

NC Center for Missing Persons
AMBER Alert Plan
2024 - 2025



North Carolina State Highway Patrol
Troop I - Special Operations
1142 SE Maynard Rd
Cary, NC 27511

January 1, 2024

RE: AMBER ALERT PLAN

Dear Law Enforcement and Telecommunicator Colleagues:

On June 12, 2003, Governor Michael F. Easley signed into law North Carolina's AMBER Alert System replacing the North Carolina Child Alert Notification (NC CAN) SYSTEM. The NC AMBER Alert system allows law enforcement to notify the public of an abducted/endangered child very quickly. The cooperation of law enforcement, the media, multiple state agencies and the public continues to be the basis of the NC AMBER Alert programs success.

June of 2023, North Carolina celebrated the twenty-year anniversary of the NC AMBER Alert program. The NC AMBER Alert program has continued to advance to keep up with the latest technology. The EAS and the AMBER Alert Portal provide a quick two step activation process which is timely and most accurate. The NC AMBER Alert program has kept its integrity for public awareness and accountability and in the process has accomplished a 100% locate or recovery rate. Because of the success of the program, we have been able to condense the NC AMBER Alert plan to a more efficient read with the most up to date and vital information.

North Carolina can be proud of its AMBER Alert system as we celebrate twenty years of service to saving the lives of children in danger.

For more information on the NC AMBER Alert plan or the NC Center for Missing Persons please visit our website at <https://nccmp.ncdps.gov> or contact the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons at 1-800-522-5437.

Sincerely,

Morrissa Ahl-Moyer

Director

NC Center for Missing Persons

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NORTH CAROLINA AMBER ALERT SYSTEM

(“America’s *M*issing: *B*roadcast *E*mergency *R*esponse”)

PREFACE

The original AMBER Plan was created in 1996 as a legacy to a 9-year-old Texas girl named Amber Hagerman whose abduction and brutal murder prompted the Arlington, Texas community to request that radio stations in the area broadcast special “alerts” when such incidents took place in the future. Since that time, all 50 states have established some form of the AMBER Alert System. The President of the United States signed into law on April 30, 2003, the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today Act (PROTECT Act of 2003), which codified the previously established National AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert Coordinator's role in the Department of Justice, and tasked the Coordinator with facilitating the development of the AMBER network, providing regional coordination and establishing guidance on criteria for issuing an AMBER Alert.

AMBER ALERT REVIEW FORUM

The North Carolina “AMBER Alert” Plan receives guidance from representatives of participating organizations whose expertise and technical support combine to promote and sustain a standard of quality necessary to achieve the goals of the Plan.

Members

North Carolina Sheriff’s Association

North Carolina Association of Broadcasters

North Carolina Department of Public Safety

North Carolina Department of Transportation

North Carolina Division of Emergency Management

North Carolina State Highway Patrol

North Carolina State Highway Patrol – Troop “C” Communications

North Carolina State Highway Patrol – Telecommunicator Training Coordinator

North Carolina Education Lottery

NC Association of Public Safety Communications Officials

NC National Emergency Number Association

Objectives

This panel shall meet no less than once every two years to review the AMBER Alert Plan:

1. To ensure the readiness of the Plan
2. To evaluate any abnormal abductions that have occurred since the last meeting
3. To receive updates on AMBER Alert developments nationwide.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE AMBER ALERT SYSTEM

North Carolina Center for Missing Persons (NCCMP)

NCCMP serves as the State's central repository for information regarding missing children and adults. Since its creation in 1985, NCCMP has worked with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to locate missing persons and reunite them with their families. NCCMP provides technical assistance to police and sheriff's offices and serves as liaison between states and various governmental agencies. NCCMP is responsible for disseminating information via the Emergency Alert System for statewide distribution through radio, television, and cable systems.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)

NCDOT operates the state-maintained transportation system in North Carolina including aviation, ferry, public transportation, rail, and highway systems. It maintains a number of overhead Dynamic Message Signs on the highways that can be viewed by travelers alerting them to traffic anomalies. They are also utilized to notify the public that an AMBER Alert has been activated.

North Carolina State Highway Patrol - Troop C Communications

Troop C Communications will be second in line to issue the EAS for the AMBER alert if NCCMP is unable to activate it. Troop C Communications is also serves as back up for the NCCMP's 1-800 line.

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

EAS is the civil emergency alert system designed to inform the public of immediate threats to national security, life and property. Employing warning tones, EAS utilizes the public safety agencies and the media who then transmit emergency information to the public.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

Wireless Emergency Alerts are short emergency messages from authorized federal, state, local, tribal and territorial public alerting authorities that can be broadcast from cell towers to any WEA-enabled mobile device in a locally targeted area.

North Carolina Association of Broadcasters (NCAB)

NCAB is an organization representing radio and television broadcasters across the state, it has been instrumental in developing a vehicle by which AMBER Alerts are dispatched via the airwaves in an expeditious manner.

National Crime Information Center (NCIC)

NCIC is maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Clarksburg, West Virginia, it is a nationwide computerized information system that serves all criminal justice agencies—local, state, and federal. NCIC contains information used to identify and locate wanted/missing persons and stolen/recovered property as entered by law enforcement agencies across the nation. NCIC also provides the access method to the national criminal history record information index known as the Interstate Identification Index.

Division of Criminal Information (DCI)

The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation's Division of Criminal Information serves as the statewide telecommunications center. This central computer network operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, linking local, state, and national criminal justice agencies with up-to-the minute information on crimes and criminals.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

NCMEC provides information and services dedicated to families, professionals, media, and law enforcement. It offers the latter technical assistance, training, and educational materials to help them investigate cases of missing and exploited children. North Carolina law requires law enforcement agencies to notify NCMEC if AMBER Alert criteria are met. NCMEC serves to broaden the AMBER Alert to the height of national attention and offers assistance valuable to the investigation.

AMBER Alert Portal

A web-based notification system designed to inform the media and provide them with the most accurate and up to date information on and active AMBER Alert. This is also where AMBER alert requests are entered by an agency. Email notifications are created when an AMBER alert is requested, when it is approved, and when it is canceled. Notifications are sent to Troop C Communications, the media, and to NCDOT.

OVERVIEW

In response to growing concern over the abduction and brutal treatment of children and in keeping with a national trend to address this issue, North Carolina established the NC AMBER Alert System. The North Carolina Center for Missing Persons of the Department of Public Safety was given the responsibility to implement and oversee this program. The program was designed to facilitate the safe and prompt recovery of abducted children whose circumstances meet a very specific combination of criteria. The system was first used in North Carolina in June 2002 when a Franklin County infant was taken by her babysitter. A friend of the woman who heard the broadcast contacted the babysitter and informed her of the alert. Upon learning about the AMBER Alert, the woman surrendered and returned the child safely.

The success of the North Carolina program is the result of a collaborative effort by state and local law enforcement, state department of transportation who operate the Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), state departments who activate the Emergency Alert Systems (EAS), television and radio broadcasters who agree to broadcast the alerts to their respective markets, and contiguous states who by mutual agreement and interest serve to extend the boundaries of alert.

In North Carolina, the Center for Missing Persons activates the alert after qualifying the request for activation from law enforcement. Once all qualifying criteria have been met the process begins to quickly disseminate the information to the participating agencies and organizations.

In the interest of deflecting inappropriate use of the AMBER System the North Carolina approach, in addition to the statutory criteria outlined below, adheres to very strict criteria and guidelines. The relative infrequency of this crime notwithstanding, preparation and the elements of speed, accuracy, and validity are essential in promoting the safe recovery of its victim.

AUTHORITY

Part 5A. North Carolina Center for Missing Persons.

§ 143B-495 through 143B-499.8: Recodified as G.S. 143B-1010 through G.S. 143B-1022, effective January 1, 2012.

G.S. 143B-1021.2(6a) gives the NC Center for Missing Persons its authority to develop and maintain the AMBER Alert System (2012).

CRITERIA

§ 143B-1021.2

(a) There is established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons the AMBER Alert System. The purpose of AMBER Alert is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding abducted children.

(b) The AMBER Alert System shall make every effort to disseminate information on missing children as quickly as possible when the following criteria are met:

- (1) The child is 17 years of age or younger;
- (2) The abduction is not known or suspected to be by a parent of the child, unless the child's life is suspected to be in danger of injury or death;
- (3) The child is believed:
 - a. To have been abducted, or
 - b. To be in danger of injury or death;
- (4) The child is not a runaway or voluntarily missing; and
- (5) The abduction has been reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.

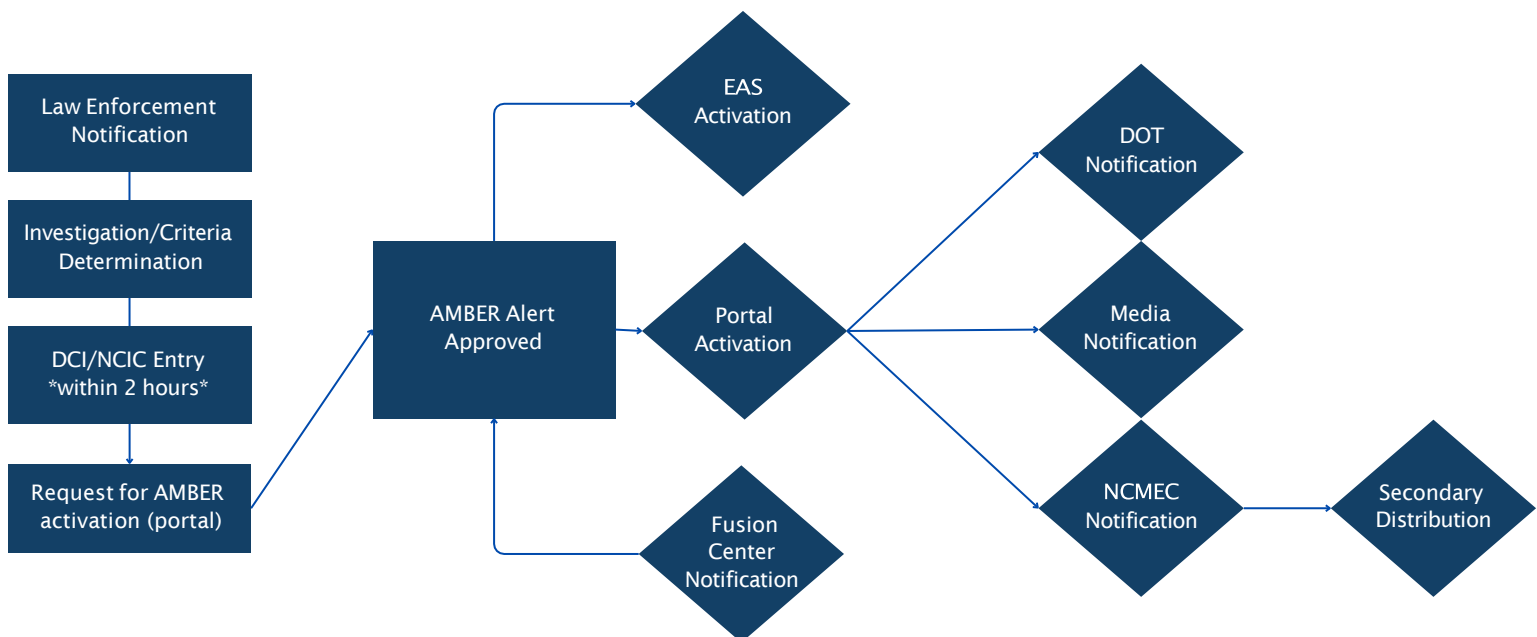
If the abduction of the child is known or suspected to be by a parent of the child, the Center, in its discretion, may disseminate information through the AMBER Alert System if the child is believed to be in danger of injury or death.

It will also be the responsibility of the Center to determine whether there is sufficient identifying data to justify an AMBER Alert activation.



NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS

NCCMP AMBER Alert Process



Portal Website: <https://nccmp.ncdps.gov/>

Training Portal: <https://apptest.ncdps.gov/>

800-522-KIDS

nccmp@ncshp.gov

ACTIVATION

Requirements of law enforcement agency

If a missing child report meets the criteria established in G.S. 143B-1010(b), as soon as practicable after receipt of the report, the law enforcement agency shall enter the case into NCIC.

Prior to notifying and requesting an AMBER Alert activation by NCCMP, the investigating officer of the originating agency will:

- 1) determine that the statutory criteria have been met;
- 2) obtain approval from the chief, sheriff, or a supervisor to request activation of an
AMBER Alert;
- 3) ensure case is entered into NCIC
- 4) establish a 24-hour attended phone number;
- 5) Obtain completed Release of Information
- 6) Enter the request for an AMBER alert via the Missing Persons Portal
- 7) once approved for activation a code will be given for
activation in DCI;

Notify the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons (NCCMP):

- 1) email release of information and a recent picture of the victim
and/or abductor as soon possible to nccmp@ncshp.gov
- 2) If no response within 15 minutes, contact NCCMP @ 800-522-5437

Requirements of the Center for Missing Persons

- 1) Communicate with **investigating officer or supervisor** as soon as possible
- 2) Validate AMBER Alert request with state criteria
- 3) Review the portal entry for accuracy and completeness
- 4) Provide activation code
- 5) Email nccmp@ncshp.gov, Troop C Communications, and the PIO to notify them of pending AMBER Alert activation
- 6) Activate EAS in office, or request Troop C Communications to activate if out of office.
- 7) Complete and release the AMBER Alert Portal System
- 8) Notify NCMEC for WEA activation & secondary dissemination
- 8) Monitor the progress of the investigation and EAS;
- 9) Within a reasonable timeframe following cancellation of the AMBER Alert, perform a step-by-step evaluation, make appropriate notifications to participating agencies and partners of any discrepancies, complete report to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Role of the Department of Transportation

NCDOT will post AMBER Alerts on overhead Dynamic Message Signs when notified **ONLY** by NCCMP. The sign will read AMBER ALERT, Vehicle Description, License plate. If vehicle information is not available, the sign will read AMBER Alert, Call 511 and information about the alert will be posted to 511. The message will remain until the AMBER Alert has been canceled by NCCMP.

Role of the Division of Emergency Management

The Division of Emergency Management, through its communications branch in the State Emergency Operations Center, will activate the statewide Emergency Alert System upon request if needed by the NCCMP. This would only be requested if there is a primary and secondary EAS Activation failure.

Role of the media

Participating media outlets, either by individual discretionary policy, or guidelines established by the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters agree to broadcast the AMBER Alert until cancelled.

Role of State Highway Patrol & 911 Communications Centers

In the event an AMBER Alert is activated, telecommunicators who staff State Highway Patrol Communications Centers will receive via auto-generated email from the North Carolina Missing Person's portal. 911 Centers will receive notification via NCIC/DCI from the entering agency.

When Communications Centers become aware that an AMBER Alert has been activated, all units on patrol will be apprised by radio transmission to be on the lookout for the victim, abductor, and suspect's vehicle. Patrol units can search DCI for additional information regarding the AMBER Alert. In anticipation of increased incoming reports of sightings and public suspicions, the following steps have been developed to promote a functional policy of disseminating information generated by these reports:

1. If a call is received from a member of the public who becomes aware of the AMBER Alert and advises that he/she has observed the suspect vehicle on a roadway, the telecommunicator receiving the report shall:
 - a) ascertain the vehicle make, model, year, color, tag number and state of issue;
 - b) determine number and description of occupants;
 - c) establish the location of sighting and direction of travel as well as location of Dynamic Message Sign, if known;
 - d) dispatch a law enforcement unit to track and/or intercept the suspect vehicle
 - e) notify a supervisor;
 - f) immediately provide the information to the law enforcement agency investigating the case.
2. Non-sighting information not deemed urgent shall be reported to the law enforcement agency of record in a timely manner. Exceptions should be made and patrol units dispatched based on the creditability, urgency, and venue of the report.
3. NCCMP will be available to assist any Communications Center throughout the course of the AMBER Alert.

Role of contiguous states

Contiguous states will be asked to assist/or activate on behalf of a NC AMBER Alert when appraised as an appropriate request. NCCMP will contact the contiguous states Fusion Centers for assistance. Additionally, an out-of state AMBER Alert may be activated in state on behalf of another state upon request if it meets the current AMBER Alert criteria according to NCCMP.

Role of the public

Cooperation of the public is essential. It is anticipated that public response will be expedient with the information flowing via television and radio broadcast reports. Cell phones enable the traveling public to offer tips spontaneously and directly to the investigating agency. Since successful outcomes depend on the assistance of the public, a substantial increase in contacts is inevitable. It is, therefore, incumbent on law enforcement to prepare itself to handle this increase. AMBER Alerts have little value without the cooperation of the public. However, a case of a criminally abducted child is a law enforcement matter and citizens should confine their involvement to serving as the “eyes and ears” of law enforcement.

CANCELLATION

Upon determining that an AMBER Alert is no longer necessary, the local law enforcement agency will **immediately** notify NCCMP, who will then ensure that the EAS is immediately cancelled. The requesting agency **must** cancel the alert in NCIC/DCI **and** the NCCMP portal, which will notify the media, NCMEC, and DOT of the cancellation. NCCMP will not address any media questions (other than to confirm the AMBER alert has been canceled) and direct all questions to the activating law enforcement agency, unless the agency has specifically requested information to be disseminated by NCCMP on their behalf.

TRAINING

Training on AMBER Alerts and any other program under the NCCMP is available from the NC Center for Missing Persons upon request. Law enforcement agencies, supervisors, investigators, training officers and 911/*HP telecommunicators are primary targets for training. Other intended targets include but are not limited to broadcasters, state agencies, educational institutions, civic organizations, volunteers, and other members of the public.

Training will be offered using a presentational model with emphasis on a systematic approach to activating the AMBER Plan. Upon completion, a trainee will be familiar with the history, predicate statutes, and dynamics of the AMBER Alert Plan as well as established hierarchical procedural responsibilities. This training also provides a forum for feedback from the participant who can serve as a resource in contributing to the advancement of the Plan.

ORGANIZATIONS/RESOURCES

The names of these organizations are provided to law enforcement who may find their web sites useful in investigating missing person's cases. Parents of missing children should always be cautious when seeking help from non-police sources in these matters for fear of encountering individuals who would exploit them.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) 1-800-THE-LOST

www.missingkids.com

One of the most ambitious resources available, NCMEC provides a wealth of information and services to families, professionals, media, and law enforcement. It offers the latter technical assistance, training, and educational materials to help them investigate cases of missing and exploited children.

The Polly Klaas Foundation (PKF) 1-800-587-4357

www.pollyklaas.org

This non-profit organization is dedicated to educating the public on the prevention of child abduction, aiding in the search of missing children, and acting as a means to bring the issue of missing children into focus. It also assists law enforcement with cases of missing children.

Klaas Kids Foundation

www.klaaskids.org

The mission of this organization is to stop crimes against children. Its web site provides information and serves as a resource for concerned citizens.

government agencies in order to locate missing or abducted children.

Child Find of America

www.childfindofamerica.org

The mission of this organization is to locate missing children through active investigation, prevent child abduction through education, and resolve incidents of parental abductions through mediation.

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System

<https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>

NamUs provides technology, forensics services, and investigative support to resolve missing person and unidentified remains cases.

The AMBER Advocate

<https://www.amberadvocate.org/>

Provides AMBER Alert training, and a technical assistance program for law enforcement agencies.

APPENDIX A

Amber Alert Release of Information Form

Information for Broadcast

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM
NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS AMBER ALERT

The undersigned hereby authorizes full disclosure of all records regarding **MISSING PERSON** _____, to the Center for Missing Persons (hereinafter referred to as the Center) and its agents and the law enforcement agencies investigating this case and their agents. I also agree that such information may be reviewed and stored provided it is done so in a confidential manner and I do so regardless of any agreement I may have made to the contrary with any other individual or entity to whom the missing person's information is released or presented. I also agree to release from liability any person or entity who releases such information pursuant to this investigation. For the purpose of this release, information shall include but is not limited to all documentation and photographic images as well as the spoken word.

A photocopy or electronically transmitted facsimile of the release form will be valid as an original thereof, even though it does not bear an original representation of my signature.

I hereby agree the information I have provided to the Center or its agents or designees to be truthful, factual, and correct. I also agree to and understand the necessity for and give authority to the Center, its agents, or designees to release information to the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters and/or its associates, to other commercial partners, and to essential State agencies and subsidiaries for alerting the public about the missing person. As parent/legal custodian or person responsible for the supervision of the missing individual, I also understand that in order for the Center to activate the North Carolina AMBER Alert, the following criteria must be met:

§ 143B-1021. of the North Carolina General Statutes requires that, in order to activate an AMBER Alert, ALL of the following conditions must be met:

- (1) The child is 17 years of age or younger;
- (2) The abduction is not known or suspected to be by a parent of the child, unless the child's life is suspected to be in danger of injury or death;
- (3) The child is believed:
 - a. To have been abducted, or
 - b. To be in danger of injury or death;
- (4) The child is not a runaway or voluntarily missing; and
- (5) The abduction has been reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.

Submission of the missing person's report is made by any parent, spouse, guardian, legal custodian, or person responsible for the supervision of the missing individual.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM
NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS AMBER ALERT

Law enforcement reports the incident to the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons.

I am also aware I may face criminal and/or civil penalties for providing false information to law enforcement authorities

I hereby agree to these provisions and willingly sign my name below. **I am authorized** to make this report under the legal authority as this missing individual's:

CHECK ONE:

- Parent** **Spouse** **Child** **Sibling**
- Guardian****
- Legal Custodian****
- Person Responsible for the Supervision of the Missing Individual****

Print name then; sign name:

_____ / _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Current Address: _____
(Street Address) (Apt/Lot Number) (City, State, Zip Code)

**Explain how you are the Guardian, legal Custodian or responsible person:

INFORMATION FOR BROADCAST ANNOUNCEMENT

THIS IS A NORTH CAROLINA AMBER ALERT FOR A CHILD ABDUCTION

The _____ is searching for _____.

(Law enforcement agency) (Victim's full name)

_____ *is a _____ year-old _____, _____ approximately _____ feet,*

(Victim's first name) (Age) (Race) (Sex)

_____ *inches tall, weighing _____ pounds. She/He has _____ hair, and*

(Color)

_____ *eyes. _____ was last seen wearing _____*

(Color) (Victim's full name) (Description of clothes)

The abductor _____, is described as (Race) _____,

(Suspect's full name)

Gender _____, Height _____, Weight _____, hair color _____, eye color _____,

clothing description _____, and unique physical

characteristics _____.

They were last seen traveling _____ on _____

(Direction) (Road)

in a _____

(Make, Model, color, License plate number, State, Other distinguishing features)

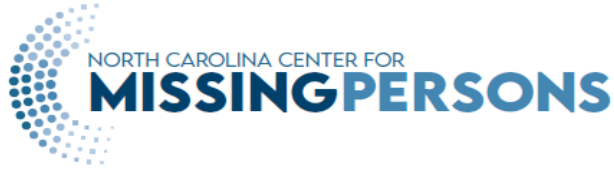
If you have any information regarding this abduction, call _____

(Law Enforcement Agency)

*immediately at _____ or call 911 or *HP.*

THIS IS AN AMBER ALERT

NCMEC Secondary Distribution: EAS Statewide. Activate CMAS In Region _____.



NCCMP TRAINING REQUEST FORM

Name of Agency: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone Number: _____

Dates Requested (please give 2 dates):

Date One: _____

Date Two: _____

Anticipated Number of Attendees

- 1-15
- 15-25
- 25-50
- 50 or more

Type of training requested

- NCCMP Portal
- AMBER ALERTS
- MISSING ENDANGERED (SILVER)
- BLUE ALERTS
- OTHER: _____

Can facility provide projector & screen for power point?

- Yes
- No

Email completed form to: nccmp@ncshp.gov
If no response within 48 working hours, please call
800-522-KIDS

APPENDIX B

US Department of Justice Publication List

<https://www.justice.gov/publications>