



## **Item No. 5**

### **Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality September 3, 2025**

**TO:** Chair Greg O'Malley and Commissioners of the Board of Police Commissioners  
for the Halifax Regional Municipality

**FROM:** Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** August 11, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **HRM Police Use of Emergency Alerts**

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#### **INFORMATION REPORT**

##### **ORIGIN**

June 4, 2025, Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality motion (Item No.10.3.1):

MOVED by Commissioner Hinch, seconded by Commissioner Beswick-Escanlar

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality direct the Chief Officer of the Halifax Regional Police and recommend that the Officer in Charge of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax Regional Detachment prepare staff reports outlining their policies governing the use of Emergency Public Alerts, detailing the number and nature of incidents for which such alerts were issued in the past 24 months, and the number and general nature of incidents in the past 24 months where an alert could have been issued in keeping with the governing policies, but was not.

That the staff reports could be in camera if required to accommodate any operational security concerns.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Between June 2023 and June 2025, Halifax Regional Police (HRP) issued two alerts through the Alert Ready system, one for a missing vulnerable youth, the other for a man believed to be armed and dangerous in our community. Further details on both alerts can be found under the sub-heading "Alerts

issued by HRP” on page 4.

During the same period, the Halifax Regional Detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP HRD) issued three alerts consisting of Dangerous Person Alerts & Vulnerable Missing Person Alerts through the Alert Ready system. Further details can be found under the sub-heading “Alerts issued by RCMP HRD” on pages 9-10.

During the course of an unfolding incident, discussions may take place about whether an alert would be an appropriate tool for law enforcement to utilize. Unless all the criteria for an alert are met, it will not be issued.

There is no data available from either police agency to reflect the number of times an alert was considered but not issued. In instances when an alert was not issued, other tools may have been used to assist the police, including issuing news releases and posting on social media to spread public awareness about an incident.

Policies related to the use of Alert Ready for HRP and RCMP HRD are included as attachments to this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

On June 4, 2025, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) for the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) passed motion 10.3.1, which directed the Chief Officer of HRP and recommended that the Officer in Charge of RCMP HRD prepare a staff report outlining the policies governing the use of emergency public alerts for each organization.

Specifically, the board requested information related to:

- The number and nature of incidents for which such alerts were issued in the past 24 months
- The number and general nature of incidents in the past 24 months where an alert could have been issued in keeping with the governing policies but was not

This staff report is in response to the above request. It is further recommended that this report not be released to the public.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Alert Ready**

Alert Ready<sup>1</sup> is Canada’s emergency alerting system and has been operational nationally since March 2018.

Alert Ready delivers critical and potentially life-saving alerts to Canadians through television, radio and LTE-connected and compatible wireless devices. Alert Ready does not require a subscription and has a distinctive alert tone which cannot be shut off.

Alert Ready is intended to provide warning for threats including, but not limited to, the following:

- Urban fires that threaten multiple properties
- Natural disasters such as tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, Tsunami and earthquakes
- Biological, chemical, nuclear, radiological threats and drinking water contamination
- Environmental emergencies such as poor air quality

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<sup>1</sup> Alert Ready is the public-facing brand name for the National Public Alert System.

- Terrorist attacks
- Civil emergencies such as public safety emergencies, AMBER Alerts or a disruption to 911 service

A complete list of threats which could trigger the Alert Ready system can be found on the Alert Ready website<sup>2</sup>.

All 13 provinces and territories are connected to the Alert Ready system, with each jurisdiction responsible for issuing alerts. Only authorized government agencies can issue alerts through the Alert Ready system.

In July 2021, HRP and the Nova Scotia RCMP were given direct access to the Alert Ready system. Prior to that, only the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (EMO)<sup>3</sup> had access to the Alert Ready system.

Currently, HRP, NS RCMP and the NS EMO are the only organizations authorized to issue an alert through the Alert Ready system in Nova Scotia. HRP and RCMP NS both have direct access to the Alert Ready system through a website log in.

### **HRP use of the Alert Ready system**

#### **HRP Policy**

HRP issued its “Alert Ready - Direct Access” policy on July 5, 2021. The policy is aligned with provincial and federal policies and regulations relating to the Alert Ready system.

The “Alert Ready – Direct Access” policy establishes roles, responsibilities and procedures related to HRP’s use of the Alert Ready national public alert system. This includes that authorization for any Alert Ready message must come from the Chief of Police<sup>4</sup>, or their designate (e.g., Deputy Chief, Superintendent.)

A copy of the “HRP Alert Ready - Direct Access” policy can be found in **Attachment 1**.

The “Alert Ready – Direct Access” policy ensures that only HRP staff who have been designated as Authorized Alert Issuers<sup>5</sup> and who have been trained to use the Alert Ready system issue public alerts. At HRP, Alert Ready messages are only issued by a supervisor within the Integrated Emergency Services (IES)<sup>6</sup> or HRP’s Emergency Planning Administrator<sup>7</sup>.

A copy of the “HRP Alert Ready Activation Process Flow” can be found in **Attachment 2**.

The “Alert Ready - Direct Access” policy also ensures that pre-approved message content is available to Authorized Alert Issuers for use within the public alert system. Message templates for a variety of situations which could trigger the Alert Ready system (e.g., Amber Alert, dangerous person, active threat

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.alertready.ca/alert-types/>

<sup>3</sup> An organization that is empowered by the Emergency Management Act federally, and at a provincial and territorial level by individually named Acts. EMOs are provincial and territorial level groups that are tasked with providing prevention and preparedness education & training before emergencies occur and manage responses when they do occur. EMOs collaborate with fire departments, fire marshals, hospitals, emergency medical services, police, search and rescue, and many others depending on jurisdictional services available.

<sup>4</sup> Chief of Police also refers to the Chief Officer of Halifax Regional Police, as referenced in the above motion.

<sup>5</sup> All HRP personnel authorized to activate a public alert through the Alert Ready system.

<sup>6</sup> Integrated Emergency Services or IES is an integrated emergency dispatch centre responsible for answering and processing all calls made to 911 within HRM.

<sup>7</sup> HRP’s Emergency Planning Administrator falls within the Support Division. This role is responsible for the development and maintenance of internal emergency and business continuity plans, administration and coordination of the hfxALERT system, provincial Alert Ready planning and delivery, and for liaising and coordinating with the HRM and NS Emergency Management Offices, in relation to the police role in wider provincial emergency planning and preparedness.

or suspicious package) are prepared and readily available.

HRP's messaging and Alert Ready process are in compliance and based off ongoing work by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police<sup>8</sup> Emergency Management sub-committee on Emergency Alerting<sup>9</sup>. A copy of the Alert Ready procedures and pre-approved message content, which are housed on the HRP Intranet for members to access, can be found in **Attachment 3** – "Alert Ready - Procedures for HRP Intranet."

Public alerts issued through the Alert Ready system are intended for:

- The most serious and time-critical emergencies
- Soliciting the public's attention
- Directing the public to act (be on the lookout for, shelter in place, evacuate, etc.)

### Alerts issued by HRP

Since gaining direct access to the Alert Ready system in 2021, HRP has issued two alerts – both within the last 24 months. Details of the two alerts issued through the Alert Ready system are as follows:

- On August 28, 2023, HRP issued an alert through the Alert Ready system for a vulnerable 16-year-old non-verbal youth who was reported missing from a local shopping mall. The youth was safely located. A copy of the Alert Ready message sent out in relation to this incident can be found in **Attachment 4**.
- On April 30, 2024, HRP issued an alert through the Alert Ready system in relation to a man, believed to be armed with a firearm and dangerous, in Dartmouth. Following an investigation, the suspect was arrested the following day and charged in connection with this incident. A copy of the Alert Ready message sent out in relation to this incident can be found in **Attachment 5**.

### Alerts considered, but not sent by HRP

HRP officers are dispatched to approximately 100,000 calls for service per year. During the course of any critical incident<sup>10</sup>, HRP would consider whether issuing an alert would benefit the unfolding situation.

In accordance with HRP's policy, prior to issuing a public alert through the Alert Ready system, the following criteria shall be met:

- There is an active threat<sup>11</sup>/ immediate action rapid deployment (IARD)<sup>12</sup> incident; and
- The circumstances are believed to cause imminent threat to the public of serious bodily harm or death; and
- There is sufficient descriptive detail and information of the threat, and the geographical location involved to provide clear direction and guidance to the public; and
- The issuance of a public alert would not place the public and/or responding emergency personnel at greater risk than not issuing an alert

As noted above in the criteria, there needs to be sufficient detail and information about a threat and its location prior to issuing an alert through the Alert Ready system – something that is often difficult in an unfolding situation.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cacp.ca/about.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cacp.ca/emergency-management-committee.html>

<sup>10</sup> Critical Incidents are typically unplanned events such as hostage takings, barricaded persons, workplace violence, and other crisis situations.

<sup>11</sup> One or more individuals who seek out an environment that offers multiple victims for the purpose of inflicting death. An active threat is real, present, credible and has shown the determination to severely injure or cause death to those individuals.

<sup>12</sup> The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to an on-going, life-threatening situation, where delayed deployment could otherwise result in grievous bodily harm or death to innocent persons.



There is no data available from HRP to reflect the number of times an alert was considered but not issued. In situations when an alert was not issued, other tools may have been used to assist police.

In some instances, such as a recent weapons call at Mount Saint Vincent University in Bedford on May 29, 2025, HRP was prepared to send an alert, if one was required. However, it was quickly determined that there was no threat and the incident did not warrant an emergency alert.

In this particular incident, there were second-hand reports that an armed robbery may have taken place at the university's café. There were no reports of gunshots and no reports of injuries. Police searched the school and found no evidence of a threat.

As the event was unfolding, HRP sent two media releases, both of which were posted to the organization's social media accounts and website. The first release<sup>13</sup> notified the public of a weapons complaint at the university and asked the public to avoid the area. The second release<sup>14</sup> confirmed there was no threat at the university.

On July 27, 2024, there was a shooting at the Africville National Historic Site while hundreds of people were gathered to celebrate the 41<sup>st</sup> annual Africville reunion, injuring five people.

Police were able to quickly determine that this was an isolated and contained incident. There was no indication of any potential for further harm to the community outside of the original incident.

HRP issued a news release to confirm a shooting had taken place at Africville Park and to ask the public to remain out of the area to allow officers to conduct the investigation. This information was also posted to HRP's website and social media accounts.

Due to the fact this was an isolated incident and there was no indication of any potential for further harm to the community, an alert was not an appropriate tool for this particular situation.

## **HRP - Additional information**

### **AMBER Alert**

An AMBER Alert<sup>15</sup> is an urgent appeal public notification that a child or vulnerable person has been abducted.

When an AMBER Alert is activated in Nova Scotia, information will be shared through various avenues including television, radio, newspaper, and social media<sup>16</sup>. This information-sharing will occur at various times until the alert is cancelled, either because the investigation has been successful or when because law enforcement no longer considers the alert effective.

A copy of the "HRP AMBER Alert Activation Flow" can be found in **Attachment 6**.

An AMBER Alert will only be activated if:

- Police have confirmed that an abduction has taken place; and
- The victim is a child, or a person of proven physical or mental disability; and
- There is reason to believe the victim is in danger of serious physical injury; and

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.halifax.ca/home/news/police-investigating-weapons-complaint-1>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.halifax.ca/home/news/no-threat-mount-saint-vincent-university>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.halifax.ca/safety-security/police/programs-services/amber-alert>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AmberAlertNSAlerteAmberNE>

- There is information available that, if broadcasted to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the victim

An AMBER Alert should not be activated if all of the above criteria are not met. It is important to remember that an AMBER Alerts is not always appropriate in every circumstance, and that their continued effectiveness depends on ensuring that they are only used in cases that meet the above criteria.

AMBER Alert guidelines:

- An AMBER Alert may only be activated by the investigating police agencies
- An AMBER Alert is intended only for the most serious, time-critical abduction cases
- An AMBER Alert is not used for cases involving runaways or parental abduction, except in life-threatening situations
- A public notification will be issued and posted on the AMBER Alert Nova Scotia Facebook page when an alert is cancelled.

A copy of the “HRP AMBER Alert Standard Operating Procedure” can be found in **Attachment 7**.

### **hfxALERT**

hfxALERT<sup>17</sup> is not the same as Alert Ready. It would not be used by police as a primary means of communicating with the public during an emergency situation – but is a useful tool for specific situations.

hfxALERT is used for informing municipal residents about emergencies that do not meet the criteria for Alert Ready. This includes urgent and non-urgent notifications from municipal Emergency Management, HRP, Halifax Fire & Emergency, as well as municipal winter parking ban notices.

Residents are required to sign up to receive notifications from hfxALERT through the HRM website. This ensures the municipality can reach individuals to share important information quickly based on set locations, such as your home or workplace.

Because hfxALERT is a voluntary signup system, only a small fraction of the HRM population is signed up for this service.

HRP's access to hfxALERT is limited to internal messaging only. This means that the hfxALERT system is used on a regular basis by HRP for such things as:

- Overtime call outs
- Extra duty opportunities
- Emergency Response Team collective messaging
- Community Response Officer collective messaging
- Volunteer collective messaging
- Administrative messaging
- Internal operational messaging

For privacy reasons, HRP has no access to the hfxALERT citizen database.

If HRP wanted to send out a non-urgent message using hfxALERT, police would need to connect with the HRM Emergency Management Office (EMO), who would send the message on our behalf. To date, HRP has not had the occasion to engage with HRM EMO to use the system in that manner.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.halifax.ca/safety-security/emergency-management/hfxalert>

## **News releases and social media**

HRP regularly issues news releases to inform the public about a variety of topics including missing persons investigations, police presence in their community, weapons complaints, etc.

News releases issued by HRP are sent to local media outlets for wider distribution. They are also posted to HRP's Facebook page<sup>18</sup> and X account<sup>19</sup> (formerly Twitter) for the public to access. In addition, news releases are posted to HRP's website<sup>20</sup>. In 2024, HRP issued over 300 news releases.

In June 2025, HRM launched six official accounts on Bluesky<sup>21</sup> and prepared to discontinue its eight official X accounts. HRP, along with other municipal business units such as Halifax Water and Halifax Public Libraries, manage their social media strategies separate from the municipality.

HRP does not currently plan to discontinue the use of X, as doing so would be inconsistent with the practice of law enforcement agencies across North America.

HRP has an established presence on X with more than 138,000 followers. Not being able to reach followers with important public safety information is too great of a risk for HRP to consider discontinuing X and moving to a new platform at this time.

As part of our regular practice, HRP will monitor the evolving social media landscape and make future decisions as required. If HRP were to adopt a new platform or platforms, Bluesky would be considered an option.

## **RCMP HRD use of the Alert Ready system**

### **Serious Incident Alerts**

RCMP HRD is guided by the Nova Scotia RCMP (H Division) policies when it comes to Serious Incident Alerts.

If at any time an incident poses imminent risk to the public, RCMP H Division may issue a Serious Incident Alert via the Alert Ready system.

A Serious Incident Alert is a tool the Division uses to alert the public of an incident. The Division may also use other communication tools to inform and provide updates to the public about an incident; these tools include social media channels, the RCMP NS website, and interaction with the media.

H Division issues Serious Incident Alerts through the Alert Ready system when an emergent or ongoing incident may put the public in direct harm and there is an urgent need to ensure the public is informed of a threat and provided any applicable directions to mitigate public safety concerns.

Serious Incident Alerts can be broadcast province-wide or to specific geographic areas via the Alert Ready system. They are sent to:

- compatible wireless devices, radio and television
- compatible wireless devices only

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/HalifaxRegionalPolice/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://x.com/HfxRegPolice>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.halifax.ca/home/news?category=25>

<sup>21</sup> Bluesky is a social media service where users can share short posts containing text, images, and videos.

- radio and television only

Keeping public safety top of mind, H Division shares information as quickly and as frequently as possible during an ongoing incident. When new, critical information is available, Serious Incident Alerts are updated through the Critical Incident Commander or Risk Manager. Non-critical updates are provided through other communication means such as the Nova Scotia RCMP Facebook page<sup>22</sup> and X<sup>23</sup> (formerly Twitter) accounts.

The Alert Ready system assists in streamlining how alerts are distributed to the public. Serious Incident Alerts can go directly to wireless devices (compatible smartphones, some tablets, and potentially other electronics) in an impacted area. The message will provide information regarding a serious emergency event and complements other avenues of notification and distribution, such as social media, TV and radio.

Police activated alerts include emergent or ongoing incidents that may put the public in direct harm, and can include:

- Emergent firearm/weapons-related offences
- Active shooter/Immediate Action Rapid Deployment (IARD) incidents
- Terrorist attacks
- Chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) incidents with an established criminal nexus
- Civil disobedience/rioting
- Dangerous animal incidents

Serious Incident Alerts are intended to rapidly and broadly solicit the public's attention of the event and direct the public to act (e.g., shelter in place, evacuate, etc.)

As per the Nova Scotia RCMP policy, a Serious Incident Alert can only be activated/cancelled by those who have the delegated authority. While it is understood that positions identified in section 2.1.7. have delegated authority to issue a Serious Incident Alert, the Risk Manager or, when activated, the Critical Incident Commander has primary responsibility to direct, issue or modify a Serious Incident Alert.

A copy of the Nova Scotia RCMP Serious Incident Alert policy can be found in **Attachment 8**.

### **AMBER Alerts**

The Nova Scotia AMBER Alert program is a province-wide program which partners the law enforcement community, media broadcasting agencies and the public in locating an abducted child, or an abducted person with a proven mental or physical disability, when it is believed that his/her life could be in imminent danger.

The AMBER Alert System is "broadcast intrusive" meaning that the activated alert will automatically interrupt broadcasting. AMBER Alerts via Alert Ready will also go directly to wireless devices (compatible smartphones, some tablets, and potentially other electronics) in an impacted area. The Alert Ready message will provide information about the abducted person and suspect and compliments other avenues of notification and distribution, such as social media.

The program disseminates a widespread emergency alert to solicit the public's assistance in the safe and swift return of the child or abducted person with a proven mental or physical disability. The H Division

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/rcmpns/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://x.com/RCMPNS>

RCMP Operational Communications Center (OCC) is the provincial centre for dissemination of AMBER Alerts for RCMP in Nova Scotia.

Approval to issue an AMBER Alert for the H Division RCMP can only come from the Criminal Operations Officer (Crops), District Policing Officer (DPO), Support Services Officer (SSO) or their delegates. RCMP units in the Halifax District must request the issuance of an AMBER Alert via the OCC. The release of personal information in the AMBER Alert is permitted within Section 8 of the Privacy Act.

A copy of the AMBER Alert policy can be found in **Attachment 8**.

### **Vulnerable Missing Person Alert**

Please note: The RCMP Vulnerable Missing Person Alert policy is currently under review and revision

A Vulnerable Missing Person Alert will be broadcasted as a “non-intrusive alert,” meaning that the broadcaster receiving the activated alert can decide whether to interrupt broadcasting. A non-intrusive alert will not be broadcast on mobile phones.

In exigent circumstances, a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert may be broadcasted as an “intrusive alert,” meaning the alert will automatically interrupt broadcasting and will also go directly to wireless devices in an impacted area. The release of personal information in the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert is permitted within Section 8 of the Privacy Act.

The H Division RCMP OCC is the provincial centre for dissemination of Vulnerable Missing Person Alerts for RCMP in Nova Scotia. Approval to issue a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert for the H Division RCMP can only come from Crops, DPO, SSO or their delegates. RCMP units in the Halifax District must request issuance of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert via the OCC.

RCMP members refer to national policy on Missing Persons and the H Division policy for procedures in conducting a missing person investigation. If a child is suspected of being abducted, officers refer to the AMBER Alert policy listed above for information on issuing an AMBER Alert.

A copy of the Vulnerable Missing Persons Alert policy, as well as the national Missing Persons policy can be found in **Attachment 8**.

### **Alerts Issued by RCMP HRD**

#### **RCMP (Provincially)**

- Since Jan 1, 2024 - The RCMP has issued 12 alerts in the province of Nova Scotia including Dangerous Persons, Vulnerable Missing Persons, etc.
- Two of the 12 alerts were sent province wide. HRM received these alerts, but they were not the original requestor.

#### **Halifax Regional Detachment (Specific)**

##### **2024**

- January 2024 – Present:

- May 26, 2025: A Missing Vulnerable Persons Alert was sent for an individual who went missing from the Sheet Harbour area.
- At times, the units necessary to issue an alert are engaged proactively and alerts are drafted but often do not result in the issuance of an alert given the development of an incident. For example, a person deemed vulnerable is reported missing and safely located before an alert is sent.

## **2023**

- The RCMP OCC issued two Dangerous Persons alerts on behalf of HRD:
  - March 2, 2023: A Dangerous Persons Alert went out for a man who was allegedly armed with a knife in Cole Harbour. The man was later taken into custody.
  - October 30, 2023: A Dangerous Person Alert was issued as police responded to a hit and run on Shrewsbury Road in Cole Harbour. RCMP officers learned that a Good Samaritan was rendering assistance to a woman that was being held against her will in a vehicle. The vehicle and suspect were located at a nearby residence and suspect was taken into custody.

### **Alerts considered, but not sent by RCMP**

There is no data available from RCMP to reflect the number of times an alert was considered but not issued. In instances when an alert was not issued, other tools may have been used to assist police. There are many instances where an alert was being drafted but not needed as the incident was resolved.

### **News releases and social media**

RCMP in Nova Scotia uses a variety of methods to communicate broadly with the public.

RCMP regularly issue news releases, in accordance with our media relations and media release policies, about operational activities such as criminal investigations, serious collisions and missing persons.

In 2024, the Nova Scotia RCMP issued more than 700 news releases.

Our news releases are emailed to local and national media outlets, published on the Nova Scotia RCMP website<sup>24</sup> and shared on the Nova Scotia RCMP's Facebook and X accounts. We also use these social media platforms to inform the public about road closures, non-critical police updates and our participation in community events.

The Nova Scotia RCMP's English Facebook account<sup>25</sup> has more than 207K followers, and its English X account<sup>26</sup> has more than 155K followers.

All of the Nova Scotia RCMP's news releases and social media content are published in both official languages<sup>27</sup>.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications identified as a result of this report.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://rcmp.ca/en/nova-scotia/news>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/rcmpns>

<sup>26</sup> <https://x.com/home?lang=en-ca>

<sup>27</sup> More information: [How the RCMP in Nova Scotia communicates with the public | Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#)

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was required for the purpose of preparing this report.

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Under subsection 55(1) of the Police Act, the function of a board is to provide:

- (a) civilian governance on behalf of the council in relation to the enforcement of law, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime in the municipality; and
- (b) the administrative direction, organization and policy required to maintain an adequate, effective and efficient police department

Section 8 (2)(b),(h),(j) and (k) of the Police Board By-law, Halifax Regional Municipality By-law P100.

8. (2) The Board in accordance with the Police Act and HRM Bylaws may carry out any of the following roles and responsibilities:

- (b) provide civilian governance on behalf of the Council in relation to enforcement of the law, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime within the municipality;
- (h) carry out any studies or investigations respecting its civilian governance responsibilities;
- (j) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing goals and methods;
- (k) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – HRP Alert Ready - Direct Access Policy
- Attachment 2 – HRP Alert Ready Activation Process Flow
- Attachment 3 – Alert Ready - Procedures for HRP Intranet
- Attachment 4 – Alert Ready message involving a missing 16-year-old
- Attachment 5 – Alert Ready message related to an armed man in Dartmouth
- Attachment 6 – HRP AMBER Alert Activation Flow
- Attachment 7 – HRP AMBER Alert Standard Operating Procedure
- Attachment 8 – RCMP HRD policies, and procedures as noted in the report

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Report Prepared by:       Natasha Pace, Coordinator – Halifax Regional Police  
                                  Insp. Jeff Mitchell, Management and Administrative Services Officer – RCMP HRD

Report Approved by:      Chief Don MacLean – Halifax Regional Police  
                                  Superintendent Greg Robertson, Support Division – Halifax Regional Police  
                                  Chief Superintendent John Duff, Officer in Charge – RCMP HRD  
                                  Bill Moore, Commissioner of Public Safety, 902.490.8545

# ALERT READY – DIRECT ACCESS

## 1. GENERAL

- A.** This policy establishes roles, responsibilities and procedures related to Halifax Regional Police's (HRP) use of the Alert Ready national public alert system as the primary method of issuance.
- B.** This policy is understood as governed by and in alignment with provincial and federal policies and regulations relating to the Alert Ready system.
- C.** Public alerts through the Alert Ready system are intended for:
  - i. The most serious and time-critical emergencies,
  - ii. Soliciting the public's attention,
  - iii. Directing the public to act (be on the lookout for, shelter in place, evacuate, etc.).
- D.** This policy applies to the "primary" alerting system that HRP shall use in the event that a public alert is required and approved. When the Alert Ready - Direct Access cannot be practically utilized, NS EMO remains the back-up process for issuing alerts.

## 2. POLICY

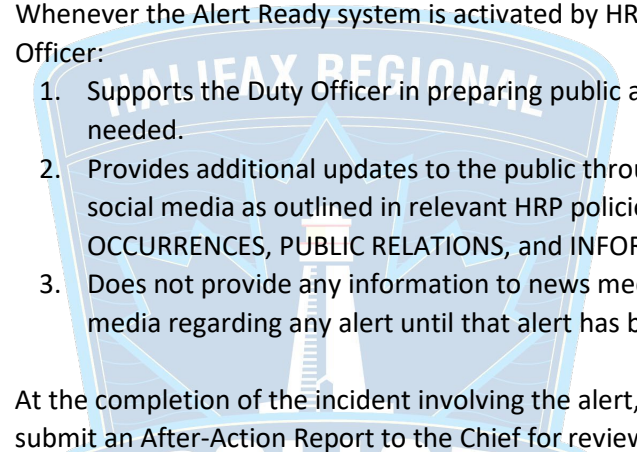
- A.** The Chief of Police or designate authorizes activation, updating or cancellation of all public alerts issued by HRP through the Alert Ready system.
- B.** HRP supports requests for public alerts through the Alert Ready system from other agencies at the discretion of the Chief or designate.
- C.** Prior to issuing a public alert by HRP through the Alert Ready system, the following criteria shall be met:
  - i. There is an active threat/immediate action rapid deployment (IARD) incident; and
  - ii. The circumstances are believed to cause imminent threat to the public of serious bodily harm or death; and
  - iii. There is sufficient descriptive detail and information of the threat and the geographical location involved to provide clear direction and guidance to the public; and
  - iv. The issuance of a public alert would not place the public and/or responding emergency personnel at greater risk than not issuing an alert.



- D. HRP Information Management Officer ensures that all its Authorized Alert Issuers are trained to utilize the Alert Ready system. Only HRP staff who have been designated as Authorized Alert Issuers and who have been trained to use the Alert Ready system issue public alerts.
- E. The Corporate Affairs Office ensures that pre-approved message content is available to Authorized Alert Issuers for use within the Public Alert system.

#### PROCEDURE

- F. When any sworn or civilian member of HRP believes that the criteria for a public alert within the jurisdiction of HRP have been met, that member shall immediately contact their supervisor who shall initiate the notification process through the appropriate chain of command to the Duty Officer for review.
- G. If the Duty Officer is satisfied that the circumstances warrant a public alert, the Duty Officer advises the Chief or designate of the circumstances and requests public alerting. The Chief or designate makes the decision to issue a public alert.
- H. If the Chief or designate authorizes a public alert:
  - i. The Duty Officer:
    - 1. Contacts an Authorized Alert Issuer and directs them to prepare a public alert. Authorized usernames are held by the Divisional Commander responsible for IES.
    - 2. Maintains records in the HRP Records Management System (RMS) specifying the rationale to issue the initial alert and any subsequent alerts.
  - ii. The Authorized Alert Issuer:
    - 1. Develops a public alert message based on pre-approved message content.
      - a. Where deviation from a pre-approved message is required, the Authorized Alert Issuer confirms the message content with the Duty Officer.
    - 2. Specifies the geographic location to which the alert should be applied.
    - 3. Alerts the EMO Duty Officer to make them aware of the Alert Ready activation. Other public safety access points shall be informed as practical.
    - 4. Issues the public alert via the Alert Ready system.
  - iii. If active threat/IARD incident evolves to warrant one or more further public alerts, the Duty Officer repeats the relevant process, outlined in sections G and H (i) and (ii). above, to confirm the alert with the Chief or designate and to direct the Authorized Alert Issuer to prepare and transmit the public alert.

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- iv. When the circumstances no longer warrant the public alert:
    - 1. The Duty Officer:
      - a. Confirms with the Chief or designate that the public alert can be terminated, and, if so:
        - i. Directs the Authorized Alert Issuer to issue a public alert message confirming that the alert is terminated.
    - 2. The Authorized Alert Issuer:
      - a. Develops a public alert message terminating the initial public alert and subsequent public alerts, based on pre-approved message content.
      - b. Issues the public alert termination via the Alert Ready system.
  - v. Whenever the Alert Ready system is activated by HRP, the Public Information Officer:
    - 1. Supports the Duty Officer in preparing public alert message updates as needed.
    - 2. Provides additional updates to the public through news media and social media as outlined in relevant HRP policies on MAJOR OCCURRENCES, PUBLIC RELATIONS, and INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION.
    - 3. Does not provide any information to news media or through social media regarding any alert until that alert has been transmitted.
  - vi. At the completion of the incident involving the alert, the Duty Officer shall submit an After-Action Report to the Chief for review

#### EXTERNAL AGENCIES

- I. In instances where multiple jurisdictions including HRP's are involved in responding to a Critical Incident, if the threat or incident moves from HRP's to another jurisdiction, HRP Duty Officer coordinates with the Involved agencies to ensure coordinated communications through the Alert Ready system.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

- A. Active threat:** One or more individuals who seek out an environment that offers multiple victims for the purpose of inflicting death. An active threat is real, present, credible and has shown the determination to severely injure or cause death to those individuals.

- B. Alert Ready:** Is the public facing name of the National Alert and Aggregation Dissemination system and supporting national initiative.
- C. Authorized Alert Issuer:** All HRP personnel authorized to activate a public alert through the Alert Ready system.
- D. Emergency Management Organization (EMO):** An organization that is empowered by the Emergency Management Act federally, and at a provincial and territorial level by individually named Acts. EMOs are provincial and territorial level groups that are tasked with providing prevention and preparedness education & training before emergencies occur and manage responses when they do occur. EMOs collaborate with fire departments, fire marshals, hospitals, emergency medical services, police, search and rescue, and many others depending on jurisdictional services available.
- E. Immediate Action Rapid Deployment (IARD) incident:** The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to an on-going, life threatening situation, where delayed deployment could otherwise result in grievous bodily harm or death to innocent persons.

Effective Date	July 5, 2021
Policy Sponsor	Inspector, Information Management

By Order Of:



Original Signed

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**Dan Kinsella**  
**Chief of Police**



ALERT READY ACTIVATION

- Incident occurs:**
- A. Risk to public Safety;
  - B. Risk to public order; or,
  - C. Amber Alert



- Duty Officer**
- A. Confirm Request meets criteria
  - B. Confirm Public Alert is necessary
  - C. Confirm Chief/Deputy approves
  - D. Authorize use of ALERT READY
  - E. Advise Corporate Communications
  - F. Advise RCMP H Div OCC



PRIMARY

- HRP Authorized Issuer**
- A. Confirm message content with Duty Officer
  - B. Draft ALERT READY message in accordance with pre-approved ALERT READY Templates
  - C. Call Duty Officer to report when message is ready for transmission
  - D. Advise RCMP OCC that ALERT READY message is about to be transmitted
  - E. Advise NS EMO Duty Officer that ALERT READY message is about to be transmitted



- HRP Authorized Issuer**
- A. Initiate ALERT Ready Notification using **Live** Pelmorex Alert Ready Link



- Corporate Communications**
- A. Send amplifying and supporting messages via Twitter
  - B. Prepare incident updates for transmission via ALERT READY
  - C. Send updates to Duty Officer for approval
  - D. Send approved messages to HRP Authorized Issuer for transmission via ALERT READY



- Alert Cancellation**
- A. Corporate Communications Confirm Alert Cancellation message wording
  - B. Corporate Communications confirm whether any other messaging or further updates will be sent va social media
  - C. Duty Officer send Alert Cancellation message wording to HRP Authorized Issuer
  - D. HRP Authorized Issuer transmit Alert cancellation



SECONDARY

- Shubie Radio**
- A. Call Shubie Radio at 1-833-758-4540
  - B. Provide Shubie Operator with Alert Authorizer PIN and Name
  - C. Complete Alert Ready Request Form
  - D. Submit request by email to Shubie@NovaSotia.ca
  - E. Advise RCMP OCC that ALERT READY message is about to be transmitted



- Shubie Radio**
- A. Initiate ALERT READY notification



- Corporate Communications**
- A. Send amplifying and supporting messages via Twitter
  - B. Prepare incident updates for transmission via ALERT READY
  - C. Send updates to Duty Officer for approval
  - D. Send approved messages to Duty Officer for onward relay to Shubie Radio for transmission via ALERT READY



- Alert Cancellation**
- A. Corporate Communications confirms Alert Cancellation message wording
  - B. Corporate Communications confirm whether any further updates will be sent via social media
  - C. Duty Officer contact Shubie Radio and request Alert Cancellation
  - D. Shubie Radio transmit alert cancellation

- HRP AUTHORIZED ISSUERS**
- IES Supervisors
  - IM Division Commander
  - Emergency Planning Administrator

HRP ALERT AUTHORIZER		
Andrew Matthews	D/Chief	(902) 476-4273
Dean Simmonds	D/Chief	(902) 298-8436
Dave Boon	Superintendent	(902) 877-1786
Carolyn Nichols	Superintendent	(902) 292-3674
Greg Robertson	Superintendent	(902) 818 0432
Stephanie Johnson	Superintendent	

## **Alert Ready**

The ALERT READY System is an extremely powerful nationally managed emergency public alerting system that pushes emergency messaging to most mobile devices and public radio and television broadcasts.

Public alerts are intended for:

- the most serious and time-critical emergencies,
- soliciting the public's attention,
- directing the public to act (be on the lookout for, shelter in place, evacuate, etc.).

## **ALERT READY Activation Criteria**

Prior to requesting the activation of a public alert broadcast, the following criteria must be met. There is an active threat; and

- the circumstances are believed to cause imminent threat to the public of serious bodily harm or death; and
- there is sufficient descriptive detail and information of the threat and the geographical location involved to provide clear direction and guidance to the public; and
- the issuance of a public alert would not place the public and / or responding emergency personnel at greater risk than not issuing an alert.

## **ALERT READY Authorization**

Public alerts are issued under the authority of the Chief of Police. The following individuals are authorized by the Chief of Police to approve HRP activation of an ALERT READY public alert:

- D/Chief Matthews
- D/Chief Simmonds
- Supt Boon
- Supt Johnson
- Supt Nichols
- Supt Robertson

## ALERT READY Authorized Public alert Issuers

Within HRP, the following people are authorized to issue an ALERT READY public alert:

- IES Supervisors
- IM Division Commander
- HRP Emergency Planning Administrator

## ALERT READY Message Templates

### Ongoing Police Operation

Police Operation		Opération policière
Headline	Police Operation in progress	Opération de police en cours
Event Description	Halifax Regional Police are responding to a police operation at [street name/location] area of [name of community].	La Police regionale d'Halifax répond à une opération de police en cours à [nom de la rue/emplacement] dans le secteur de [nom de la communauté].
Instructions	Lock your doors, stay away from windows and avoid the area.	Verrouillez vos portes, restez à l'abri loin des fenêtres et évitez le secteur.
Area Description	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
Text	Halifax Regional Police are responding to a police operation in the [street name/route number/neighbourhood] area of [community]. If you are in the area, STAY INSIDE away from doors and windows. All others, AVOID THE AREA until further notice. 9 1 1 should only be used to report emergency situations.	La Police regionale d'Halifax répond à une opération de police dans le secteur [nom de la rue/numéro de la route/quartier] de [communauté]. Si vous êtes dans le secteur, RESTEZ À L'INTÉRIEUR, loin des portes et des fenêtres. Toutes autres personnes doivent ÉVITER LA ZONE jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Composez le 9 1 1 uniquement pour signaler une urgence.

## Dangerous Person

	Dangerous Person – unknown threat	Personne dangereuse – menace inconnue
<b>Headline</b>	Dangerous Person	Personne Dangereuse
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police are investigating reports of a dangerous person in the [street name/location] area of [name of community].	La Police régionale d’Halifax enquête sur des rapports faisant état d’une personne dangereuse dans le secteur [nom de la rue/numéro de la route/quartier] de [communauté].
<b>Instructions</b>	Lock your doors, stay away from windows and avoid the area.	Verrouillez vos portes, restez à l’abri loin des fenêtres et évitez le secteur.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to reports of a dangerous person in the [street name/route number/neighbourhood] area of [community]. If you are in the area, STAY INSIDE away from doors and windows. All others, AVOID THE AREA until further notice. 9 1 1 should only be used to report emergency situations.	La Police régionale d’Halifax enquête sur des rapports faisant état d’une personne dangereuse dans le secteur [nom de la rue/numéro de la route/quartier] de [communauté]. Si vous êtes dans le secteur, RESTEZ À L’INTÉRIEUR, loin des portes et des fenêtres. Toutes autres personnes doivent ÉVITER LA ZONE jusqu’à nouvel ordre. Le 9 1 1 ne doit être utilisé que pour signaler des situations d’urgence.

## Active Threat

	Active threat - Initial	Menace active
<b>Headline</b>	Active shooter	Tireur actif
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to an [active shooter/armed individual] in the [street name/location] area of [name of community]. The suspect is described as [insert description of subject if available i.e. Name, age, height, built, clothing].	La Police regionale d'Halifax répond à [un tireur actif/personne armé] dans le secteur [nom de la rue/location] de [communauté]. Le suspect est [Description du suspect si disponible nom, âge, grandeur, poids, vêtements].
<b>Instructions</b>	If in the area, SHELTER IN PLACE. DO NOT disclose police locations. BE CAUTIOUS if not in the area. Call 9 1 1 for emergencies or tips.	Si vous êtes dans le secteur, S'ABRITER SUR PLACE. NE PAS divulguer les positions de la police. Soyez vigilant si vous n'êtes pas dans la région. Appelez le 9 1 1 pour des urgences ou des indices.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to reports of an [active shooter/armed individual] in the [street name/route number/neighbourhood] area of [community]. If in the area, find a safe location and SHELTER IN PLACE. DO NOT disclose police locations. BE CAUTIOUS if not in the area. Call 9 1 1 to report emergencies or tips. Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	La Police regionale d'Halifax répond à [un tireur actif/personne armé] dans le secteur [nom de la rue/location] de [communauté]. Le suspect est [Description du suspect si disponible nom, âge, grandeur, poids, vêtements]. Si vous êtes dans le secteur, S'ABRITER SUR PLACE. NE PAS divulguer les positions de la police. Soyez vigilant si vous n'êtes pas dans la région. Appelez le 9 1 1 pour des urgences ou des indices Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.



## Active Threat Changing Locations

	UPDATE: Active threat changing locations	MIS À JOUR : Menace active changeant de lieu
<b>Headline</b>	UPDATE Active threat changing locations	Menace active changeant de lieu
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police believe the suspect [description of subject: Name, age, height, built, clothing] is moving [on foot/in a vehicle] [description, licence plate must include spaces] going toward [location].	La Police regionale d'Halifax croit que le suspect [description du sujet : nom, âge, taille, corpulence, vêtements] se déplace [à pied ou dans un véhicule] [description, la plaque d'immatriculation incluant les espaces] en direction de [lieu].
<b>Instructions</b>	BE CAUTIOUS. If in the area, SHELTER IN PLACE. If you see the suspect, DO NOT APPROACH. Call 9 1 1 to report emergencies or tips.	SOYEZ PRUDENT. Si vous êtes dans le secteur, S'ABRITER SUR PLACE. Si vous voyez le suspect, NE L'APPROCHEZ PAS. Appelez le 9 1 1 pour signaler des urgences ou des indices.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police believe the suspect [description of subject: Name, age, height, built, clothing] is moving [on foot/in a vehicle] [description, licence plate must include spaces] going toward [location]. BE CAUTIOUS. If in the area, SHELTER IN PLACE. If you see the suspect, DO NOT APPROACH. Call 9 1 1 to report emergencies or tips. Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	La Police regionale d'Halifax croit que le suspect [description du sujet : nom, âge, taille, corpulence, vêtements] se déplace [à pied ou dans un véhicule] [description, la plaque d'immatriculation incluant les espaces] en direction de [lieu]. SOYEZ PRUDENT. Si vous êtes dans le secteur, S'ABRITER SUR PLACE. Si vous voyez le suspect, NE L'APPROCHEZ PAS. Appelez le 9 1 1 pour signaler des urgences ou des indices. Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.

## Active Threat Update

	UPDATE: Active threat – Release of Description	MISE À JOUR : Publication de la description de la menace active
<b>Headline</b>	Halifax Regional Police releases a description	Police regionale d’Halifax MISE À JOUR La communique une description
<b>Event Description</b>	The [active shooter/armed individual] in the [street name/route number/neighbourhood] area is a [man/woman] in [his/her] [20s, 30s, 40s, etc], [X foot XX, XXX pounds], with [colour] hair, [colour] eyes, wearing [clothing description].	Le [tireur actif/individu armé] dans le quartier de [nom de la rue/numéro de la route/quartier] est [un homme/une femme] de [20/30/40] ans, qui mesure [X pied XX] et pèse [XXX livres], avec des cheveux [couleur], des yeux [couleur], portant [description des vêtements].
<b>Instructions</b>	Continue to SHELTER IN PLACE. If you see the suspect, DO NOT APPROACH. Call 9 1 1.	Continuez à vous abriter sur place. Si vous voyez le suspect, ne vous approchez pas. Appelez le 9 1 1.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	The [active shooter/armed individual] in the [street name/route number/neighbourhood] area is a [man/woman] in [his/her] [20s, 30s, 40s, etc], [X foot XX, XXX pounds], with [colour] hair, [colour] eyes, wearing [clothing description]. Continue to SHELTER IN PLACE. If you see the suspect, DO NOT APPROACH. Call 9 1 1.	Le [tireur actif/individu armé] dans le secteur de [nom de la rue/numéro de la route/quartier] est [un homme/une femme] de [20/30/40] ans, qui mesure [X pied XX] et pèse [XXX livres], avec des cheveux [couleur], des yeux [couleur], portant [description des vêtements]. Continuez à vous abriter sur place. Si vous voyez le suspect, ne vous approchez pas. Appelez le 9 1 1.

## Active Threat Release of Identity

UPDATE: Release of identity		MISE À JOUR : Publication de l'identité
<b>Headline</b>	UPDATE Halifax Regional Police releases identity	La Police regionale d'Halifax MISE À JOUR La) communique l'identité
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police have identified the suspect in the [name of community] as [insert age] year old [insert full name].	La Police regionale d'Halifax identifié le [tireur actif/individu armé] de [nom de la communauté] comme étant [prénom et nom], [XX] ans.
<b>Instructions</b>	Continue to SHELTER IN PLACE. If you see the suspect, DO NOT APPROACH. Call 9 1 1.	Continuez à vous abriter sur place. Si vous voyez le suspect, ne vous approchez pas. Appelez le 9 1 1.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police have identified the [active shooter/armed individual] in the [name of community] as [insert age] year old [insert full name]. Continue to SHELTER IN PLACE. If you see the suspect, DO NOT APPROACH. Call 9 1 1.	La Police regionale d'Halifax identifié le [tireur actif/individu armé] de [nom de la communauté] comme étant [prénom et nom], [XX] ans. Continuez à vous abriter sur place. Si vous voyez le suspect, ne vous approchez pas. Appelez le 9 1 1.

## Active Threat Release of Vehicle Information

	UPDATE: Release of Vehicle information	MISE À JOUR : publication des informations sur les véhicules
<b>Headline</b>	Halifax Regional Police identify vehicle used by suspect	La Police regionale d'Halifax a identifié le véhicule utilisé par le suspect
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police [believe/have confirmed] the suspect [name, if known] is travelling in a [colour] [year/make/model of vehicle] with licence plate number [X X X X X licence plate must include spaces].	La (SERVICE DE POLICE) [croit/a confirmé] que le suspect [prénom et nom si connu] se déplace à bord [d'un/d'une] [marque et modèle du véhicule] [couleur] de [année] portant la plaque d'immatriculation [X X X X X - incluant les espaces].
<b>Instructions</b>	Do not approach vehicle. If seen, Call 9 1 1.	Ne pas s'approcher. Composer le 9 1 1 immédiatement si vous le voyez.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police [believes/has confirmed] the suspect [name, if known] is travelling in a [colour/year/make/model of vehicle] with licence plate number [licence plate must include spaces]. Do not approach vehicle. If seen, Call 9 1 1. Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	La Police regionale d'Halifax [croit/a confirmé] que le suspect [prénom et nom si connu] se déplace à bord [d'un/d'une] [marque et modèle du véhicule] [couleur] de [année] portant la plaque d'immatriculation [X X X X X - incluant les espaces]. Ne pas s'approcher. Composer le 9 1 1 immédiatement si vous le voyez. Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.

## Active Threat at School

	Active threat at school	Menace active à l'école
<b>Headline</b>	Active threat at a school	Menace active à l'école
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to an active threat at [name of school] in [name of community]. Roads are blocked.	La Police regionale d'Halifax répond à une menace active à [nom de l'école] à [nom de la communauté]. Les routes sont bloquées.
<b>Instructions</b>	Avoid the area. Remain inside and shelter in place.	Évitez le secteur. Restez à l'intérieur, à l'abri.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to an active threat at [name of school] in [name of community]. Roads are blocked. Avoid the area. Remain inside and shelter in place. Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	La Police regionale d'Halifax répond à une menace active à [nom de l'école] à [nom de la communauté]. Les routes sont bloquées. Évitez le secteur. Restez à l'intérieur, à l'abri. Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.

## Bomb Threat / Suspicious Package

	Threat to Safety / Bomb threat / Suspicious Package	Menace pour la sécurité / Alerte à la bombe / Colis suspect
<b>Headline</b>	Threat to public safety	Menace pour la sécurité
<b>Event Description</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to a [threat to public safety/bomb threat/suspicious package] in [location]. Nearby homes and buildings are being evacuated, and roads are blocked.	La Police regionale d'Halifax se trouve à [location] où il y a une [Menace pour la sécurité / Alerte à la bombe / Colis suspect]. On évacue les résidences et les bâtiments à proximité, et les voies du secteur sont bloquées.
<b>Instructions</b>	Avoid the area. Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	Évitez le secteur. Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Halifax Regional Police are responding to a [threat to public safety/bomb threat/suspicious package] in [location]. Nearby homes and buildings are being evacuated, and roads are blocked. Avoid the area. Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	La Police regionale d'Halifax se trouve à [location] où il y a une [Menace pour la sécurité / Alerte à la bombe / Colis suspect]. On évacue les résidences et les bâtiments à proximité, et les voies du secteur sont bloquées. Évitez le secteur. Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.

## Police Operation Concluded

	Police Operation over	L'Opération de la police est terminée
<b>Headline</b>	Police Operation over	L'opération de la police est terminée
<b>Event Description</b>	The Halifax Regional Police operation has ended. There is no longer a threat to public safety.	L'opération de la Police regionale d'Halifax est terminée. Il n'y a plus de menace pour la sécurité publique.
<b>Instructions</b>	Residents may exit their homes and may return to normal activities. Police remain in the area as part of the investigation.	Les résidents peuvent sortir de leur domicile et reprendre leurs activités normales. Les policiers demeurent dans le secteur pour enquêter.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	The Halifax Regional Police operation has ended. There is no longer a threat to public safety. Residents may exit their homes and may return to normal activities. Police remain in the area as part of the investigation.	L'opération de la Police regionale d'Halifax est terminée. Il n'y a plus de menace pour la sécurité publique. Les résidents peuvent sortir de leur domicile et reprendre leurs activités normales. Les policiers demeurent dans le secteur pour enquêter.

# Amber Alert

Amber Alert		Alerte Amber
<b>Headline</b>	Amber Alert	Alerte Amber
<b>Event Description</b>	Victim [name, age]. Suspect [name, age]. Last seen in a [vehicle description] licence plate [must include space in the licence plate] heading [direction] on [road/highway] toward [community].	Victime [nom, âge]. Suspect [nom, âge]. Vu pour la dernière fois dans un véhicule [description du véhicule] immatriculé [incluant l'espace dans la plaque d'immatriculation] se dirigeant [direction] sur [route/autoroute] vers [localité].
<b>Instructions</b>	If seen, call 9 1 1 immediately. Do not attempt to approach or apprehend the suspect(s). . Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	Si vous le voyez, appelez immédiatement le 9 1 1. Ne tentez pas d'approcher ou d'appréhender le(s) suspect(s). Miss au jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.
<b>Area Description</b>	[Area/ address / building / street / community]	[Endroit/ adresse / édifice / rue / communauté]
<b>Text</b>	Victim [name, age]. Suspect [name, age]. Last seen in a [vehicle description] licence plate [must include space in the licence plate] heading [direction] on [road/highway] toward [community]. If seen, call 9 1 1 immediately. Do not attempt to approach or apprehend the suspect(s). . Updates @hfxregpolice on X and Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.	Victime [nom, âge]. Suspect [nom, âge]. Vu pour la dernière fois dans un véhicule [description du véhicule] immatriculé [incluant l'espace dans la plaque d'immatriculation] se dirigeant [direction] sur [route/autoroute] vers [localité]. Si vous le voyez, appelez immédiatement le 9 1 1. Ne tentez pas d'approcher ou d'appréhender le(s) suspect(s). Mises à jour @hfxregpolice sur X et Halifax Regional Police on Facebook.



**Alert Ready message sent out on August 28, 2023:**

Missing Vulnerable Person

Halifax Regional Police is seeking the public's assistance in locating a missing [REDACTED] youth. [REDACTED] is described as [REDACTED], approximately [REDACTED], with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED] was last seen at 2:10 pm heading south [REDACTED] from the Halifax Shopping Centre. Ground Search and Rescue is in the area actively looking for [REDACTED]

Anyone with information on his whereabouts, is asked to call police at 902-490-5020.

Anonymous tips can be sent to Crime Stoppers by calling toll-free 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), submitting a secure web tip at [www.crimestoppers.ns.ca](http://www.crimestoppers.ns.ca) or by using the P3 Tips app.

**Alert Ready message sent out on April 30, 2024:**

**Dangerous Man Armed with a Fire Arm**

Police are warning the public to be on the lookout for a white male late 40s, 6 ft 170 lbs, average build, bald , tattoos on both arms, wearing blue jeans, black t-shirt, work boots. Individual is believed to be armed and dangerous.

Police ask public to stay away from the Gaston Road area and ask residents to shelter in place. Call 911 if you spot the man. Do not approach. Halifax Regional Police will update when more details are available.

**Areas**

0-100 block Gaston Road Dartmouth



AMBER ALERT ACTIVATION

AMBER ALERT CRITERIA

The following criteria must be met before an Amber Alert can be initiated

- A. The child must be under 18 yrs of age or have a proven mental or physical disability
- B. Police must believe that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death
- C. Police must have sufficient descriptive information of the child, abductor and/or suspect vehicle

An Amber Alert Shall NOT be initiated if:

- A. A child or vulnerable person is missing, and foul play IS NOT suspected
- B. A child or vulnerable person has run away from a residence; and/or
- C. It is a suspected parental abduction and the child is NOT believed to be in danger



AMBER ALERT ACTIVATION

Duty Officer

- A. Confirms with Chief/Deputy Chief authorization of Alert Ready activation
- B. Contacts IES Supervisor, IM Division Commander or Emergency Planning Administrator and direct the preparation of an AMBER ALERT message via Broadcast Intrusive (BI) ALERT READY message to all of Nova Scotia
- C. Notifies Divisional Manager of Corporate Affairs or designated on call representative

Alert Issuer

Prepare an AMBER ALERT message using the format below:

- 1. Child information/Description (name, sex, age, height, weight, eye colour, hair colour, race, clothing description, unique identifiers)
- 2. Suspect Information/Description (name, sex, age, height, weight, eye colour, hair colour, race, clothing description, unique identifiers)
- 3. Vehicle Description (make, model, colour, plate number, province, unique descriptors)
- 4. Abduction Information (Direction of travel, possible destinations, last seen at, additional suspects)
- 5. Tips phone Line 902-490-4327
- 6. Tips email address AMBERALERT@Halifax.ca
- 7. HRP Social Media accounts for Updates: Twitter: @HfxRegPolice, Facebook: @HalifaxRegionalPolice



IES SUPERVISOR

- A. Set Up IES Training Room to act as Amber Alert Coordination Center
- B. Assign call takers to the Public Tips line located in IES Training Room. (If short staffed req assistance from Duty Officer)
- C. Assign Dedicated Dispatcher to the incident
- D. Commence monitoring Amber ALERT Email Box
- E. Facilitate an all-call broadcast and MDT message to all units containing pertinent details. Repeat the broadcast/MDT message to oncoming shift if call is still active
- F. Notify all NS PSAPs, and EMO Duty Officer
- G. notify appropriate agencies, groups, businesses, and associations via group email using the HRM Outlook distribution list DL-HRP-IM-AMBERALERTEXTERNAL
- H. Ensure CPIC Transcription broadcasts a CPIC Critical Incident Message



CID

- A. On activation of an Amber Alert, assume primary lead of the investigation utilizing major crime management protocol as soon as practicable.
- B. Send File Coordinator to IES



MEDIA RELATIONS

- A. Assume the role of Public Information Officer and assign a HRP Spokesperson.
- B. Monitor all HRP social media accounts
- C. Publish the Tips Line numbers and instructions to the public on what to do if they sight the suspect/vehicle.
- D. Post pictures of child, suspect and suspect vehicle on all social media accounts and push out to media outlets.



AMBER ALERT CANCELLATION

- A. Prepare an ALERT READY Cancellation message for NAADS LIVE using BI Broadcast Immediate
- B. Facilitate an all-call broadcast and MDT Amber Alert Cancellation message to all units containing pertinent details.
- C. Notify all NS PSAPs, and EMO Duty Officer
- D. notify appropriate agencies, groups, businesses, and associations of cancellation via group email using the HRM Outlook distribution list DL-HRP-IM-AMBERALERTEXTERNAL
- E. Ensure CPIC Transcription broadcasts a CPIC Critical Incident Message Cancellation

## **AMBER ALERT**

### **Authority to Activate**

During normal working hours an Amber Alert shall be approved by the Chief of police, or in his/her absence, the Duty Officer.

### **Amber Alert Criteria**

1. The following criteria **must** be met before an Amber Alert can be initiated:
  - a. the child must be under 18 yrs of age or have a proven mental or physical disability;
  - b. Police must believe that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death AND,
  - c. Police must have sufficient descriptive information of the child, abductor and/or suspect vehicle.
2. An Amber Alert shall **not** be initiated if:
  - a. A child or vulnerable person is missing and foul play is not suspected;
  - b. A child or vulnerable person has run away from a residence; and/or
  - c. It is a suspected parental abduction and the child is not believed to be in danger.

### **Amber Alert Activation Procedure**

4. When the criterion for an Amber Alert have been met and a determination has been made that an Amber Alert is warranted, the Chief of Police, his/her appointed representative, or the Duty Officer shall authorize issuance of an Amber Alert via ALERT READY.
  - a. The Duty Officer shall contact the IES Supervisor, the Information Management Division Commander, and/or the Emergency Planning Administrator, and direct the IES Supervisor to prepare an Amber Alert Message for transmission via ALERT READY.
  - b. The IES Supervisor will access the NAADs Live user Access System and prepare a Broadcast Intrusive (BI) Amber ALERT Message to cover all Nova Scotia using the format below:

#### **Child Information**

- Name
- Sex
- Age
- Height
- Weight

- Eye Colour
- Hair Colour
- Race
- Clothing Description
- Other unique identifiers

#### **Suspect information**

- Name
- Sex
- Age
- Height
- Weight
- Eye Colour
- Hair Colour
- Race
- Clothing Description
- Other Unique Identifiers

#### **Vehicle Description**

- Make
- Model
- Colour
- Plate Number
- Province
- Other Descriptors

#### **Abduction information**

- Direction of travel
- Possible destinations
- Additional suspects

#### **Tips Line/Email Address Information for public reporting**

- Dedicated phone number for reporting tips
- Email address
- Social Media Accounts that will provide updates

#### **IES Amber Alert Response**

5. The IES Supervisor will assign two call takers for the Public Tips lines to:
  - a. Obtain all information possible, including the caller's identification and contact information;

- b. If the call requires immediate follow up, transfer the call to **902-490-5020** via the CONF/Transfer button on the telephone, and request a call for service be entered;
  - c. Receive all Amber Alert related calls of a non-urgent nature and ensure all information received is entered in Versadex under the assigned GO# using the Community Contact;
  - d. Liaise with the assigned CID member to ensure all information is transferred to the investigative triangle in a timely fashion; and
  - e. Ensure the Amber Alert voicemail is regularly checked.
- 6. The IES Supervisor shall upon being notified of a possible Amber Alert, assign a dedicated dispatcher to the incident;
  - a. Ensure all information is entered into Versadex under the assigned general occurrence number (GO#) using the Community Contact;
  - b. Upon being notified by the WCOM of an active Amber Alert, call out additional personnel to staff the Amber Alert Investigation line(s);
  - c. Contact the Provincial 911 PSAPs and advise that an Amber Alert has been initiated by HRP;
  - d. Once an Amber Alert is issued, ensure that, in conjunction with a radio and MDT broadcast, all buildings are paged advising personnel of the Amber Alert. The paging numbers are as follows:
    - i. Central Division: **902-490-5064**;
    - ii. East Division: **902-490-4772**;
    - iii. West Division: **902-490-5185**; and
    - iv. CID: **902-490-2397**.
- 7. IES Dispatchers shall, upon receipt of a call for service related to an Amber Alert, contact the File Coordinator to advise of the call and the related information;
  - b. If an Amber Alert is issued, facilitate an all-call broadcast and Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) message to all units containing all pertinent details. Repeat the broadcast/MDT message to the oncoming shift if the call is still active;
  - c. When an Amber Alert is issued by any police agency in Nova Scotia, immediately broadcast the information to all police units both verbally and electronically;
  - d. If responding to information related to an alert from outside HRP (e.g., if subjects of a CBRP Amber Alert have been seen in HRP jurisdiction), dispatch a unit to investigate; and

- e. Do not close the call until confirmation has been received that the results of the investigation have been communicated to the agency that issued the alert.
- 8. CPIC Transcription shall add the file to CPIC as a Missing Person and ensure all related GO numbers are processed as a priority.

#### **CID Major Crime Management Activation**

- 9. On activation of an Amber Alert, CID shall assume primary lead of the investigation utilizing major crime management protocol as soon as practicable. Once CID has assumed primary lead of the Amber Alert, the Duty Officer will assign resources and provide support and coordination as necessary to facilitate the CID investigation.

#### **Amber Alert Media Response**

- 10. Upon notification of an Amber Alert initiation, the Media Relations Manager will assume the role of Public Information Officer in the POC and shall assign a HRP Spokesperson. Media relations shall begin to continuously monitor all HRP social media accounts and shall publish the Tips Line numbers and instructions to the public on what to do if they sight the suspect/vehicle. If available, a photograph of the subject of an Amber Alert shall be published on all social media accounts and pushed out to media outlets.

#### **Amber Alert Public Notification**

- 11. The following groups and individuals shall be notified as part of an Amber Alert notice to the public:
  - a. EMO NS for the emergency public alerting system **(902) 490-5064;**
  - b. Metro Transit Operations Centre **(902) 490-6708;**
  - c. HHBC – **(902) 491-8294;**
  - d. Halifax International Airport Authority SOC – **(902) 873-6911;**
  - e. Maritime Bus Lines – **(902) 877-1337;**
  - f. Via Rail Police – **(514) 934-7159**
  - g. Marine Atlantic Ferries (Sydney) - **(902) 794-5307**
  - h. Bay Ferries Limited (Yarmouth/Digby/Caribou) - **(902) 969-7466**
  - g. Military Police – **(902) 722-4446;**
  - i. Casino Taxi – **(902) 491 8294;**
  - j. Bob's Taxi – **(902) 292 8871;**
  - k. Satellite Taxi – **(902) 789 7893**

#### **Cancellation of Amber Alert**

12. An Amber Alert shall be cancelled when the subject of the Amber Alert has been located, or (except in extraordinary circumstances), more than 24 hours have elapsed since the Amber Alert was initiated. Based upon the recommendations of the CID Team Lead and in consultation with the Duty Officer, the Amber Alert shall be cancelled and an Amber Alert Cancellation Message shall be promulgated.

#### **Amber Alert After Action Report**

13. The Amber Alert Administrator shall ensure a detailed report summarizing the activation is submitted to the Amber Alert Review Committee (c/o Dept. Of Justice, Policing Services, Po Box 7, Halifax NS, B3J 2L6) within seven days of the completion of the Amber Alert. A copy of the report shall be placed in the investigative file folder. The Amber Alert Coordinator shall ensure a list of the supplies/resources used is generated and the responsibility to replenish them is assigned as required.
14. The Amber Alert Administrator shall ensure an internal debriefing and after-action report is completed and where appropriate, identify problematic issues, needs for improvement, and proposed measures for counteracting problematic elements. This report shall be submitted to the Operational Planning Officer within 30 days of an Amber Alert.

#### **Amber Alert Duties and Responsibilities Check Lists**

##### **Duty Officer Duties**

15. Unless otherwise directed, the Duty Officer shall assume responsibility for overall coordination of HRP's response to an Amber Alert. When advised that an existing situation meets the Amber Alert criteria, the Duty Officer shall:
- a. Assess the situation and, if in agreement, authorize an Amber Alert activation by way of the WCOM as soon as possible, approving the Amber Alert Form and its submission;
  - b. Advise the Executive Management Team of the incident by way of an email to the "Executive Management Team" distribution list;
  - c. Liaise with the on call CID S/Sgt, or in his/her absence the on call CID NCO to ensure adequate resources are available;
  - d. Designate a suitable conference room to be used as a coordination center for the Amber Alert
  - e. Attend the designated coordination center and review the investigation and resources with the on call CID S/Sgt;
  - f. Update the Executive Management Team via the "Executive Management Team" distribution list of any significant developments during the activation period.
  - g. Act as Incident Commander.

##### **Watch Commander**

16. The Watch Commander shall, upon being advised of a possible Amber Alert activation:



- a. Contact the below parties by phone and advise of activation:
  - i. SIS Staff Sergeant (S/Sgt) or on-call CID S/Sgt;
  - ii. Senior Officer / Duty Officer; and
  - iii. Public Relations Manager and/or designate.
- b. Upon being advised that an Amber Alert will be activated, contact by phone and advise the following persons:
  - i. The IES Supervisor to request that a dedicated call taker be assigned to the call; and
  - ii. Emergency Planning Administrator.
- c. Ensure proper resources are allocated to all areas participating in the Amber Alert.

**Corporate Communications and Public Information Office**

- 17. The Corporate Communications and Public Information Office shall:
  - a. Assist with and coordinate the communication strategy for the incident by working in concert with the Duty Officer and the CID Team Commander;
  - b. Upon receipt of media inquiries regarding an abduction of a child/vulnerable person, confirm, if accurate, that HRP has received a report of a missing child/vulnerable person and the investigation is in the early stages. PR personnel shall refer to the Amber Alert holding lines template for further direction;
  - c. Post a media release to HRP's news application and Twitter Account with a photo of the subject; share Amber Alert in NS' Facebook post on HRP's Facebook account; pin a post on HRP's Facebook and Twitter accounts; and bring any potential tips to the attention of the File Coordinator;
  - d. Conduct media interviews (e.g. TV, radio, print), and respond to media calls in a timely manner;
  - g. Monitor social media and respond to any tips posted to HRP social media accounts with the following reply: "To ensure the most effective investigation, please call Amber Alert Tips Line with tips rather than posting on social media";
  - h. Manage media at the scene, if applicable;
  - i. Contact the CID S/Sgt for additional resources should the volume of media tips exceed unit capacity; and
  - j. Upon the cancellation of the Amber Alert:
    - i. Draft a follow-up media release regarding the status of the child or vulnerable person (i.e., they have been found or are still missing);

- ii. Ensure the media release is posted to HRP's news application and twitter with a photo of the subject, share Amber Alert in NS' Facebook post on HRP's Facebook account, and pin a post on HRP's Facebook and Twitter accounts as to the status of the investigation. Ensure the media and/or public are provided contact numbers if necessary (e.g., Crime Stoppers, 902-490-5016, and HRP non-emergency dispatch, 902-490-5020).

#### **CID Team Lead Duties in an Amber Alert**

- 18. The CID Team Lead shall:
  - a. In accordance with major case management protocol, manage the concurrent and subsequent investigation;
  - b. Assign a member to coordinate information received by the IES call takers in IES;
  - d. Make a determination as the investigation progresses as to the appropriate staffing of the Amber Alert Investigation telephones; and
  - e. Oversee the transition from the Amber Alert process into the investigative process.

#### **Primary CID Investigator**

- 19. The CID Primary Investigator shall:
  - a. Review all information that is received and together with the File Coordinator identify tasks for assignment and brief personnel on their responsibilities; and
  - b. Determine if updated information is available, including photos, locations last seen, vehicle description, possible suspects, last know direction of travel, etc. Update AMBERT ALERT information and social media posts as necessary throughout the course of the investigation.

#### **CID File Coordinator**

- 18. The CID File Coordinator shall:
  - a. Document all information/inquiries received from IES call takers, the Amber Alert Investigation Line(s), the Amber Alert Tip-line, and comments received via social media; and
  - b. Complete all duties associated with the Investigative Triangle and Major Case Management protocols.

#### **Amber Alert Administrator (HR Emergency Planning Administrator)**

- 19. The Amber Alert Administrator shall:
  - a. Collect observations and lessons learned;
  - b. Review the POC Amber Alert Activation Log and records;

- c. Compile a list of supplies and resources that have been expended in support of an Amber Alert;
- d. Submit a report summarizing the activation to the Amber Alert Review Committee within 7 days of Amber Alert Cancellation, and

## RCMP Policy

# H Division Operational Manual

## 37.155. Serious Incident Alert

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**Updated Directive: 2024-07-02**

1. [General](#)
  2. [Definitions](#)
  3. [Activating/Cancellation a Serious Incident Alert](#)
  4. [Member/Supervisor](#)
  5. [District Commander](#)
  6. [OCC Risk Managers Unit](#)
  7. [Critical Incident Commander \(CIC\)](#)
  8. [Operational Communications Centre \(OCC\)](#)
  9. [Strategic Communications Unit](#)
  10. [Inter-Jurisdictional Serious Incident Alert Request](#)
- [References](#)
- 

(For information regarding this policy, contact [H Division Criminal Operations Support](#).)

### 1. General

1.1. The Alert Ready System assists in streamlining how public alerts are distributed to the public. Serious Incident Alerts can go directly to wireless devices (compatible smartphones, some tablets, and potentially other electronics) in an impacted area. The message will provide information regarding a serious emergency event and complements other avenues of notification and distribution, such as social media, TV and radio.

1.2. The Alert Ready System can be “broadcast immediate” meaning that the activated alert will be immediately broadcasted on television, radio and wireless devices or “broadcast non-intrusive”, meaning that the alert will not be pushed to wireless devices and television and radio broadcasters receiving the activated alert can decide whether or not to interrupt broadcasting.

1.3. Police activated alerts include emergent or on-going incidents that may put the public in direct harm, and can include; emergent firearm/weapon related offences, active shooter/immediate action rapid deployment (IARD) incidents, terrorist attacks, chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) incidents with an established criminal nexus, civil disobedience/rioting, and dangerous animal incidents.

1.4. Serious Incident Alerts are intended to rapidly and broadly solicit the public’s attention of the event and direct the public to act. (shelter in place, evacuate, etc.)

1.5. The release of personal information in the Serious Incident Alert is permitted within Section 8 of the [Privacy Act](#).

## **2. Definitions**

2.1. The following definitions will be used for the purposes of a Serious Incident Alert activation:

2.1.1. "emergent or on-going incident that may put the public in direct harm" means a developing incident where containment may or may not have been established and persons with the intent to do harm could pose a threat to public safety.

2.1.2. "active threat" means one or more individuals who seek out an environment that offers multiple victims for the purpose of inflicting death. An active threat is real, present, credible and has shown the determination to severely injure or cause death to those individuals.

2.1.3. "immediate action rapid deployment (IARD)" means the swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to an on-going, life threatening situation, where delayed deployment could otherwise result in grievous bodily harm or death to innocent persons.

2.1.4. "serious incident" means an event or series of events which by their scope and nature require a specialized and coordinated tactical response.

2.1.5. "serious incident alerts" are intended to rapidly and broadly solicit the public's attention of the event and direct the public to act. (shelter in place, evacuate, etc.)

2.1.6. "authorized user" is an employee who has been trained by the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (NSEMO) on the use of the provincial alerting system. Only authorized users will add Serious Incident Alerts to the provincial alerting system.

2.1.7. "authority to issue a Serious Incident Alert" are positions the CrOps Officer has delegated their authority to issue Serious Incident Alerts. The following positions, in ascending order, have delegated authority to issue a Serious Incident Alert; Risk Manager, Critical Incident Commander (if activated), OIC OCC, Duty Officer, SSO and DPO.

## **3. Activating/Cancellation of a Serious Incident Alert**

3.1. A Serious Incident Alert can only be activated/cancelled by those who have the delegated authority as per section 2.1.7.

3.2. A Serious Incident Alert can only be cancelled when the serious incident is determined to be contained or completed.

3.2.1. A serious incident alert may be cancelled by:

3.2.1.1. Issuance of an additional alert advising of status or;

3.2.1.2. Via Strategic Communications Unit to public and media advising of status.

3.3. While it is understood that positions identified in 2.1.7. have delegated authority to issue a Serious Incident Alert, the Risk Manager or, when activated, the Critical Incident Commander has primary responsibility to direct, issue or modify a Serious Incident Alert.

#### **4. Member/Supervisor**

4.1. The supervisor will continually assess if the issuance of a Serious Incident Alert is appropriate and confirm that the issuance would not place the public and / or responding emergency personnel at greater risk.

4.1.1. The nature of the modality of the treat will inform the geographical scope of the Serious Incident Alert.

4.1.2. A Serious Incident Alert will be issued immediately in a situation where an emergent or on-going incident may put the public in direct harm and there is an urgent need to ensure the public is informed of a threat and provided any applicable directions to mitigate public safety concerns.

4.1.3. Contact the Risk Manager to advise of the incident and request a Serious Incident Alert be initiated.

4.1.4. Contact the Strategic Communications Unit to ensure they are engaged and aware of the pending alert.

4.1.5. As soon as practicable, brief the DPO/SSO on the request for issuance of the Alert.

#### **5. District Commander**

5.1. Update/brief Senior Management by way of an "unfolding event" email to: [HDIV\\_CROPS\\_UNFOLDINGEVENT@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:HDIV_CROPS_UNFOLDINGEVENT@rcmp-grc.gc.ca).

#### **6. OCC Risk Managers Unit**

6.1. Continually assess to determine whether a Serious Incident Alert is appropriate. For incidents where a Critical Incident Commander has not taken command, the Risk Manager, upon assessing the criteria outlined within section 4.1 will consult with the ad-hoc commander to assess if the issuance of the Serious Incident Alert will impact member safety. If member safety has been assured, the Risk Manager will immediately issue the Serious Incident Alert. As information is received, the Risk Manager will continuously assess the need for an initial Alert broadcast or any updates thereto.

6.1.1. If not already engaged, ensure Strategic Communications are engaged and advised of the event and the type of alert that will be activated.

6.1.2. Ensure timely updates and ongoing communication are maintained with OCC and Strategic Communications throughout the incident response.

6.2. Assist in coordination of incoming calls, information and updates received by the OCC in order to prioritize information to be reported to members.

6.3. When the situation no longer meets the criteria for a Serious Incident Alert, and there is no longer a threat to public or police safety, issue a Serious Incident Alert Cancellation in a timely manner to notify the community a threat no longer exists.

## **7. Critical Incident Commander (CIC)**

7.1. In situations where a Critical Incident Program deployment has occurred and a Serious Incident Alert has not yet been initiated, the activated Critical Incident Commander will immediately assess the need to issue a Serious Incident Alert based on the threshold noted in section 4.1. and continuously re-assess as information is received.

## **8. Operational Communications Centre (OCC)**

8.1. Inform all OCC employees of the Serious Incident Alert activation so they may ensure sufficient resources are available to manage call volume.

8.2. Notify all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in Nova Scotia that an alert is to be issued and provide them with a copy of the alert wording at the earliest opportunity.

8.3. Ensure a Be On Look Out (BOLO) and Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) message is sent province wide to all RCMP and Municipal Police Services within Nova Scotia.

8.4. Notify RCMP OCC's in "J" and "L" Divisions as well as partner agencies, if deemed necessary, based on where the incident is located and information received as to the possibility of the incident continuing in their jurisdiction.

8.5. OCC will manage incoming calls generated from the Serious Incident Alert and in consultation with the OCC Risk Manager, prioritize and disseminate incoming information as required.

## **9. Strategic Communications Unit**

9.1. When notified that there will be a Serious Incident Alert activation:

9.1.1. When appropriate, contact the Risk Manager or CIC, who will provide the Director or designate with the final Alert before it is disseminated. The contact will also advise once the Alert has been disseminated and the geographic catchment area(s) for the Alert. It is recognized that in some cases, i.e. active shooter, the Risk Manager will immediately issue the Alert.

9.1.2 Engage sufficient Unit resources to manage all other public communication.

9.1.3 This may include requesting assistance from another Division of National Communication Services for a prolonged incident.

9.2. Produce and manage all other public communication for the duration of the incident.

9.2.1. Provide updated and accurate information on an ongoing basis to the public and media.



9.2.1.1. Reach in to the established OCC or CIC contact for updated information about the incident and approvals of the public communications, as required.

9.2.1.2. Monitor the public commentary on the RCMPNS social media account(s) to help determine what information may need to be provided to the public.

9.2.1.3. Field media calls.

9.3. When notified that the Serious Incident Alert will be updated:

9.3.1. Share the updated Alert messaging on the RCMPNS social media account(s), indicating when the updated alert was issued and the areas for which the Alert applies.

9.3.3. Continue to provide updated and accurate information on an ongoing basis to the public and media via the RCMPNS social media account(s) as per section 8.2.2.

9.4. When notified that the Serious Incident Alert will be cancelled:

9.4.1. Update the RCMPNS social media account(s) to indicate the incident has concluded; the circumstances of the conclusion, e.g. suspect(s) is in custody; the Alert has been cancelled and when it was cancelled; and that more information will be provided when available.

9.4.2. Produce and manage all ongoing public communication with regard to the incident.

9.4.3. Support any internal communication with regard to the incident.

## **10. Inter-Jurisdictional Serious Incident Alert Request**

10.1. Any request regarding activation of a Nova Scotia Serious Incident Alert received from an out-of-province agency, or RCMP Division or international law enforcement, must be directed to an authorized user who will determine whether the Serious Incident Alert is activated.

10.2. The authorized user will contact the requesting agency and obtain details regarding the incident. The following details must be met, prior to a Serious Incident Alert being issued:

10.2.1. There must be an active and current Serious Incident Alert in effect for the requesting agency.

10.2.2. The location of the serious incident is close to the provincial border of Nova Scotia or there is information/belief that the subjects of interest could be in or heading to Nova Scotia.

10.2.3. The out-of-province Serious Incident Alert circumstances meet the criteria set out for a Nova Scotia Serious Incident Alert activation.

10.3. If feasible, all PSAP's for Nova Scotia and Strategic Communications Unit shall be notified prior to activation of the Inter-Jurisdictional Serious Incident Alert.



## References

[Privacy Act](#)

[OM - ch. 16.5. Police-Initiated Public Alerts](#)

# H Division Operational Manual

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## 37.9. Amber Alert

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**Directive Amended: 2021-10-13**

1. [General](#)
2. [Definitions](#)
3. [AMBER Alert Criteria](#)
4. [Member](#)
5. [Supervisor](#)
6. [District Commander](#)
7. [Support Services Officer](#)
8. [OCC Risk Managers Unit](#)
9. [Operational Communications Centre \(OCC\)](#)
10. [Strategic Communications Unit](#)
11. [Major Crime Unit](#)
12. [DEOC](#)
13. [Inter-Jurisdictional AMBER Alert Request](#)
14. [AMBER Alert Coordinator](#)

[App. 37-9-1](#) - Amber Alert Activation Request Form

[App. 37-9-2](#) - AMBER Alert Child Abduction Urgent Notification Form

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(For information regarding this policy, contact [H Division Criminal Operations Support](#).)

### 1. General

1.1 The Nova Scotia AMBER Alert Program is a province-wide program which partners the Province's law enforcement community, media broadcasting agencies and the public in locating an abducted child, or an abducted person with a proven mental or physical disability, when it is believed that his/her life could be in imminent danger.

1.2 The Amber Alert System is "broadcast intrusive" meaning that the activated alert will automatically interrupt broadcasting. Amber Alerts via Alert Ready will also go directly to wireless devices (compatible smartphones, some tablets, and potentially other electronics) in an impacted area. The Alert Ready message will provide information of the abducted person and suspect and compliments other avenues of notification and distribution, such as social media.

1.3 The Program disseminates a widespread emergency alert to solicit the public's assistance in the safe and swift return of the child or abducted person with a proven mental or physical disability.

1.4 The H Division RCMP Operational Communications Center (OCC) is the provincial centre for dissemination of AMBER Alerts for RCMP in Nova Scotia.

1.5 Approval to issue an AMBER Alert for the H Division RCMP can only come from the Criminal Operations Officer (Crops), District Policing Officer (DPO), Support Services Officer (SSO) or their delegates.

1.6 RCMP units in the Halifax District must request issuance of an Amber Alert via the OCC.

1.7 The release of personal information in the AMBER Alert is permitted within Section 8 of the [Privacy Act](#).

## **2. Definitions**

2.1 The following definitions will be used for the purposes of the AMBER Alert Program in Nova Scotia:

2.1.1 "Abduction" means an incident where a child is removed from his/her environment without the permission from the child's legal guardian or representative, or if a person with a proven mental or physical disability has been abducted;

2.1.2 "Alert Ready System" is an electronic means for an AMBER Alert to be distributed by police agencies to provide detailed information to the public, area radio/television stations and media regarding an abduction and is the responsibility of Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (EMO).

2.1.3 "Local AMBER Alert Coordinator" is the Sergeant NCO i/c of the H Division Emergency Management Section (EMS).

## **3. AMBER Alert Criteria**

3.1 The following criteria must be met before an AMBER Alert can be activated:

3.1.1 Reasonable belief exists that a child under the age of 18 years or a person with a proven mental or physical disability has been abducted;

3.1.2 There is reasonable belief that the child or person with a proven mental or physical disability is in danger of serious bodily harm and/or death; and

3.1.3 There is enough descriptive information on one or more of the following factors to believe that an AMBER Alert will assist with the safe return of the child or person with a proven mental or physical disability, including descriptions of:

3.1.3.1 The child or person with a proven mental or physical disability;

3.1.3.2 Abductor(s); and

#### 3.1.3.3 Suspect vehicle.

3.1.4 The AMBER Alert can be issued within a timeframe that would provide a reasonable expectation that the child or person with proven mental or physical disabilities could be located.

### **4. Member**

4.1 All reports of missing persons shall be investigated without delay.

4.2 When all criteria for an AMBER Alert activation have been met, the investigator will:

4.2.1 Ensure that the H Division OCC Risk Manager is updated immediately;

4.2.2 Request that the Unit Commander or delegate recommend an AMBER Alert be initiated;

4.2.3 Once approval is obtained, the investigator will complete an "AMBER Alert Activation Request Form" ([Appendix 37.9.1](#)) and "AMBER Alert Child Abduction Urgent Notification Form" ([Appendix 37.9.2](#)), providing all the necessary information

4.2.3.1 The "AMBER Alert Activation Request Form" and "AMBER Alert Child Abduction Urgent Notification Form" must be reviewed and approved by the Detachment Commander or delegate. Final approval must then be provided by the Crops Officer, SSO, DPO or delegate before the forms are forwarded to the OCC;

4.2.3.2 The forms are available from the H Division OCC Risk Manager. If operationally necessary, the investigator may voice the information to the Risk Manager or OCC Supervisor.

4.3 The investigator will email the completed/approved forms (or provide the information verbally) to the H Division OCC Risk Manager/Shift Supervisor. The investigator will then personally confirm receipt of the forms by the Risk Manager/Shift Supervisor by calling (902) 426-2242.

4.4 Information for the activation request should include:

4.4.1 Name; age; physical description (height, weight, hair color and style, eye color, clothing, scars or marks), of the abducted person and suspect(s);

4.4.2 A recent photograph of the abducted person and/or suspect(s) which clearly identify the faces of the child and/or suspect(s);

4.4.3 The date, time and location where the abducted person was last seen;

4.4.4 Description of any weapon used during the abduction;

4.4.5 Description of any vehicle involved in the abduction;

4.4.6 Name(s), if known, and/or a detailed description of the suspect(s);

4.4.7 Last known direction of travel and possible destination;

4.4.8 A telephone number for receiving tips on; and

4.4.9 Name and telephone number of the Public Information Officer supporting the investigation.

4.5 Verify accuracy of information to be released.

4.6 Ensure the AMBER Alert and all available information is entered onto CPIC.

4.7 Notify the Unit Commander/delegate of any new information that would require an update to the AMBER Alert or necessitate its cancellation.

## **5. Supervisor**

5.1 Monitor the missing person investigation.

5.2 Consider the use of Ground Search and Rescue.

5.3 Confirm the AMBER Alert criteria has been met. If so, contact the DPO, SSO or Crops Officer and recommend the initiation of the AMBER Alert process.

5.4 Review and approve the completed "AMBER Alert Activation Request Form" and "AMBER Alert Child Abduction Urgent Notification" Form.

5.5 If the criteria has not been met, do not recommend the initiation of the AMBER Alert process. Ensure the investigation proceeds and continue to work towards establishing the criteria for an AMBER Alert, which may be activated at any time. If the criteria for AMBER alert are not satisfied, consider activation of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert.

## **6. District Commander**

6.1 Where there is a potential AMBER Alert activation, ensure there are sufficient resources for investigation, containment, and any possible public responses.

6.2 Update Crops Officer, SSO and DPO as required.

6.3 Authorize the issuance of an AMBER Alert, if appropriate.

## **7. Support Services Officer**

7.1 Ensure that the OIC Major Crime Unit or delegate is notified immediately.

7.2 The Support Services Officer will activate DEOC.

7.3 The Support Services officer will notify the local AMBER Alert Coordinator

## **8. Risk Manager**



8.1 Monitor the missing person investigation and liaise with the Investigator/Unit Commander.

8.2 Notify the Director of Strategic Communications Unit or delegate of a potential Amber Alert.

8.3 Notify the I/C Operational Support & Communication Centre or Delegate.

8.4 Notify the SSO of a potential AMBER Alert.

8.5 Once Amber Alert Activation is confirmed;

8.5.1 Call in a second Risk Manager to assist;

8.5.2 Confirm activation with H Division Strategic Communications Unit or delegate;

8.5.3 Notify the On Duty Officer for NS EMO at 1-833-758-4540 to advise them of the AMBER Alert;

8.5.4 Draft and issue an Alert Ready message via the NAAD Live site;

8.5.4.1 The AMBER Alert should be deployed to ALL of Nova Scotia

8.5.5 Act as a point of contact for sharing of information between Investigators and the Strategic Communications Unit until a MCU resource is in place.

8.5.6 If the Alert Ready System was deployed, update and cancel the Alert as required. Upon cancellation, update NS EMO.

8.6 If notified of an Amber Alert issued by another Provincial Municipal Police Agency;

8.6.1 Notify the Strategic Communications Unit immediately

8.6.2 Monitor Alert for potential of RCMP involvement;

## **9. OCC Shift Supervisor**

9.1 Call-in additional resources as required.

9.2 Notify the OCC Commander or Delegate.

9.3 Create and maintain unit specific procedures related to issuance of an Amber Alert

9.3.1 Ensure all employees are aware of unit specific protocols and if an Amber Alert is likely, initiate the protocol immediately.

9.4 Ensure the Urgent Child Abduction Notification Form ([Appendix 37.9.2](#)) and associated photographs are sent electronically to the AMBER Alert Contact List (includes all points of exit/entry into Nova Scotia; namely, Halifax International Airport, Confederation Bridge Control, Cobequid Toll Plaza, Northumberland Bay Ferries and Marine Atlantic).

9.4.1 When new information becomes available, update all points of exit/entry.

9.5 Ensure that there is a provincial broadcast to all municipal police departments, RCMP detachments, all on-duty RCMP officers and neighbouring Divisions.

9.6 When advised by a neighbouring province or state that they have issued an AMBER Alert, notify NS EMO and all PSAPs (Public Service Answering Point) of the details and the telephone number where calls are to be forwarded.

9.7 Maintain an updated Amber Alert Contact List.

## **10. Strategic Communicatons Unit**

10.1 Create and maintain unit specific procedures related to issuance of an Amber Alert

10.1.1 Ensure all employees are aware of unit specific protocols and if an Amber Alert is likely, initiate the protocol immediately.

10.2 When notified that an AMBER Alert is imminent, the Strategic Communications Unit will:

10.2.1 Obtain pertinent info about abductee, suspect, suspect vehicle and particulars of abduction and photograph(s) to be uploaded to the RCMP Nova Scotia Website and social media sites.

10.3 Ensure the all relevant information and associated photographs are sent electronically to the "provincial media group"

10.4 All broadcast media will be asked to air the AMBER Alert according to the following guidelines:

10.4.1 Every fifteen (15) minutes for the first three (3) hours; and

10.4.2 After the initial three (3) hours, every half hour for the next five (5) hours Include the Alert in all newscasts for a twenty-four (24) hour period. When new information becomes available the media will be notified.

10.5 Share information/tips received with investigators though the Risk Manager or MCU investigator once established as appropriate.

10.5.1 If possible, clarify information posted on social media, dispel rumours and correct misinformation as required.

10.6 Once it is determined that the AMBER Alert activation will be cancelled, advise the "provincial media group" of the cancellation.

10.7 If notified of an Amber Alert issued by a Provincial Municipal Police Agency, share information on social media;

10.7.1 Include contact information for the Provincial Municipal Police Agency to ensure accurate and timely reporting of information.

10.8 Ensure availability of sufficient resources, including communications advisor and public information officer, to handle a high volume of public and media inquiries;

10.8.1 Ensure public communication via social media, RCMPNS website and media in accordance with strategic communications protocols for Amber Alert.

10.9 Evaluate strategic communications protocols and make modifications following an AMBER Alert.

10.10 Maintain a media contact list that is available to the Risk Manager and the OCC.

## **11. Major Crime Unit**

11.1 The Major Crimes Unit will assume total responsibility of the investigation in accordance with the principles of Major Case Management.

11.1.1 The Major Crimes Unit will:

11.1.1.1 Assign an investigator to be embedded in the OCC.

11.1.1.2 The investigator will act as point of contact for investigators, Strategic Communication Unit, and the Risk Manager.

11.1.1.3 The sharing of information between units in real time is essential for investigators to act on tips received and provide updates to social media on an ongoing basis and correct any misinformation.

11.1.1.4 The investigator will advise when there is a need to update information on the AMBER Alert or when a cancellation of the Alert is required.

## **12. DEOC**

12.1 The DEOC Coordinator will ensure the DEOC is staffed with sufficient resources and OCC personnel to accommodate the processing of all information received and dispatched from the DEOC for a 24-hour period (or as required);

12.2 The National Operation Centre (NOC) will be notified of the AMBER Alert through DEOC Operations. Subsequent Situational Reports will be submitted every 4 hours or as required.

12.3 The AMBER Alert will be cancelled when the child or person with a proven mental or physical disability is located or twenty-four (24) hours have elapsed since the initial AMBER Alert. Social media, traditional media and all points of entry/exit into Nova Scotia will be advised immediately.

12.4 OCC employees embedded in DEOC will disseminate a provincial broadcast to all municipal police departments, RCMP detachments, all on-duty RCMP officers and neighbouring Divisions cancelling the AMBER Alert.

12.5 NOC will be notified of the DEOC reverting to a Level 1 status.

### **13. Inter-Jurisdictional AMBER Alert Request**

13.1 Any request regarding activation of an AMBER Alert received from an out-of-province agency, RCMP Division or international law enforcement must be directed to the Criminal Operations Officer (Crops) or their delegates who will determine whether the AMBER Alert is required.

13.2 The following details must be met, prior to an AMBER Alert being issued:

13.2.1 There must be an active and current AMBER Alert in effect for the requesting agency.

13.2.2 The location of the abduction is close to the provincial border and/or there is information/belief that the victim and/or suspect could be in or heading to Nova Scotia.

13.2.3 That the out-of-province AMBER Alert circumstances meet all four criteria that are required for an AMBER Alert activation and there are identified protocols from the requesting agency for cancellation.

13.2.4 The Strategic Communications Unit must be advised prior to activation of the Inter-Jurisdictional AMBER Alert.

13.2.5 If an AMBER Alert request is approved by the Criminal Operations Officer, this will be initiated through the Risk Manager following the above policy.

### **14. Local AMBER Alert Coordinator**

14.1 When an AMBER Alert is initiated, ensure that a complete set of records, observations and notes is captured by the initiating agency, to provide post event analysis and feedback.

14.2 Provide updates to the NS Department of Justice Provincial AMBER Alert Coordinator as any new information is received.

14.3 Organize a post-incident debriefing with the District, Risk Manager, OCC Commander, MCU, Strategic Communications Unit, the Provincial AMBER Alert Coordinator and NS EMO to collect information and to ensure best practices.

14.4 The Local AMBER Alert Coordinator shall submit a report in writing within 60 days of the AMBER Alert, to the NS Department of Justice summarizing the events that led to the AMBER Alert and any pertinent observations and lessons learned from the activation.

14.5 Ensure protocols are tested and contact lists are updated on an annual basis, as required by National [OM 37.9.2.4](#).

### **References**

[Privacy Act](#)



# H Division Operational Manual

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## 37.158. Vulnerable Missing Person Alert

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**New Directive: 2021-12-08**

1. [General](#)
  2. [Definitions](#)
  3. [Vulnerable Missing Person Alert Criteria](#)
  4. [Member](#)
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  6. [District Commander](#)
  7. [Risk Manager](#)
  8. [OCC Shift Supervisor](#)
  9. [Strategic Communications Unit](#)
  10. [Inter-Jurisdictional Vulnerable Missing Person Alert Request](#)
- 

(For information regarding this policy, contact [H Division Criminal Operations Support](#).)

### 1. General

1.1. A Vulnerable Missing Person Alert will be a broadcast as a "Non-intrusive Alert," meaning that the broadcaster receiving the activated alert can decide whether or not to interrupt broadcasting. The alert will not be broadcast to mobile phones.

1.1.1. In exigent circumstances, a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert may be broadcasted as an "Intrusive Alert" meaning the alert will automatically interrupt broadcasting and will also go directly to wireless devices in an impacted area.

1.2. The release of personal information in the Vulnerable Person Alert is permitted within Section 8 of the [Privacy Act](#).

1.3. The H Division RCMP Operational Communications Center (OCC) is the provincial centre for dissemination of Vulnerable Missing Person Alerts for RCMP in Nova Scotia.

1.4. Approval to issue an Vulnerable Missing Person Alert for the H Division RCMP can only come from Criminal Operations Officer (Crops), District Policing Officer (DPO), Support Services Officer (SSO) or their delegates.

1.5. RCMP units in the Halifax District must request issuance of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert via the OCC.

1.6. Refer to National policy [OM 37.3. Missing Persons](#) and [HOM 37.3. Missing Persons](#) for procedures in conducting a missing person investigation.

1.7. If a child is suspected of being abducted, refer to [HOM 37.9. Amber Alert](#) for information on issuing an Amber Alert.

## **2. Definitions**

2.1. The following definitions will be used for the purposes of the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert Program in Nova Scotia:

2.2. A "vulnerable missing person" is a person who due to the virtue of a physical, mental, cognitive sensory disability or age would be considered a high risk for injury, illness, environmental or social danger.

2.3. "Authorized user" refers to police service personnel authorized to activate a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert. In "H" Division, the authorized users are the OCC Risk Manager, Critical Incident Commander (CIC) (if CIC activated), OIC Operational Communications Centre, District Policing Officer (DPO), Support Services Officer, and the OIC Criminal Operations in ascending order.

2.3.1. "Alert Ready System" is an electronic means for a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert to be distributed by authorized agencies to provide detailed information to the public, area radio/television stations and media regarding a Vulnerable Missing Person and is the responsibility of Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (EMO).

## **3. Vulnerable Missing Person Alert Criteria**

3.1. The following factors should be considered to assist in determining if the person is vulnerable;

3.1.1. The possibility that they are a victim of crime, including intimate partner abuse, elder abuse, abduction, bullying, etc.

3.1.2. Their age, physical condition, mental, cognitive or sensory disability, medical condition, substance abuse issues or suicidal ideations.

3.1.3. Whether they are a runaway, homeless or have other housing challenges.

3.1.4. Their involvement in high risk activities, i.e. sex trade worker, drug trade associate, hitchhiking etc.

3.1.5. The vulnerable person's believed location and associated weather considerations.

3.1.6. The person is a justice system participant.

3.2. There is enough descriptive information to believe that a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert will assist with the safe return of the person.

3.3. The Vulnerable Missing Person Alert can be issued within a timeframe that would provide a reasonable expectation that the vulnerable missing person could be located.

## **4. Member**

- 4.1. All reports of missing persons shall be investigated without delay.
- 4.2. When situational factors for a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert activation have been met, the investigator will:
  - 4.2.1. Ensure that the H Division OCC Risk Manager is updated immediately;
  - 4.2.2. Request that the Unit Commander or delegate recommend a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert be initiated;
- 4.3. Information for the activation request should include:
  - 4.3.1. Name; age; physical description (height, weight, hair color and style, eye color, clothing, scars or marks), of the Vulnerable Missing Person;
  - 4.3.2. A recent photograph of the person;
  - 4.3.3. The date, time and location where the vulnerable person was last seen;
  - 4.3.4. Description of any vehicle involved;
  - 4.3.5. Last known direction of travel and possible destination;
  - 4.3.6. A telephone number for receiving tips on; and
  - 4.3.7. Name and telephone number of the Information Officer supporting the investigation.
- 4.4. Verify accuracy of information to be released.
- 4.5. Ensure the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert and all available information is entered onto CPIC.
- 4.6. Notify the Unit Commander/delegate of any new information that would require an update to the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert or necessitate its cancellation.

## **5. Supervisor**

- 5.1. Monitor the missing person investigation.
- 5.2. Consider the use of Ground Search and Rescue.
- 5.3. Confirm if situational factors support the issuance of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert. If so, contact the OCC Risk Manager, Critical Incident Commander (CIC) (if CIC activated), OIC Operational Communications Centre, DPO, SSO or Crops Officer and recommend the initiation of the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert process.

## **6. District Commander**

- 6.1. Where there is a potential Vulnerable Missing Person Alert activation, ensure there are sufficient resources for investigation, containment, and any possible public responses.

6.2. Update Crops Officer, SSO and DPO as required.

6.3. Authorize the issuance of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert, if appropriate.

## **7. Risk Manager**

7.1. Monitor the missing person investigation and liaise with the Investigator/Unit Commander.

7.2. Notify the Director of Strategic Communications Unit or delegate of a potential Vulnerable Missing Persons Alert.

7.3. Notify the I/C Operational Support & Communication Centre or Delegate.

7.4. Once a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert Activation is confirmed;

7.4.1. Confirm activation with H Division Strategic Communications Unit or delegate;

7.4.2. Notify the On Duty Officer for NS EMO at 1-833-758-4540 to advise them of the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert;

7.4.3. Draft and issue an Alert Ready message via the NAAD Live site;

7.4.3.1. The Vulnerable Missing Person Alert should be deployed to specific areas in Nova Scotia where the vulnerable missing person may be located.

7.4.4. Act as a point of contact for sharing of information between Investigators and the Strategic Communications Unit.

7.4.5. If the Alert Ready System was deployed, update and cancel the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert as required. Upon cancellation, update NS EMO.

7.5. If notified of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert issued by another Provincial Municipal Police Agency;

7.5.1. Notify the Strategic Communications Unit immediately

7.5.2. Monitor Alert for potential of RCMP involvement;

## **8. OCC Shift Supervisor**

8.1. Call-in additional resources as required.

8.2. Notify the OCC Commander or Delegate.

8.3. Ensure all employees are aware of unit specific protocols and if a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert is likely, initiate the protocol immediately.

8.4. Ensure that there is a provincial broadcast to all municipal police departments, RCMP detachments, all on-duty RCMP officers and neighbouring Divisions.

## **9. Strategic Communications Unit**

9.1. Create and maintain unit specific procedures related to issuance of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert.

9.1.1. Ensure all employees are aware of unit specific protocols and if a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert is likely, initiate the protocol immediately.

9.2. When notified that a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert is imminent, the Strategic Communications Unit will:

9.2.1. Obtain pertinent info about the missing person, and photograph(s) to be uploaded to the RCMP Nova Scotia Website and social media sites.

9.3. Ensure the all relevant information and associated photographs are sent electronically to the "provincial media group"

9.4. Share information/tips received with investigators though the Risk Manager as appropriate.

9.4.1. If possible, clarify information posted on social media, dispel rumours, and correct misinformation as required.

9.5. Once it is determined that the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert activation will be cancelled, advise the "provincial media group" of the cancellation.

9.6. If notified of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert issued by a Provincial Municipal Police Agency, share information on social media;

9.6.1. Include contact information for the Provincial Municipal Police Agency to ensure accurate and timely reporting of information.

9.7. Evaluate strategic communications protocols and make modifications following a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert.

9.8. Maintain a media contact list that is available to the Risk Manager and the OCC.

## **10. Inter-Jurisdictional Vulnerable Missing Person Alert Request**

10.1. Any request regarding activation of a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert received from an out-of-province agency, RCMP Division or international law enforcement must be directed to the Criminal Operations Officer (Crops) or their delegates who will determine whether the Vulnerable Missing Person Alert is required.

10.2. The following details must be met prior to a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert being issued:

10.2.1. There must be an active and current Vulnerable Missing Person Alert in effect for the requesting agency.

10.2.2. The location of the vulnerable missing person is close to the provincial border and/or there is information and reasonable belief that the vulnerable missing person could be in or heading to Nova Scotia.

10.2.3. That the out-of-province Vulnerable Missing Person Alert circumstances meet criteria that are required for a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert activation and there are identified protocols from the requesting agency for cancellation.

10.2.4. The Strategic Communications Unit must be advised prior to activation of the Inter-Jurisdictional Vulnerable Missing Person Alert.

10.2.5. If a Vulnerable Missing Person Alert request is approved by the Criminal Operations Officer, this will be initiated through the Risk Manager following the above policy.

## **References**

[Privacy Act](#)

## **Alerts Issued by RCMP in Past 24 Months**

### **RCMP Provincially**

- Since Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 - The RCMP has issued 12 Alerts in the Province of Nova Scotia including Dangerous Persons, Vulnerable Missing Persons, etc.

2 of the 12 were sent Province wide. Halifax County would have received the alerts but they were not the requestor.

### **Halifax Regional Detachment Specifically**

- January 2024 – Year to Date – No alerts have been issued for RCMP led incidents occurring within the Halifax Regional Municipality.

At times, the units necessary to issue an alert are engaged proactively and alerts are drafted but often do not result in the issuance of an alert given the development of an incident. For example, a person deemed vulnerable is reported missing and safely located before an alert is sent.

### **2023**

In 2023 the RCMP OCC did issue three alerts on behalf of Halifax District consisting of Dangerous Person Alerts & Vulnerable Missing Person Alerts.

### **Incidents Where Alerts were not Issued**

- There were incidents where ALERTS were drafted and ready to be sent, but subjects were located prior to sending.
- The RCMP does not track incidents where ALERTS could have been issued but were not due to the outcome of rapidly changing situations.
- RCMP Policy dictates the threshold required for an alert to be issued and the positions authorized to issue or delegate their authority to issue Emergency Alerts.

## OM - ch. 37.3. Missing Persons

**Policy Amended: 2021-09-29**

For information regarding this policy, contact Operational Policy and Compliance, National Criminal Operations, Contract and Indigenous Policing.

- 1. Definitions
  - 2. General
  - 3. Roles and Responsibilities
  - App. 37-3-1 Missing Person Information Checklist
- 

### 1. Definitions

1. 1. **Missing person** means an individual reported to or by police as someone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of their disappearance, and who will be considered missing until they are located.

1. 2. **High-risk person**, for missing person investigations, means that the missing person's health or well-being may be in immediate danger due to:

- 1. 2. 1. their own vulnerability,
- 1. 2. 2. the weather or physical conditions where the missing person is believed to be, or
- 1. 2. 3. reasonable grounds to believe they may be the victim of a crime.

NOTE: Examples of persons considered high-risk include: children; the elderly; a person with a physical, mental, or sensory disability; a person with a medical condition, mental illness, or who is suicidal; sex trade workers; gang or drug-trade associates; court witnesses; victims of abduction; victims of domestic violence and elder abuse; victims of bullying; transient/homeless persons; runaways; and those involved in high-risk activities such as hitchhiking and drug or alcohol abuse.

1. 3. **High-risk lifestyle** means the engagement in or the association with others involved in dangerous activities and/or frequenting or residing in dangerous environments, either by personal choice or circumstance.

### 2. General

2. 1. Divisions are guided by provincial legislation regarding missing person investigations.

2. 2. All reports of a missing person will be promptly and thoroughly investigated, regardless of the individual's gender, age, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, belief, social standing, or lifestyle. Refer to OM ch. 38.2., Bias-Free Policing.



2. 3. Under no circumstance will a complainant be advised that they must wait a specific period of time before a report of a missing person can be made.

2. 4. A missing person complaint will be accepted and acted on by any detachment, regardless of jurisdiction. This includes any information, tips, or leads regarding a missing person investigation.

2. 4. 1. If the initial complaint is received by a detachment that does not have jurisdiction, refer to sec. 3.1.

2. 5. When the jurisdiction is in question:

2. 5. 1. The detachment or agency where the person was last seen has jurisdiction over the investigation and is responsible for the missing person report and the follow-up investigation.

2. 5. 2. If the last known location where the person was reported as missing cannot be determined, the police service for the jurisdiction where the missing person resides or last stayed is responsible for the missing person report and the follow-up investigation.

2. 6. When issuing a media release with a photograph of the missing person, the following must be ensured:

2. 6. 1. the image clearly depicts the missing person; and

2. 6. 2. the image represents the most recent likeness of the missing person, if possible.

2. 6. 2. 1. If the complainant or family member cannot provide a recent image, or if the image provided does not represent the most recent likeness of the missing person, and there is a suitable image available from an RCMP records management system (RMS), this image may be used.

NOTE: After an initial media release with the RMS image, if a more suitable image becomes available, this image will be used in any subsequent media releases.

2. 7. RCMP Ottawa INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) [REDACTED] will provide assistance for any missing person who is suspected of being transported to a foreign country, has been reported to have gone missing in a foreign country, or is a foreign national. Refer to OM ch. 44.4., Request for Assistance to Foreign Law-Enforcement Agencies.

2. 7. 1. Interpol may issue a Yellow Notice. This notice is to help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.

2. 8. Locating the missing person is the primary investigational objective in a missing person complaint.

2. 9. A person is deemed to be missing until the police force of jurisdiction receives credible information confirming the missing person's identity, safety, and well-being.

NOTE: Every attempt should be made to confirm the individual's safety and well-being in person. If circumstances exist that prevent an in-person confirmation, consider enlisting the assistance of a partnering agency (e.g. other police agency, social services, or school) to verify the missing person's safety and well-being.

2. 9. 1. In the event of the missing person's death, the police force of jurisdiction must receive positive confirmation of the missing person's identity.

2. 10. For investigations regarding lost or overdue persons, refer to OM ch. 37.2., Lost/Overdue Persons.

2. 11. For investigations regarding missing persons under the age of 18, refer to OM ch. 37.10., Missing Children, and for parental abduction, refer to OM ch. 2.8., Parental Child Abduction.

NOTE: If there is information that the abducting parent may intend to leave, or has left, the country, National Missing Children Operations (NMCO) can be contacted by telephone at [REDACTED]. The NMCO is available 24 hours a day to provide advice and assistance to primary investigators in urgent situations.

2. 12. The National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) can provide specialized analytical services or assist with requests to publish missing person information to their website. The NCMPUR may be contacted by email at [REDACTED]. Refer to OM ch. 37.10. and OM ch. 2.8.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3. 1. Member

3. 1. 1. If you receive an initial complaint and your detachment does not have jurisdiction:

3. 1. 1. 1. immediately communicate the missing person information, and any investigational steps taken, to the detachment or agency of jurisdiction, verbally by telephone, followed by electronic written correspondence; and

3. 1. 1. 2. open a file and document the transfer of information.

3. 1. 2. Inform the complainant if the investigation has been transferred to another jurisdiction and provide the contact information of the receiving jurisdiction.

3. 1. 3. Promptly and thoroughly investigate all missing person complaints. Document all investigational steps taken, in detail, in your notebook and the Records Management System (RMS). Refer to OM ch. 25.2., Investigator's Notes.

3. 1. 4. Complete Form 6473, Missing Persons Intake and Risk Assessment, to assist in determining the appropriate response and resources.

NOTE: Complete Form 6473 first, unless the incident requires immediate operational response (i.e. abduction in progress). The completion of Form 6473 is critical, as it contains information that may guide you on different investigative avenues.

3. 1. 5. When the missing person is high risk or maintains a high-risk lifestyle (refer to sec. 1.2. and 1.3.), notify your supervisor immediately.

3. 1. 5. 1. Consult your supervisor, as soon as practicable, regarding the appropriate response on all missing person investigations.

3. 1. 6. Determine the appropriate investigational response considering the circumstances, as well as any risk factors associated to the missing person, e.g. high-risk person. Refer to sec. 1.2. and 1.3.

3. 1. 7. Confirm the physical descriptors of the missing person with the complainant and ensure the CPIC entry is correct.

3. 1. 8. Review divisional policy and OM ch. 1.1., First Response Investigations.

3. 1. 9. Consider other options available, depending on the circumstances, such as issuing a BOLO or an Amber Alert. Refer to OM ch. 37.9., AMBER Alert.

3. 1. 10. Develop a schedule in consultation with the family/reporting party/complainant to provide updates on the status of the investigation. Document each scheduled update in the file, using either:

3. 1. 10. 1. Form 6519, Complainant/Family Communication Schedule; or

3. 1. 10. 2. the applicable RMS.

3. 1. 10. 2. 1. For PROS (Police Reporting and Occurrence System), create a contact log entry.

3. 1. 10. 2. 2. For PRIME-BC (Police Records Information Management Environment – British Columbia) or Halifax Versadex, create a supplemental report.

3. 1. 11. Follow provincial directives for referral and access to available victim services, taking into consideration cultural needs, where possible. Refer to OM ch. 37.6., Victim Assistance.

3. 1. 12. Notify the family/complainant if the missing person is located.

3. 1. 12. 1. If there are exigent circumstances, including, but not limited to, a risk to the continued safety of the person reported missing (e.g. court witness, victim of domestic violence, or victim of elder abuse), consider withholding the person's location.

3. 1. 12. 2. If a found missing person is a competent adult, do not disclose their location to the family/complainant without the missing person's consent.

3. 1. 13. To ensure comprehensive information gathering, see App. 37-3-1, Missing Person Information Checklist.

3. 1. 14. Immediately take steps to ensure that a detailed missing person entry is entered in the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC).

3. 1. 14. 1. Continually update the entry as more information becomes available. Refer to the relevant CPIC user manual.

NOTE: If the detachment does not have the means to process the CPIC entry, employ the assistance of an internal partner to ensure that the entry is entered immediately (e.g. operational communications centre {OCC}, 24/7 or neighbouring detachment), and document the actions taken.

3. 1. 15. Contact Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) by telephone at [REDACTED], if there is a possibility or suspicion that a missing or abducted child may be taken to the United States, or if a border alert is required for a missing adult.

3. 1. 16. Consult with Forensic Identification Services (FIS), where appropriate, and follow their direction regarding the preservation and recovery of physical evidence. Refer to OM ch. 35.1., DNA Collection and Data Bank, and the Investigator's guide to National Forensic Laboratory Services.

3. 1. 17. During the investigation, if it is reported that the missing person has been seen in another jurisdiction, notify that jurisdiction, and request their investigational assistance.

3. 1. 18. Complete a ViCLAS booklet, Form 3364, Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS), if foul play is suspected. Refer to OM ch. 36.1., Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS).

3. 1. 19. Document on the applicable RMS the initial risk assessment, and throughout the investigation re-assess the risk level, and document the changes, if any.

3. 1. 20. If the missing person is not located, seek to establish or rule out foul play.

### **3. 2. When a Missing Person is Located**

3. 2. 1. Ensure CPIC entries are removed, and other agencies, alerts, notifications, or information systems used during the investigation are updated when a missing person has been located and the investigation is concluded.

3. 2. 2. Consider conducting an interview with the found person to determine the details pertaining to the disappearance, and any requirements for follow-up investigation.

3. 2. 2. 1. Document information obtained in the file for use in subsequent investigations.

3. 2. 3. Contact the appropriate child welfare agency to determine what action should be taken, if a person under the age of majority does not want to be returned to their residence.

3. 2. 4. Document the details of the investigation, including the complainant notification and the disposition or outcome of the complaint, in the applicable RMS.

### **3. 3. Supervisor**

3. 3. 1. Review all missing person files, review Form 6473, and document direction and guidance provided to the member on the applicable RMS.

NOTE: Ensure Form 6473 has been completed, and all investigative avenues have been considered.

3. 3. 2. Confirm that the appropriate investigative response is underway, and that all investigative actions have been, and continue to be, documented in the file.
3. 3. 3. Confirm the continuance of the investigation until the missing person is located.
3. 3. 4. Confirm that the missing person has been added to CPIC.
3. 3. 5. Determine at the earliest possible time, whether to request the assistance of your General Investigation Section (GIS), Major Crime Unit, divisional Missing Persons Unit, and/or integrated unit, e.g. if foul play is suspected or there are similar missing person occurrences.
3. 3. 6. When appropriate, brief the unit commander.
3. 3. 7. Confirm coordination, cooperation, and information-sharing among all police agencies involved in the investigation and search for the missing person.
3. 3. 8. Request additional resources when appropriate, e.g. search and rescue services, police dog services, FIS, air services, NCMUR, technical crime unit, coroner/medical examiner, National Sex Offender Registry, Behavioural Sciences, Indigenous Relations Services, and media relations.
3. 3. 9. Determine if there is a need for a command post.
  3. 3. 9. 1. If you have determined that there is a need for a command post, ensure the deployment of a critical incident commander. Refer to TOM ch. 1.1., Incident Commanders.
3. 3. 10. Ensure that members are documenting the assessment of risk on the applicable RMS, and that if the risk level changes during the investigation, the reassessment of the risk level has been documented.
3. 3. 11. Monitor the investigative file on an ongoing basis to ensure that all investigative actions have been properly documented, that there are no gaps in the investigation, and that all missing person files are passed on to the oncoming watch.
3. 3. 12. If foul play is suspected, confirm that Form 3364 has been completed.
3. 3. 13. Confirm that CPIC entries have been removed, and other agencies, alerts, notifications, or information systems used during the investigation, have been updated when a missing person has been located and the investigation is concluded.
3. 3. 14. If the missing person has a previous history of being reported missing, consider conducting a review of the occurrence to identify any enhancements which could be used to prevent or assist in future missing person investigations.

#### 3. 4. Unit Commander

3. 4. 1. Confirm that all missing person complaints are thoroughly investigated and properly supervised.

3. 4. 2. Consider the inclusion of a unit level quality assurance process for missing person investigations. Refer to the national review guide entitled Missing Persons Investigations.

3. 4. 3. Make certain that incidents involving missing persons with suspicious circumstances are reported to the appropriate divisional coordinator where possible, e.g. Indigenous Relations Services is advised of Indigenous missing persons.

3. 4. 4. At the end of each shift, ensure a proper pass on system or process is established for missing person investigations that are not resolved.

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## References

- Form 3364, Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS)
- Form 6473, Missing Persons Intake and Risk Assessment
- IMM ch. 3.1., Information Access
- OM ch. 1.1., First Response Investigations
- OM ch. 2.8., Parental Child Abduction
- OM ch. 2.11., National Sex Offender Registry
- OM ch. 7.1., Immigration
- OM ch. 25.2., Investigator's Notes
- OM ch. 35.1., DNA Collection and Data Bank
- OM ch. 36.1., Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS)
- OM ch. 37.2., Lost/Overdue Persons
- OM ch. 37.6., Victim Assistance
- OM ch. 37.9., AMBER Alert
- OM ch. 37.10., Missing Children
- OM ch. 38.2., Bias-Free Policing
- OM ch. 44.4., Request for Assistance to Foreign Law-Enforcement Agencies
- Solicitor General's Manual, *"Police Procedures for Ground Search and Rescue for Lost and Missing Persons"*, 1994.