effectiveness of Blue Alert plans.

As previously reported, the COPS Office made direct outreach calls to each of the 56 states and territories. This includes 31 states that operate Blue Alert systems as well as those 25 states and territories that currently do not have Blue Alert systems. This outreach enabled us to identify and establish Blue Alert points of contact across the country; this is a critical resource for law enforcement and the public, as no such resource had been in existence. The lack of such

a resource affected jurisdictions' ability to communicate within states and across the country. Even in states with established Blue Alert plans, it was often difficult to identify important points of contact necessary for alert activation or interstate coordination.

Since implementation of the National Blue Alert Network, there have been numerous incidents where law enforcement officers were shot and killed, sparking a search for suspects. In response, the Deputy Coordinator contacted the affected state authorities to offer assistance and to ensure that neighboring states or jurisdictions were promptly notified and to facilitate interstate coordination.

As previously reported, the COPS Office also verified which states have Blue Alert plans and the extent to which the plans comport with the voluntary guidelines. We secured copies of Blue Alert plans and related materials such as program overviews, activation plans, legislation, and brochures from states that currently have Blue Alert plans.

To further our analysis of existing Blue Alert plans, the COPS Office publishes a legislation compendium containing the specific public laws, statutes, or executive orders that authorized and created Blue Alert systems. The following are highlights of the threshold activation criteria from those states. These highlights illustrate clear and significant differences between states that could limit or complicate coordination efforts when a suspect flees, or is thought to have fled, to another jurisdiction.

- 55% (17 states) of plans contain provisions for officers missing in the line of duty
- 19% (6 states) of states allow for activation in cases where an officer is threatened with a deadly weapon but not actually injured
- 65% (20 states) require sufficient descriptive information about a suspect to enlist the public's assistance
- 52% (16 states) require a suspect vehicle description or license tag for activation

The following table is a quick reference of threshold activation criteria for the featured states as of April 2019. The wide range of Blue Alert activation criteria among states highlights the need for uniform guidance and consistent protocols to enhance coordination and maximize interoperability from one state to another.

	AL	AZ	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	IL	IN	KS	KY	MD	ME	MI	MIN	MS	MO	MT	NC	ND	OH	OK	RI	SC	SD*	TN	TX	UT*	VA	WA		
OFFICER STATUS																																	
Killed	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Attempted killing									•																								
Serious bodily Injury	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Life threatening injury				•																													
Assaulted with deadly weapon		•	•		•		•														•					•							
Injured														•																			
Missing	•				•		•	•		•		•	•					•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Concerning circumstances	•				•		•			•										•		•										•	
Last location known							•			•		•	•								•	•		•									
SUSPECT																																	
Poses serious threat to public	•					•		•	•								•															•	•
Imminent threat to public or LE		•	•		•		•				•	•	•	•	•				•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Sufficient desc. to enlist public	•				•	•		•	•			•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Vehicle description or tag		•	•		•		•			•	•	•	•	•	•					•	•		•			•				•	•		
OTHER																																	
Alert may help avert further harm		•	•		•		•														•						•				•		
Alert may hasten apprehension		•	•		•		•			•											•					•				•		•	

*Blue Alert adopted through executive action – no legislation available to include in compendium

The COPS Office continues to examine and document the differences and commonalities between existing Blue Alert processes. The policies compendium will include state Blue Alert policies, forms, brochures, and promotional material from Blue Alert states that will be useful to states and law enforcement agencies in developing or improving their own Blue Alert systems.

VI. Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

After working closely with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), and its continued commitment to officer safety, the COPS Office formalized a practice of monitoring and tracking incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. The COPS Office uses DOJ Libraries—verified news reporting services to monitor and track shootings of law enforcement officers in the United States and its territories—specifically, shootings in which on-duty officers are wounded or killed.

The purpose of this practice is to better understand the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert; these types of felonious attacks account for nearly all situations where a Blue Alert would be issued. Tracking data does not include assaults by means other than firearms, due to inconsistent availability of data. The COPS Office

published a report which documented all known shooting incidents for calendar year 2018. The following are notable statistics from the report:

- There were **204** incidents during calendar year 2018 resulting in **251** on-duty law enforcement officers being shot – including **32** incidents where multiple officers were shot
- **51** law enforcement officers died from their injuries and **200** survived
- There was a **24%** increase in the number of law enforcement officers shot and killed during 2018 compared to 2017
- Sheriffs and county law enforcement officers died at a higher rate (**28%**) as a result of being shot than their city/municipal counterparts (**17%**)
- Disturbance calls (**72**) and traffic stops (**39**) accounted for more than half of all shooting incidents and resulted in **22** officer deaths
- **22** law enforcement officers were shot and **5** died as a result of being ambushed
- Another **11** officers were shot and **3** died in situations that were not ambushes per se, but where the offender acted without warning in a premeditated/calculated manner taking an officer by surprise
- Shootings occurred in **39** states and Puerto Rico
- California had the highest number of shooting incidents with **20**, followed by Texas at **19**
- The highest number (**27**) of shooting incidents occurred during the month of July

The COPS Office recently announced a competitive solicitation under the Community Policing Development program that will lead to an award of up to \$100,000 for data collection activities to help identify and document incidents where on-duty law enforcement officers are shot in the line of duty.

VII. Summary of Activities and Projected Next Steps

A. Notable Past Developments/Activities. The Department reported the following developments and activities in its previous reports to Congress:

- Developed a wide variety of Blue Alert informational resources, including:
 - National Blue Alert Network factsheet and PowerPoint presentation
 - Compendium of state Blue Alert legislation and policies
 - Directory of state Blue Alert officials
 - Guidance and recommendations on developing or enhancing Blue Alert plans
- Launched the National Blue Alert Network SIG on the FBI LEEP platform at https://leo.cjis.gov/leoContent/sigs/blue_alert/
- Conducted quarterly Advisory Group meetings
- Coordinated with FCC to create a dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code
- Identified all 56 state and territorial IPAWS authorizing officials
- Coordinated with FEMA to integrate Blue Alert plans into IPAWS

- Visited the FEMA IPAWS lab and trained on alerting equipment and software, including conducting test Blue Alerts
- Trained selected COPS Office Blue Alert Team members to provide technical assistance to states and local agencies
- Performed immediate outreach to states after officers were killed to offer assistance and facilitate interstate coordination.
- Promoted awareness of the Blue Alert Act at various national law enforcement events, including the annual IACP conference and the National Officer Safety and Wellness Group forum

B. Notable New Developments/Activities. The Department reports the following new developments and activities in this current report to Congress:

- New FCC rules authorizing the use of “BLU,” the Blue Alert EAS event code went into effect on January 18, 2019. The same FCC rule authorizes the issuance of Blue Alerts via Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) beginning on July 18, 2019. The combination of these rules taking effect will make it possible for alerting authorities throughout the nation to quickly issue Blue Alerts using existing alerting software and systems.
- Members of the COPS Office Blue Alert team and colleagues from the FCC were awarded the Attorney General’s Award for Outstanding Contributions to Community Partnerships for Public Safety for their outstanding leadership in implementing Blue Alert plans throughout the U.S. in support of the Blue Alert Act.
- Members of the COPS Office Blue Alert team monitored media reports and other sources to identify possible Blue Alert situations. When practical, team members contacted the affected law enforcement agency to verify facts and offer assistance if needed.
- The COPS Office launched a targeted outreach plan to establish working coalitions within each of the 19 states without Blue Alert laws/policies. The purpose of the outreach was to inform key stakeholders about the benefits of Blue Alerts and about the resources of the National Blue Network. All efforts were coordinated with US Attorneys’ Offices in the affected states/districts. As a result, eight states have since taken action to commence the adoption of statewide Blue Alert plans.
- The National Blue Alert Coordinator attended dozens of conferences and meetings around the country where he promoted the use of Blue Alerts and resources offered by the COPS Office.

- The Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator traveled to Des Moines, Iowa at the request of the Iowa Peace Officers Association to provide information and answer questions from state officials who were considering the adoption of a statewide Blue Alert plan.
- The Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator presented information about Blue Alerts at the annual training conference for DOJ Law Enforcement Coordinators (LEC) in Columbia, South Carolina. LECs play a key role in US Attorneys' Offices through their support of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in their districts.
- The COPS Office published a report describing incidents where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2018. The report was the first of its kind and provided meaningful insights into incidents that could give rise to the issuance of Blue Alerts.

C. Upcoming Activities. The Department plans to undertake the following activities in the coming year in furtherance of its Blue Alert Mission:

- Identify a contractor to assist with data collection of incidents where law enforcement officers are shot in the line of duty
- Conduct additional outreach to states and territories to raise awareness about the availability of free educational resources and technical assistance
- Continue to work with the FCC, FEMA, and other federal partners to ensure effective coordination of Blue Alert rules and infrastructure
- Coordinate with FEMA to conduct national call with state alerting officials to discuss how each is responding to the new BLU EAS event code
- Continue to work with law enforcement stakeholders and Advisory Group members to increase the effectiveness of our guidance and recommendations
- Continue to promote the Blue Alert Act to thousands of officers and agencies at upcoming law enforcement events
- Identify fiscal needs for further implementation of the Blue Alert Act and make appropriate funding requests
- Promote the Blue Alert Act with all active COPS Office award recipients
- Continue with COPS Office Blue Alert Team meetings
- Continue with quarterly Blue Alert Act Advisory Group meetings

Attachments:

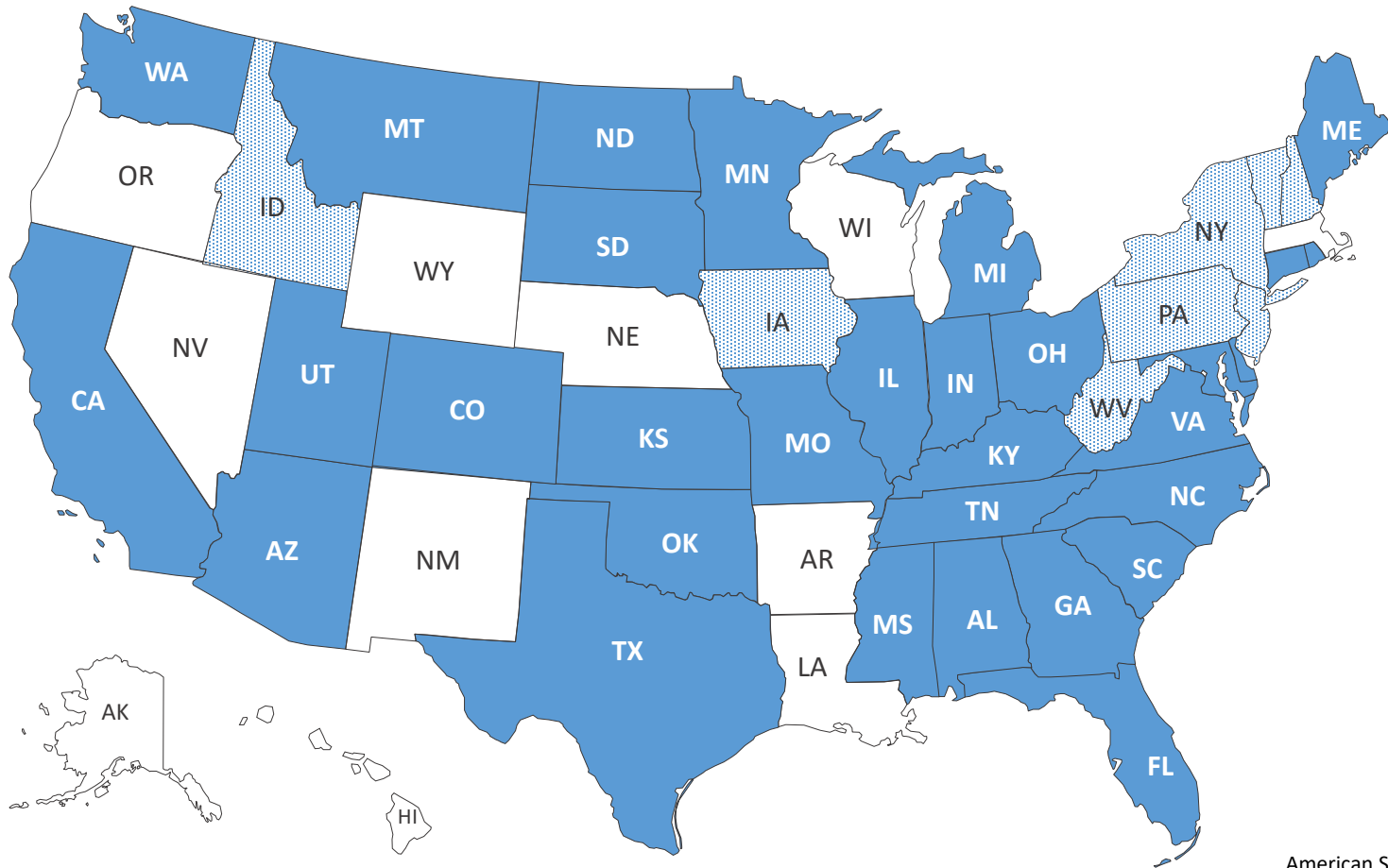
- State Map of Blue Alert plans (March 2019)
- Blue Alert Factsheet (May 2017)
- 2018 Report of Officers Shot in the Line of Duty
- Blue Alert web page screen image



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U.S. Department of Justice

NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

- 31 Formal Statewide Blue Alert Plan
- 8 Pending Blue Alert Legislation/Action
- 11 No Blue Alert Action



- VT
- NH
- MA
- RI
- CT
- NJ
- DE
- DC
- MD

- American Samoa..... AS
- A-Virgin Islands..... VI
- Guam..... GU
- Mariana Islands..... MI
- Puerto Rico..... PR



Fact Sheet

www.cops.usdoj.gov



National Blue Alert Network

History

In 2015, Congress passed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, named in honor of two New York City police officers killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014. The Act establishes a voluntary nationwide system to give police an early warning of threats against police officers and to aid in the apprehension of suspects who have killed or seriously injured an officer. In 2016, the COPS Office was asked to implement the Blue Alert Act and establish a National Blue Alert Network.

Blue Alerts

Blue Alerts provide for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public about violent offenders who have killed, seriously injured, or pose an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement. Blue Alerts can be transmitted via wireless devices and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The National Blue Alert Network works to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States.

Blue Alert Activation Criteria

Blue Alerts may be issued in any of the following circumstances, provided there is actionable information known about a suspect (e.g., name, physical description, or vehicle description):

- When a law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured in the line of duty
- When an officer is missing in connection with official duties
- When there is an imminent and credible threat to kill or seriously injure a law enforcement officer



Blue Alert Resources

The COPS Office provides resources and technical assistance to states, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders seeking to establish or enhance an existing Blue Alert plan. The National Blue Alert Network also maintains a secure data repository, for law enforcement only, containing many Blue Alert resources collected from around the nation, including examples of legislation, policies, forms, and a directory of state Blue Alert officials.

For more information, visit the COPS Office website at www.cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert, email the COPS Office at BlueAlert@usdoj.gov, or call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Other Resources

Federal Emergency Management Agency Integrated Public Alerting and Warning System (IPAWS)

<https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system>

Federal Communications Commission Emergency Alert System (EAS)

<https://www.fcc.gov/general/emergency-alert-system-eas>



Law Enforcement Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

2018 Year-End Summary



COPS
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U.S. Department of Justice

JANUARY 2019

This report is compiled from publicly available information. It contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally, for the express purpose of better understanding the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. Care should be taken to account for differing methodology when comparing these results with those of other entities that collect similar data. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK 2018 - SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

In 2015, Congress passed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, named in honor of two New York City police officers killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014. The Act directs the Department of Justice to establish a voluntary nationwide system to give authorities an early warning of threats against law enforcement officers and to aid in the apprehension of suspects who have killed or seriously injured an officer. In 2016, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) was given the honor of implementing the Act and established the National Blue Alert Network.

The National Blue Alert Network, administered by the COPS Office, seeks to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States. Blue Alerts provide for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public to aid in the apprehension of offenders who have killed, seriously injured, or pose an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement. Blue Alerts can be transmitted via wireless devices and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) in the same manner as AMBER Alerts.

TRACKING OFFICER SHOOTINGS

The COPS Office uses DOJ Libraries—verified news reporting services to monitor and track shootings of law enforcement officers in the United States and its territories—specifically, shootings in which on-duty officers are wounded or killed. In this way, it hopes to better understand the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert; these types of felonious attacks account for nearly all situations where a Blue Alert would be issued. Tracking data does not include assaults by means other than firearms, due to inconsistent availability of data.

2018 NOTABLE STATISTICS

- In calendar year 2018, **251** on-duty law enforcement officers were shot in **204 incidents**, including **32** incidents where multiple officers were shot.
- Of those shot, **51** law enforcement officers died from their injuries and **200** survived.
- There was a **24 percent** increase in the number of law enforcement officers shot and killed during 2018 compared to 2017.
- Sheriffs and county law enforcement officers who were shot died at a higher rate (**28 percent**) than their city/municipal counterparts (**17 percent**).
- Disturbance calls (**72**) and traffic stops (**39**) accounted for more than half of all shooting incidents and resulted in **22** officer deaths.
- **22** law enforcement officers were shot and **5** died as a result of being ambushed.
- Another **11** officers were shot and **3** died in situations where the offender acted without warning in a premeditated/calculated manner taking an officer by surprise.
- Shootings occurred in **39** states and Puerto Rico.
- California had the highest number of shooting incidents at **20**, followed by Texas at **19**.
- The highest number (**27**) of shooting incidents occurred during the month of July.

NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

2018 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

2018 INCIDENT DATA

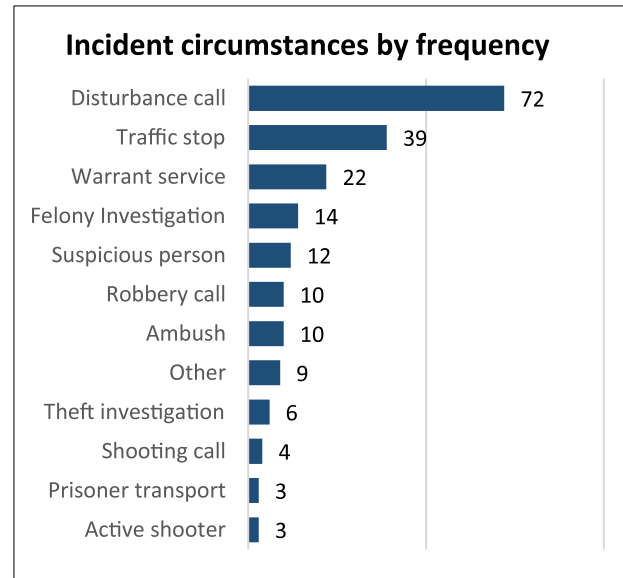
There were **204** incidents in 2018 where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty, a **2 percent** increase over the number of incidents in 2017. However, the number of officers shot and killed increased by **24 percent** from 2017.

	2018 Totals	2017 Totals	% Change
Total number of shooting incidents	204	200	+ 2%
Total number of officers shot	251	252	0%
Number of officers shot and survived	200	211	- 5%
Number of officers shot and killed	51	41	+ 24%

INCIDENT DATA BY CIRCUMSTANCE

Disturbance calls and traffic stops accounted for more than half of all shooting incidents. **17** law enforcement officers were shot and **5** died as a result of being ambushed. Another **11** officers were shot and **3** died in situations where the offender acted without warning in a premeditated/calculated manner, taking the officer by surprise—for example, an officer shot in the back while walking back to his patrol car to run the license of a driver he just stopped.

Circumstance at time of incident				
Circumstance	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
Active shooter	3	6	5	1
Ambush	10	22	17	5
Disturbance call	72	85	68	17
Felony investigation	14	17	11	6
Prisoner transport	3	4	2	2
Robbery call	10	10	9	1
Shooting call	4	4	4	0
Suspicious person	12	12	7	5
Theft investigation	6	10	8	2
Traffic stop	39	41	36	5
Warrant service	22	31	26	5
Other	9	9	7	2
	204	251	200	51



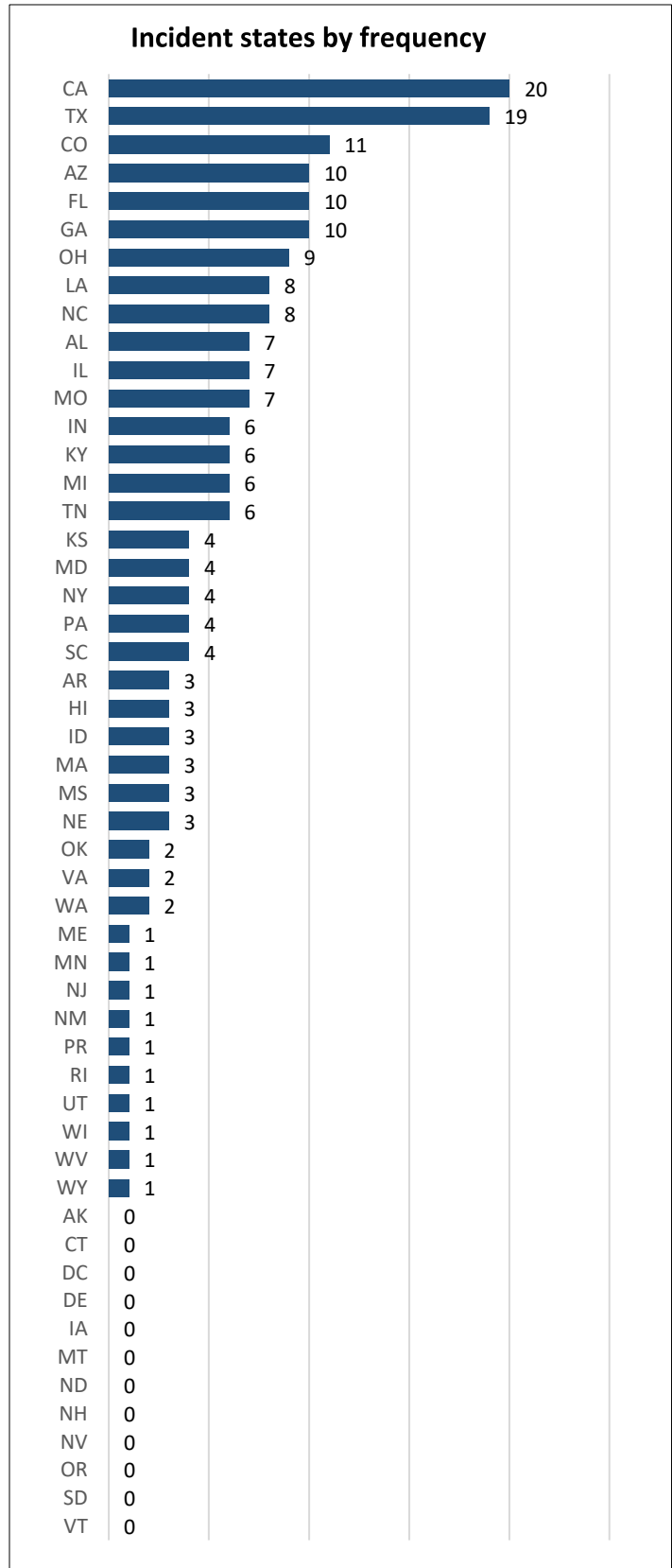
BULLET RESISTANT VESTS

At least **14** officers were protected from gunshots by a protective ballistic vest. The actual number may be higher, but this element is not always apparent from news reporting.

NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

2018 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

State	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
AK	0	0	0	0
AL	7	7	6	1
AR	3	3	3	0
AZ	10	12	9	3
CA	20	24	20	4
CO	11	14	12	2
CT	0	0	0	0
DC	0	0	0	0
DE	0	0	0	0
FL	10	11	7	4
GA	10	12	8	4
HI	3	3	2	1
IA	0	0	0	0
ID	3	4	4	0
IL	7	8	6	2
IN	6	6	4	2
KS	4	6	3	3
KY	6	6	4	2
LA	8	8	8	0
MA	3	4	2	2
MD	4	6	5	1
ME	1	1	0	1
MI	6	8	7	1
MN	1	2	2	0
MO	7	12	11	1
MS	3	4	2	2
MT	0	0	0	0
NC	8	8	7	1
ND	0	0	0	0
NE	3	3	3	0
NH	0	0	0	0
NJ	1	2	2	0
NM	1	1	1	0
NV	0	0	0	0
NY	4	4	3	1
OH	9	10	8	2
OK	2	2	2	0
OR	0	0	0	0
PA	4	8	7	1
PR	1	1	0	1
RI	1	1	1	0
SC	4	13	10	3
SD	0	0	0	0
TN	6	7	6	1
TX	19	22	19	3
UT	1	1	1	0
VA	2	2	2	0
VT	0	0	0	0
WA	2	2	1	1
WI	1	1	0	1
WV	1	1	1	0
WY	1	1	1	0
	204	251	200	51

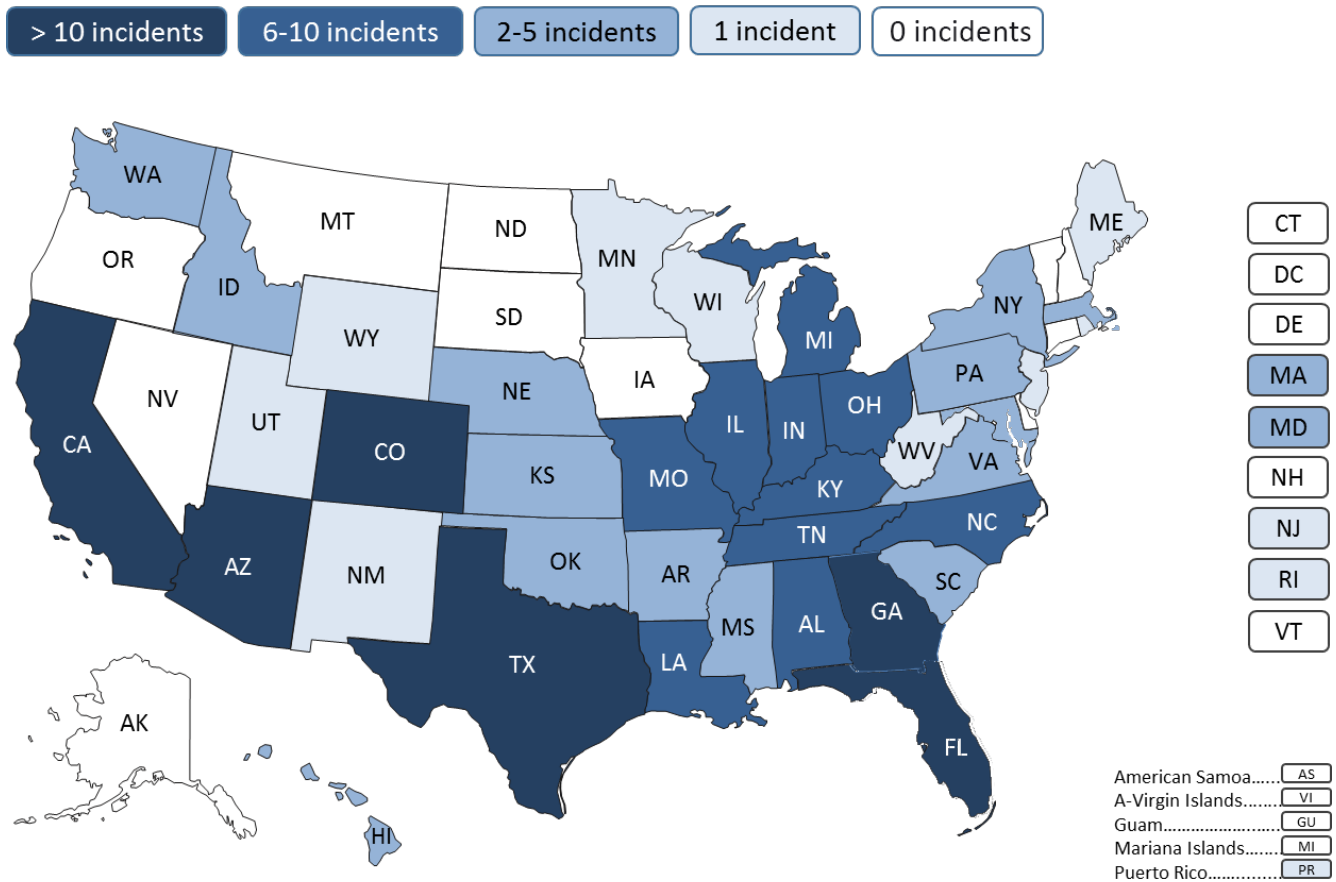


NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

2018 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

INCIDENT LOCATION DENSITY MAP

Officer shootings were reported in **39** states and Puerto Rico. California had the highest number of shooting incidents at **20**, followed by Texas at **19** and Colorado at **11**. No officer shootings were reported in **11** states. The map below depicts shooting incident density across the nation.

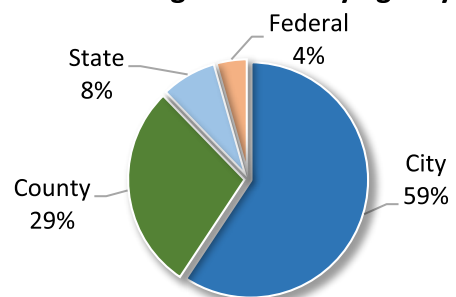


INCIDENT DATA BY AGENCY TYPE

59 percent of all shooting incidents involved city/municipal law enforcement agencies. The following data and chart depict incidents based on agency type. Sheriffs and county law enforcement officers who were shot died at a higher rate (**28 percent**) than their city/municipal counterparts (**17 percent**).

Incidents by agency type				
Agency type	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
City	121	146	121	25
County	58	76	55	21
State	16	19	16	3
Federal	9	10	8	2
	204	251	200	51

Total shooting incidents by agency type



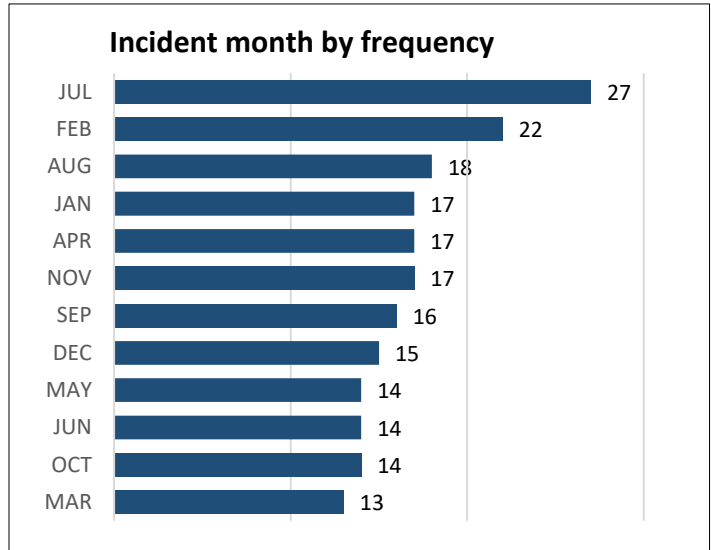
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2018 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

INCIDENT DATA BY MONTH

The highest number (**27**) of shooting incidents occurred during the month of July. The deadliest month was February, when **8** law enforcement officers died from shooting injuries. There were no shooting fatalities reported during the month of August.

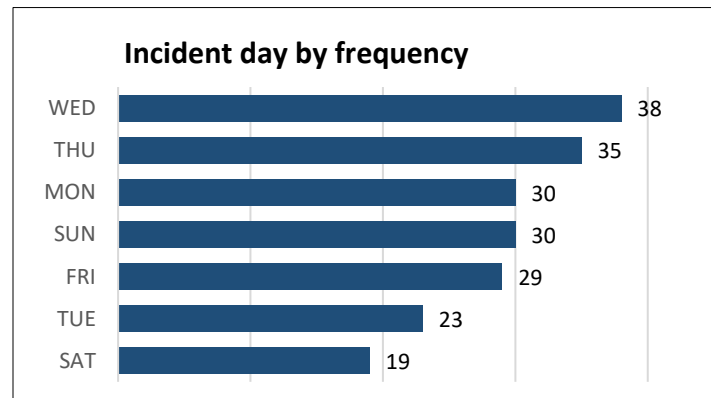
Incident data by month				
Month	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
JAN	17	24	19	5
FEB	22	29	21	8
MAR	13	17	11	6
APR	17	19	13	6
MAY	14	14	11	3
JUN	14	16	14	2
JUL	27	33	27	6
AUG	18	20	20	0
SEP	16	20	15	5
OCT	14	25	21	4
NOV	17	17	14	3
DEC	15	17	14	3
	204	251	200	51



INCIDENT DATA BY DAY OF WEEK

More shooting incidents occurred on Wednesdays and Thursdays than other days of the week.

Incident data by day of week				
Day	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
SUN	30	35	30	5
MON	30	40	36	4
TUE	23	30	24	6
WED	38	48	36	12
THU	35	42	31	11
FRI	29	35	28	7
SAT	19	21	15	6
	204	251	200	51





NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

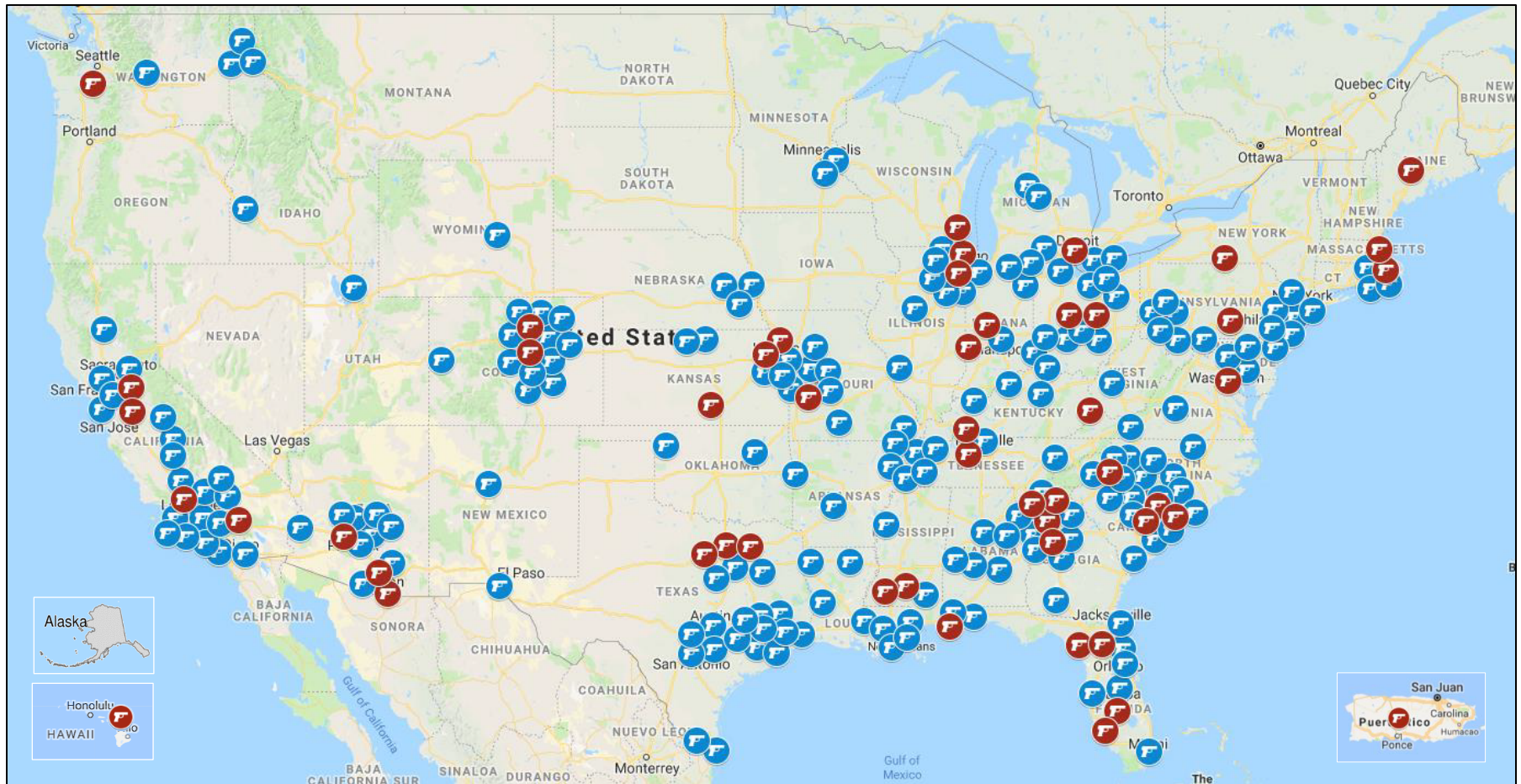
2018 – LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY*

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	2018 Totals	2017 Totals	% Change
Total number of shooting incidents	17	22	13	17	14	14	27	18	16	14	17	15	204	200	+ 2%
Total number of officers shot	24	29	17	19	14	16	33	20	20	25	17	17	251	252	0%
Number of officers shot and survived	19	21	11	13	11	14	27	20	15	21	14	14	200	211	- 5%
Number of officers shot and killed	5	8	6	6	3	2	6	0	5	4	3	3	51	41	+ 24%

204 Shooting Incidents / 251 Officers Shot

 Officer Shot and Wounded (200)

 Officer Shot and Killed (51)



* Assaults with firearms on on-duty law enforcement officers resulting in an officer being wounded or killed in calendar year 2018. Does not include assaults by means other than firearms due to inconsistent availability of data. Markers represent approximate geographic location.

This report contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally, for the purpose of better understanding the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. Blue Alerts provide for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public to aid in the apprehension of offenders who have killed, seriously injured, or pose an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
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Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details on COPS Office programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

The National Blue Alert Network supports the use and integration of Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to rapidly disseminate information to law enforcement agencies, the media and the public to aid in the apprehension of violent criminals who have killed, or seriously injured an officer in the line of duty. Blue Alerts can also be issued when a suspect poses an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement, or when an officer is missing in the line of duty.



NATIONAL Blue Alert NETWORK

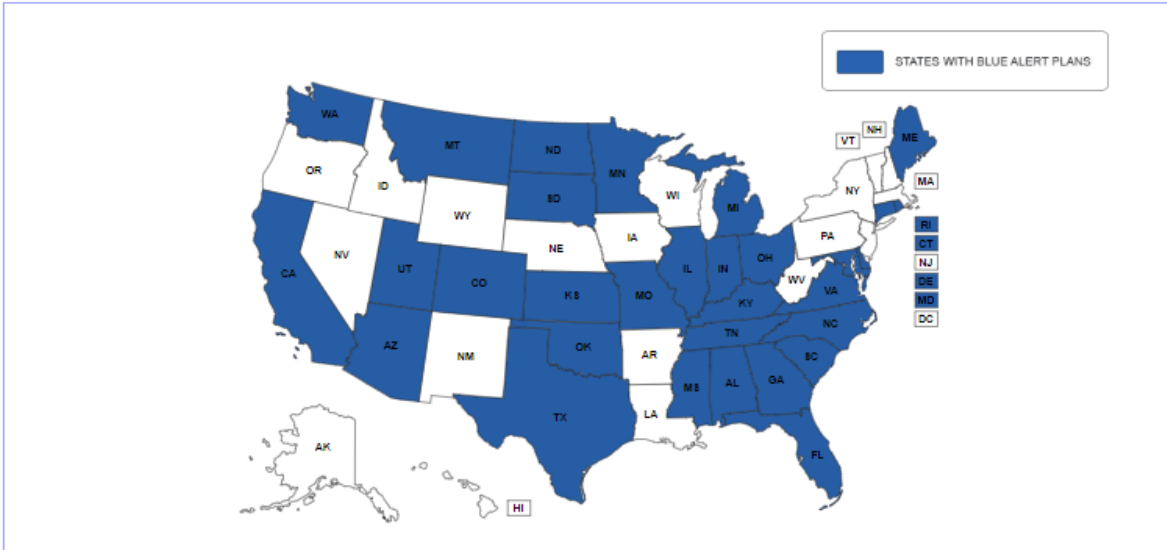
Blue Alerts can be transmitted to television and radio stations; to cellphones and wireless devices, to overhead highway message signs, and other secondary alerting mechanisms – in the same way that AMBER Alerts are commonly issued.

There are currently 31 states with Blue Alert plans. The COPS Office provides resources and technical assistance to states, territories, law enforcement agencies, and tribes seeking to establish or enhance Blue Alert plans; including, voluntary activation guidelines, examples of legislation, policies, and forms gathered from around the nation in a central Blue Alert data repository.

Congress passed the [Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015](#) in order to *encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans.*

The law is named in honor of New York City Police Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu who were killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014.

[Fact Sheet](#)[Guidance](#)[Legislation](#)[Alert Guidelines](#)



SECURE BLUE ALERT INFORMATION REPOSITORY - LAW ENFORCEMENT ONLY



Blue Alert Information Repository (Law Enforcement Only)

Secure data repository, for law enforcement only, containing many Blue Alert resources collected from around the nation, including examples of legislation, policies, forms, and a directory of state Blue Alert officials.

OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY



Law Enforcement Officers Shot in the Line of Duty - 2018 Year-End Summary Report

This report contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally, for the purpose of better understanding the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. The COPS Office uses DOJ Libraries-verified news reporting services to monitor and track shootings of law enforcement officers in the United States and its territories.

OTHER GOVERNMENT RESOURCES



White House

White House statement of support for policing – “Standing up for our Law Enforcement Community”.



Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

IPAWS is a conduit to the national emergency alerting infrastructure including the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA).



Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

The FCC establishes technical requirements and rules for broadcasters, cable system operators, mobile commercial service providers, and other participants in voluntary mobile alerting programs.



FirstNet – First Responder Network Authority

The FirstNet mission is to deploy, operate, maintain, and improve the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety.

NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES



National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund

The mission of the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund is to tell the story of American law enforcement and make it safer for those that serve.

[2016 Report](#)

[2017 Report](#)

[2018 Report](#)

[Blue Alert Act](#)

For more information, contact us at BlueAlert@usdoj.gov or call the Response Center at 800-421-6770.