

# Kansas Silver Alert Protocol

## *The Purpose of the Kansas Silver Alert Protocol*

The Kansas Silver Alert Protocol creates a voluntary process for coordinating efforts between law enforcement agencies, media outlets and other entities when a person 65 years of age or older, or a person suffering from dementia is reported missing by family members or caregivers. The Kansas Silver Alert Protocol provides guidance for law enforcement agencies and media outlets for alerting the public when an at-risk adult is reported missing.

The Silver Alert Protocol was designed to respect the dignity and independence of Kansas seniors and their right to make choices in their everyday lives. Although there is little data to document how many seniors go missing each year, it does happen—sometimes with tragic results. It is a particular concern for seniors with cognitive impairment.

## *Criteria for Using the Kansas Silver Alert Protocol*

The Kansas Silver Alert Protocol is intended to assist law enforcement in locating certain missing persons meeting the following criteria. The Kansas Silver Alert Protocol does not limit law enforcement from the use of the same public notification resources in missing person cases not meeting these criteria. However, the term “Silver Alert” must not be used by law enforcement or the media in requesting public assistance in locating a missing adult unless the following three criteria are met.

1. Law enforcement has reason to believe the person reported missing is either
  - a. Suffering from dementia, or
  - b. Over age 65, and
    - (1) The person has a reported medical or mental condition that may threaten, or greatly reduce, their ability to make sound reasonable decisions and/or may diminish their ability to survive without assistance, or
    - (2) The person has been determined to be a risk to harm their self.
2. The person’s whereabouts are unknown and he or she is missing under circumstances not conforming to their normal routine or habits and may be in need of assistance or intervention.
  - a. Care should be taken to be reasonably certain the person reporting the missing person is not using the system to locate another for reasons other than to assure their safety. For example, some people may attempt to use the system to find an adult who has voluntarily and knowingly chosen to go elsewhere away from the complainant or a domestic abuser may use the system to attempt to find their spouse.
3. The investigating officer determines it is appropriate to request public assistance in locating the individual.

- a. Officer(s) should be aware a missing adult has the right to self determination and the missing person or their family may object to public release of medical or other personal information. The goal of law enforcement must be the safety of the missing person based on all known facts and existing circumstances and conditions.

#### *Activation and Implementation of a Kansas Silver Alert*

The activation and implementation of a Kansas Silver Alert is a local decision based on the above criteria and is implemented locally by the law enforcement agency investigating the report.

When a decision is made to issue a Silver Alert, it is the responsibility of local law enforcement to notify the media and other resources that may assist in locating the missing person. If information is known to reasonably indicate the missing person has left the local area of the report, the investigating officer(s) will need to determine what non-local resources are appropriate and make the necessary notifications. In the event that a statewide search is necessary, the officer will notify KBI Communications.

If a Silver Alert is issued, even at a local level, the incident must be reported by law enforcement immediately to the Office of the Attorney General.

#### *Deactivation of a Kansas Silver Alert*

It is the responsibility of the initiating agency to deactivate a Kansas Silver Alert as soon as possible after the missing person is located. This will include contacting media and any other public outlet requested to assist and notification to the Office of the Attorney General.

#### *Resources*

- [Kansas Silver Alert Law Enforcement Model Policy](#)
- [Media Guide](#)