

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE



ASHANTI ALERT FOR ABDUCTED ADULTS

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DATE: _____

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SUMMARY

The Virginia Ashanti Alert for Abducted Adults (Ashanti Alert) Plan provides a valuable tool for Virginia law enforcement agencies in the ongoing effort to protect our citizens, while allowing the broadcasters of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and other partners an opportunity to contribute to the communities they serve in an extremely beneficial capacity.

This plan is available for use by all Virginia law enforcement agencies and can be used as their primary Ashanti Alert Plan or as a supplement to their existing plan.

Definitions:

Ashanti Alert means an adult (i) whose whereabouts are unknown, (ii) who is believed to have been abducted, (iii) who is 18 years of age or older, and (iv) whose disappearance poses a credible threat as determined by law enforcement to the safety and health of the adult and under such other circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Virginia State Police. (Note: See Ashanti Alert Criteria for appropriate circumstances on page 5.)

"Ashanti Alert Agreement" means the voluntary agreement between law-enforcement officials and members of the media whereby an adult will be declared abducted, and the public will be notified, and includes all other incidental conditions of the partnership as found appropriate by the Virginia State Police.

Ashanti Alert means the notice of an adult abduction provided to the public by the media or other methods and under an Ashanti Alert Agreement.

Ashanti "Alert Program" or "Program" means the procedures and Ashanti Alert Agreements to aid in the identification and location of Critically Missing Adult.

"Media" means print, radio, television, and internet-based communication systems or other methods of communicating information to the public.

Major Components of the Ashanti Alert System

- **Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN)**

VCIN is a telecommunication system which provides 24-hour access to Virginia law enforcement agencies to enter and query criminal justice information, including information regarding abduction or any matter dealing with missing persons.

- **Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Message Boards and Highway Alert Radio and other VDOT Communication Systems**

These systems are maintained by VDOT. Electronic changeable message signs and radio systems will be used to disseminate information to the public as they utilize the highway transportation system. Fixed signs are located on major highways throughout the state. If available, these signs and radio system can be used to publicize information regarding abduction. The other communication systems will provide information to Virginia rest areas, welcome centers, truck weigh stations and toll facilities.

- **Virginia Missing Person's Information Clearinghouse (VMPC)**

The Clearinghouse has the ability to upload photographs and enter information regarding a lost adult on to the Virginia Missing Persons Alert website. Additionally, the VMPC uses Everbridge software to initiate mass messages to media and other partners.

Secondary Components of the Ashanti Alert System

- **Public Utilities' Communication Systems**

Notification of the major public utilities within the Commonwealth, have communication systems capable of notifying their field employees when the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan is activated. These utilities include electric companies, gas companies, etc.

- **Notification of a Regional Plan Infrastructure**

Notification of the coordinator of a regional Ashanti Alert Plan will enable regional plans to notify all those elements of their respective plans, which have not been activated by the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan.

- **Virginia Realtors Association**

Notification of the Multiple Listing Services (MLS) will notify the realtors of Virginia when a Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan has been activated.

- **Virginia State Lottery**

The Virginia State Lottery will display the Ashanti Alert on their lottery machine marquee during activation of the alert. The Marquee used will notify lottery customers of an Ashanti Alert, the location, and for customers to tune to local media or to www.vasenioralert.com for more details.

- **DMV**

Ashanti Alert notices are sent to all Customer Service Center location managers. Information provided about the incident is programmed into DMV's Q-Flow queuing system. This information will be set to the TV screens in 73 Customer Service Centers.

Criteria for the Activation of the Plan

1. The Adult must be 18 years of age or older and the law enforcement agency believes the adult has been abducted (unwillingly taken from their environment without permission).
2. The law enforcement agency believes the Adult is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death.
3. A law enforcement investigation has taken place that verified the abduction or eliminated alternative explanations.
4. Sufficient information is available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the Adult, suspect, and/or the suspect's vehicle.
5. The Adult must be entered into the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) missing person files.
6. The Virginia Ashanti Alert Form authorizing release of information must be signed.

****Note****

If all of the aforementioned criteria are not met, the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan will not be activated.

Law Enforcement Agency Request Process

The following requirements must be met by the requesting law enforcement agencies. Meeting the established requirements will enable the most effective Ashanti Alert.

- Enter the Adult into the VCIN/NCIC systems (“pack the record” with any and all information that may cause a hit or provide leads during a police contact.).
- Have at least one individual designated as the reporting officer.
- Use the criteria as delineated in the flow chart to determine whether to activate the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan.
- Provide updates as frequently as they become available to the VMPC.
- Have an assigned telephone number capable of rolling over to at least two separate lines to take telephone calls if the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan is activated.
- Have volunteers or personnel to receive the telephone calls for a minimum of 24- hours if the plan is activated or until the Alert is canceled.
- Submit the required information through the Virginia Ashanti Alert Activation website to the Virginia Missing Person’s Information Clearinghouse immediately upon the initiation of the abduction investigation or as the investigation is developing.
- Submit a photograph of the Missing Adult in JPEG format to the Virginia State Police Duty Sergeant dutysgthq@vsp.virginia.gov.
- Use the termination script in the event the incident is terminated before the 12- hour cycle is over.

ACTIVATION PROCESS

Activation of the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan will only be initiated through the Virginia State Police. Once the contacted agency receives a report that an adult has been abducted, the following process should be followed:

1. Confirm that abduction has taken place and the criteria have been met.
2. The information submitted through the Ashanti Alert request activation website will be verified with the investigating agency. If the website is unavailable, Virginia Ashanti Alert activation forms, equivalent Regional Plan or Agency forms which contain the required information as set forth in the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan may be submitted by fax or email.
3. Include a current photograph of the Missing Adult that can be emailed to the State Police duty sergeant.
4. Send the forms to the Virginia Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse (VMPC) by telephonic facsimile. Contact the VMPC immediately confirming receipt of the packet information or if you should have any difficulties transmitting information. Designate a department contact for VMPC (include a name and telephone number on the standardized facsimile form). Local law enforcement agencies must follow intra-departmental policy regarding the actual investigation process involving any abducted/kidnapped adult incident which takes place within their jurisdiction. If a current portrait of the adult is available, forward it along with a copy of all abduction details or summaries to the Virginia Missing Persons Clearinghouse Coordinator at email vamissing@vsp.virginia.gov.

Telephone #: 804-674-2026 | Facsimile 804-674-6704

5. After being contacted by the reporting agency, VMPC will conduct the required tasks as outlined in this plan and confirm receipt of the Virginia Ashanti Alert information with the reporting agency.
6. After being contacted, the Virginia State Police will contact any/all broadcasting companies through the Everbridge Software. The Virginia State Police may provide supplemental information with a detailed summary of the adult abduction, and forward a copy of the Adult portrait to any/all broadcasting companies.

The above-mentioned steps provide an efficient and streamlined approach to disseminate detailed information regarding a Critically Missing Adult whose life may be in danger. The goal of this notification process is to be quick, clear, concise, uncluttered, and effective.

Local Law Enforcement Agencies' Responsibilities and Procedures

Prior to activation of any Ashanti Alert the Virginia Missing Persons Clearinghouse (VMPC) shall be contacted with the required information to activate the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan. The requesting agency will be required to submit updated information and notify VMPC of the recovery of the adult or cancellation of the alert.

Law enforcement agencies should follow these operating procedures:

After local law enforcement officials determine an abduction has occurred (Please refer to the Virginia Ashanti Alert (Plan Flow Chart, page 10), they should notify the Virginia Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse immediately at the Virginia State Police Administrative Headquarters and provide them with the required information by fax or email.

Additionally, the law enforcement agency should do the following:

1. As additional information presents itself, including photographs, the agency shall contact the VMPC immediately with updates so the information can be disseminated to the media.
2. Upon closure of the adult abduction case, immediately notify the VMPC with pertinent information.

The prompt broadcasting of abduction is an integral part of the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan and our statewide adult protection network. **If it saves the life of only one adult, it is well worth your participation. That one adult may be from your community.**

VIRGINIA MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE **RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES**

The following procedure is to be used if a Regional Plan has been activated prior to a request for activation of the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan.

Upon notification that a Regional Plan has been activated, the Virginia Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse (VMPC) shall contact the investigating agency and obtain the required information needed to activate the Virginia Ashanti Alert plan, if requested.

The VMPC shall initiate the required steps to obtain approval as specified below to implement the Virginia Ashanti Alert in order to eliminate a delay in the implementation of the Ashanti Alert if requested by the investigating agency.

The following procedure is to be used if the Virginia Ashanti Alert Plan is being used as the primary plan.

1. Upon receiving a call from a law enforcement agency to activate a Virginia Ashanti Alert, the Virginia Missing Persons Clearinghouse (VMPC) will review the Information request submitted through the Virginia Ashanti Alert request activation website or if not available submit the required forms.
2. The VMPC shall verify that the use of an Ashanti Alert is justified, and will assist the local law enforcement agency with the drafting of an Ashanti Alert Broadcast.
3. The VMPC will immediately notify the CJIS VCIN First Sergeant, CJIS VCIN Administrative Sergeant, or VCIN Lieutenant who will evaluate the request and determine if a Virginia Ashanti Alert should be activated. The VCIN First Sergeant, VCIN Administrative Sergeant, or VCIN Lieutenant will notify the Duty Sergeant of the decision. The CJIS Captain and Executive Staff will be notified by email of the activation.
4. Supervision will then direct the Duty Sergeant to have the VCIN Control Center submit an Ashanti Alert through the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN), activate either statewide or on a regional basis, and activate the VDOT System. Supervision will then ensure that the missing adult is posted onto the VMPC website.
5. Upon activation of the Virginia Ashanti Alert, the VMPC will activate the EAS to broadcast email notices to media and other partners.

VIRGINIA MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES (CONTINUED)

6. When an Ashanti Alert is activated, the CJIS Division will assist with calls from the media.
7. The VMPC will send a VCIN message to all Virginia criminal justice agencies notifying them that the Virginia Ashanti Alert has been activated and for them to anticipate an increase in their 911-telephone traffic.
8. The VMPC will coordinate with the agency to determine if assistance is needed in the production of missing person's posters.
9. The VMPC will notify other surrounding states that Virginia has activated the Virginia Ashanti Alert plan and provide them with alert information.

Law enforcement agencies are to contact the VMPC immediately if the victim is located, or if the Ashanti Alert should be canceled for some other reason. After receiving this information, VMPC will issue a VCIN cancellation message advising that the Virginia Ashanti Alert has been CANCELED. If the adult was located the message will advise that the Virginia Ashanti Alert has been cancelled – ADULT LOCATED.

Ashanti Alerts are generally approved for 12 hour activation unless new leads or information is obtained to necessitate a time extension. If no additional information is obtained and the alert has been active for 12 hours, VMPC will issue a VCIN cancellation message advising that the Virginia Ashanti Alert has "EXPIRED".

DECISION FLOWCHART FOR VIRGINIA Ashanti Alert PLAN ACTIVATION

Is the MISSING ADULT 18 year of age or older?

YES

NO

DO NOT ACTIVATE THE Ashanti Alert

IS THE INCIDENT AN ABDUCTION KIDNAPPING?

YES

NO

DO NOT ACTIVATE THE Ashanti Alert

HAS AN INVESTIGATION BEEN CONDUCTED TO VERIFY THE ABDUCTION?

YES

NO

DO NOT ACTIVATE THE Ashanti Alert

WAS THE ADULT'S INFORMATION ENTERED INTO THE NCIC/VCIN SYSTEMS?

YES

NO

DO NOT ACTIVATE THE Ashanti Alert

IS THE ADULT IN DANGER OF SERIOUS BODILY HARM OR DEATH?

YES

NO

DO NOT ACTIVATE THE Ashanti Alert

IS SUFFICIENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO DISSEMINATE TO THE PUBLIC THAT COULD ASSIST IN LOCATING THE ADULT, SUSPECT AND/OR THE SUSPECTS'S VEHICLE?

YES

NO

DO NOT ACTIVATE THE Ashanti Alert

ACTIVATE THE VIRGINIA ASHANTI ALERT™

**APPENDIX
A**

VIRGINIA ASHANTI ALERT FORMS

Virginia Ashanti Alert Form

ABDUCTION INFORMATION

Date Abducted: _____ **Time Abducted:** _____
(mm/dd/yy) (hh:mm)

Location of Abduction: _____
(Description)

Direction of Travel/Destination: _____
(City, State, Subdivision)

Vehicle Description: _____
(Make, Model, Year, Color, License Plate Number and State of Issue)

ADULT INFORMATION (Complete an additional page for each adult abducted)

Name: _____
(Last, First, MI)

Gender: _____ **DOB:** _____ **Race:** _____
(Male/Female) (mm/dd/yy or Approx. Year) (Include all Types)

Height: _____ **Weight:** _____ **Hair:** _____ **Eyes:** _____
(Feet/Inches) (lbs.) (Style and Color) (Color)

Clothing:

Shirt: _____
(Type, Long or Short Sleeve, Color)

Pants: _____
(Type and Color)

Shoes: _____
(Type and Color)

Other: _____
(Type and Color)

Outerwear: _____
(Type and Color)

Additional Significant Identifiers:

*OBTAIN A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ADULT, AND E-MAIL TO THE VIRGINIA
MISSING PERSONS INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE
vamissing@vsp.virginia.gov.*

Details: _____

Virginia Ashanti Alert Form

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ABDUCTOR INFORMATION (Complete an additional page for each additional abductor)

Name: _____

(Last, First, MI)

Gender: _____ DOB: _____ Race: _____
(Male/Female) (mm/dd/yy or Approx. Year) (Include all Types)

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair: _____ Eyes: _____
(Feet/Inches) (lbs.) (Style and Color) (Color)

Clothing:

Shirt: _____
(Type, Long or Short Sleeve, Color)

Pants: _____
(Type and Color)

Shoes: _____
(Type and Color)

Other: _____
(Type and Color)

Outerwear: _____
(Type and Color)

Additional Significant Identifiers:

Details: _____

CONTACT ORGANIZATION:

Sheriff's Office or Police Department: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Facsimile Number: _____

Pager Number: _____ Cellular Telephone Number: _____

Date and Time Submitted:

Virginia Ashanti Alert Form

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AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF MISSING ADULT INFORMATION

For a period of one year from the execution of this form, the undersigned authorizes full disclosure of all records concerning the missing adult to any agent of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia State Police, or any individual or entity assigned by the Virginia State Police, whether the records are of a public, private, internal, or confidential nature, I direct the release of such information regardless of any agreement I may have made to the contrary with any entity or individual to whom the missing adult's information is released or presented. The intent of this authorization is to give my consent for full and complete disclosure of potentially confidential information. Additionally, I understand the duty of the Virginia State Police to release any information to the proper authorities and make other reports as may be mandated by law. I also certify that any person(s) who may furnish such information concerning the missing adult shall not be held accountable for giving this information, and I do hereby release such person(s) from any and all liability which may be incurred as a result of furnishing such information. I further release the Virginia State Police, Virginia Broadcasters Association and its agents, and designees under this release, from any and all liability which may be incurred as a result of furnishing such information. A photocopy of this release form will be valid as an original thereof, even though the said photocopy does not contain an original writing of my signature. I have read and fully understand the contents of the "Authorization for Release of Missing Adult Information."

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE:

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial

Current Address, House Number/Box Number Street Name/Rural Route, City, State, Zip Code

Signature: _____

LIABILITY AGREEMENT:

I hereby agree the information I have provided to you acting as an agent of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia State Police, Virginia Broadcasters Association or any individual or entity assigned by the Virginia State Police, to be truthful, factual, and correct. As the next of kin custodian, I am aware that in order for the Virginia State Police to activate the Virginia Ashanti Alert, the following criteria must be met:

1. The adult is 18 years of age or older,
2. The investigating agency believes the missing adult has been ***abducted***, and
3. The investigating agency believes the adult ***is in danger*** of serious bodily harm or death.

I am also aware I may be charged criminally for knowingly providing false information to law enforcement authorities. I have read and fully understand the contents of this "Liability Agreement."

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE:

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial

Current Address, House Number/Box Number Street Name/Rural Route, City, State, Zip Code

Signature: _____

Virginia Ashanti Alert Activation Fax Form

The enclosed fax is a request for activation of the Virginia Ashanti Alert.” It includes the standard activation text.

There are (*number*) _____ pages, including this cover sheet.

The originating agency is (*Agency*) _____.

The activating officer is (*Name and Title*) _____.

UNLESS TERMINATED EARLIER, THIS ALERT WILL AUTOMATICALLY END AT _____.
(12 hours from current time.)

If there are any problems with or questions about the contents of this fax, call

(*Name*) _____, at (*phone*) _____.

Virginia Ashanti Alert Termination Fax Form

The enclosed fax is a request for termination of the Virginia Ashanti Alert.

It includes the standard termination text.

There are (*number*) _____ pages, including this cover sheet.

The originating agency is (*agency*) _____.

The terminating officer is (*name and title*) _____.

If there are any problems with or questions about the contents of this fax, call (*name*) _____, at (*phone*) _____.