



NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK ROLLOUT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Blue Alert?

Blue Alerts are warnings, issued primarily by states, for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public to aid in the apprehension of violent offenders who have killed, or seriously injured an officer in the 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.

28 States already have Blue Alert plans, what does this add?

There are 28 states that have some form of a Blue Alert emergency system. The National Blue Alert Network will help those 28 states to ensure consistency and will support those other states who elect to create and implement Blue Alert plans.

Will the Federal Government now issue Blue Alerts?

No. Local law enforcement continues to be the best equipped to determine an imminent and credible threat in their communities. The National Blue Alert Network allows the federal government to support local law enforcement across the country as they develop and implement their state emergency plans. We will provide training, technical assistance, and guidelines to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States.

Why should violent attacks on law enforcement officers be treated differently than similar crimes committed against non-officers?

Anyone who would kill or seriously harm law enforcement officers in the line of duty poses an inherently elevated and unique danger to all. Any delay in capture, could result in the death of other law enforcement officers and nearby innocent civilians. Violent attacks on law enforcement officers constitute an assault on the American way of life and erode the actual and perceived safety of affected communities and beyond.

Recent ambush-style attacks on law enforcement have shocked the conscience of our nation and highlighted the inherently disturbing nature of violent attacks on law enforcement officers. Our nation's law enforcement officers take great risks to maintain our safety, we as a nation must do all we can to increase theirs.



Why are Blue Alert plans and alerts necessary in order to apprehend those who kill or seriously injure an on-duty law enforcement officer?

Blue Alert plans provide an important framework for quick response. Our nation's emergency alerting infrastructure is a valuable resource that can expedite information sharing and facilitate the quick apprehension of dangerous criminals who pose an immediate threat to law enforcement and communities they serve.

We need to move quickly to apprehend dangerous criminals. Time and again the public has played a critical role in assisting law enforcement maintain safety. But, in order to assist, the public must be informed. Blue Alerts, using our nation's emergency alerting infrastructure, can get critical information out to the public and law enforcement alike.

Blue Alerts can provide an immediate warning to thousands or even millions of innocent persons in an area where an extremely violent offender is thought to be. Warnings provide instructions to keep innocent persons safe and information on what to do if a suspect is spotted.

Why is the Department of Justice asking the FCC to approve a new Emergency Alert System (EAS) event code for Blue Alerts?

A dedicated EAS event code for Blue Alerts would streamline Blue Alert plans across the nation and will help to integrate existing plans into a coordinated national framework.

A dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code would also serve as the central and organizing element for Blue Alert plans coast-to-coast and greatly facilitate the work of the National Blue Alert Network.

The absence of a dedicated event code for Blue Alerts requires states and local law enforcement agencies to utilize an existing generic Law Enforcement Warning (LEW) event code in an ad hoc manner. Despite its serious sounding name, the LEW event code is most often used for routine informational purposes such as hazardous road conditions and road closures. Consequently, there is often a perceived lack of urgency associated with the LEW event code.

A dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code would allow for promulgation of specific rules to ensure that Blue Alerts are handled in a specific manner by participating media outlets and wireless carriers.

Law enforcement stakeholders from around the country have cited the absence of a dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code as a key limitation to broader adoption and use of Blue Alert plans. Lastly, a dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code conveys the appropriate level of urgency and galvanizes public awareness necessary to protect law enforcement officers and the public from extremely dangerous offenders.



Why was the COPS Office selected to implement the Act?

Our office of Community Oriented Policing (COPS Office) is charged with maintaining the Blue Alert Network. The COPS Office has an extensive history of working with and supporting local law enforcement, particularly furthering officer safety and wellness.