

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES**



Department on Disability Services	Procedure Number: 2014-DDA-PR002
Responsible Program or Office: Developmental Disabilities Administration	Number of Pages: 4
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Supersedes Procedure Dated: N/A	
Cross References and Related Policies and Procedures: Individualized Support Plan Policy; Duty Officer Policy and Procedure; Silver Alert Information Sheet and Consent Form	
Subject: Procedures Governing DDS' Participation in the Silver Alert Program	

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the protocol by which the Department on Disability Services (“DDS”) shall participate in the Silver Alert Program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Silver Alert provides protection for people whose age or disability put them in imminent danger or at grave risk of bodily harm, if they are lost or missing, by disseminating information about the missing person through the use of road signs, reverse 911, social media, news broadcasts, and/or the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Silver Alert helps in the locating missing persons in order to safely return them home.

2. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to all DDS administrations, workgroups, offices, managers, supervisors, and employees, as well as DDS providers and their agents or designees.

3. AUTHORITY

The authority for this procedure is established in DDS as set forth in D.C. Law 16-264, the “Department on Disability Services Establishment Act of 2006,” effective March 14, 2007 (D.C. Official Code § 7-761.01 *et seq.*).

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for this procedure is vested in the Deputy Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration. Responsibility for this procedure's implementation lies with the person's service coordinator, the supervisory service coordinator, the duty officer on duty at DDA if after hours, and all providers responsible for administering the person's array of services.

5. PROCEDURES

- a. Implementation
 - i. As Individual Support Plans (ISPs) are developed or updated in accordance with a person's needs, the ISP and MCIS face sheet shall meet the requirements described below.
- b. People who are served by Developmental Disabilities Administration shall have the specifics of the Silver Alert Program ("Program") fully explained to them prior to asking them to agree to participate in the program, as part of their Individualized Service Planning ("ISP") meeting(s). This shall include but not be limited to an overview of what the Program is, as well as the nature of the Memorandum of Agreement in place between the Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD") and the Department on Disability Services ("DDS").
- c. DDS shall inform people (and where applicable, their guardians) of the purpose of DDS's involvement in the Silver Alert Program, which is to utilize all available resources including public notices in an effort to locate people who are served by DDS, regardless of age, and who are absent and unaccounted for from their homes, regularly-scheduled day activity location, or other scheduled community activity.
- d. During the initial intake process and yearly at the Individualized Service Plan ("ISP") meeting, information regarding Silver Alert shall be shared with the person receiving services and where applicable, their designated decision maker or guardian. In addition, the Service Coordinator will provide a written copy of the Silver Alert Information Sheet.
- e. During the intake process and yearly at the ISP meeting, the person receiving services or their guardian, where applicable, shall sign the Silver Alert Information Sheet and Consent Form acknowledging they have received information about Silver Alert and choose or decline participation.
- f. The fact that a Silver Alert is not issued for a person shall not prevent a standard Missing Persons Report from being filed with MPD.
- g. A person may decide at any time to participate in the Silver Alert Program. If during the course of the year, the person or the guardian, express interest in

participating in the Silver Alert Program, the Service Coordinator shall document this request in MCIS case notes and the exemption is no longer valid.

- h. The person's service provider or that person's designee and/or immediate supervisor, as well as day habilitation/employment, residential, and IID staff ("Responsible Party" or "Responsible Parties"), shall retain responsibility for ensuring that people are present and accounted for at their home, regularly-scheduled programs, and services.
- i. If a Responsible Party reasonably believes that the person is missing from his or her home, regularly-scheduled day, other community activity, the Responsible Party shall immediately make all reasonable efforts to determine the person's whereabouts. These include but are not limited to contacting the person via any telephone numbers on file, the person's place of employment, his or her parents, guardians, friends, known family members, other Responsible Parties, and other places the person is known to frequent such as restaurants, malls, shops, or community centers.
- j. If after exercising all reasonable efforts, the Responsible Party cannot determine the person's whereabouts, s/he shall call the person's Service Coordinator, or if outside regular business hours, the Duty Officer currently on duty at the Developmental Disabilities Administration immediately.
- k. The Service Coordinator or Duty Officer (as applicable) shall review the facts of the incident, including the person's age and disability, circumstances, and history of leaving without telling anyone, if any, before making a determination of whether to contact MPD to file a Missing Person's Report or Silver Alert. A person who, for example has a history of leaving his or her home to visit friends or family in another city, or to visit a significant other for a period of time, would not necessarily be reported to MPD as a missing person, absent extenuating circumstances and/or an absence for an abnormally extended period of time.
- l. If, in weighing the person's circumstances; including the facts at hand, the length of time the person has been missing, and the efforts that have been undertaken to locate the person; the Duty Officer or Service Coordinator determines that a Silver Alert should be issued, s/he shall first review the person's MCIS face page to determine whether a Silver Alert may be authorized on behalf of the person.
- m. If a Silver Alert is authorized, the Service Coordinator or Duty Officer shall contact MPD and request that a Silver Alert be issued. Otherwise, the Service Coordinator or Duty Officer shall contact MPD to file a Missing Person's Report only, and shall specify to MPD that the person has not authorized a Silver Alert to be filed. The Duty Officer or Service Coordinator, at his or her discretion, may authorize the Responsible Party who reported the person missing to file the Missing Person's Report with MPD directly.

- n. The Service Coordinator's/Duty Officer's review of the person's circumstances and whether to file a Missing Person's Report and/or Silver Alert shall be conducted, and if necessary, MPD contacted immediately following notification by a Responsible Party that the person has gone missing.
- o. When MPD personnel arrive on-site, the person who requested that a Missing Person's Report (Duty Officer, Service Coordinator, or a Responsible Party) be filed over the phone shall indicate that a Silver Alert be issued for the person as well, as applicable.
- p. The Duty Officer, Service Coordinator, or Responsible Party shall provide MPD with the person's most recent picture, height, weight, eye color, the clothing s/he was last seen wearing, any other defining characteristics necessary to locate the person, and any information related to the safety of the missing person; such as, s/he has a fear of people in uniforms or strangers and may run if approached.
- q. The Duty Officer, Service Coordinator, or Responsible Party shall instruct MPD to use respectful, People First language in issuing Silver Alerts, and to include information about the person's disability in the Silver Alert only if such information is necessary to locate and identify the missing person.
- r. Information related to a person's disability should be excluded from the Silver Alert unless it is critical to locating the person and/or relates to a safety concern. For example, if the missing person cannot safely cross streets or be in traffic, which could be due to dementia or another type of disability, information should be conveyed in the Silver Alert that indicates that they have a disability and cannot safely cross streets, but not disclose the nature of the person's disability. Moreover, for persons who, for instance, cannot speak as a result of a developmental disability, it is preferable to say that the person "does not use words to communicate, or that they do not speak but will understand what is said to them" in the Silver Alert as opposed to sharing the nature or extent of the person's disability in the alert itself.



Laura L. Nuss, Director



Approval Date