

Media Contact:

MediaRelations@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release**FCC ADOPTS NEW ALERT CODE FOR MISSING AND ENDANGERED PERSONS*****Wireless Phone, TV, and Radio Alerts Could Help Raise Public Awareness of the Thousands of Missing Indigenous Persons***

WASHINGTON, August 7, 2024—The Federal Communications Commission today voted to establish a new alert code to help save missing and endangered persons by delivering critical alert messages to the public over television, radio, and wireless phones. In 2023, more than 188,000 people went missing who fall outside of the criteria for AMBER Alerts. The new alert code adopted today will be particularly beneficial to Tribal communities, where American Indians and Alaska Natives are at a disproportionate risk of violence, murder, or vanishing.

The new missing and endangered persons alerts within the nation’s Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alert system will help law enforcement agencies galvanize public attention to missing and endangered people of all ages who do not qualify for AMBER Alerts, including those who meet the criteria for Ashanti Alerts. Today’s decision will support efforts to raise critical public awareness of missing Indigenous persons. In particular, thousands of missing Indigenous women have disappeared from their homes never to be seen again – according to FBI statistics, in 2023, there were 10,650 reported missing American Indian/Alaska Native persons of which 3,269 were 18 years old or older. Likewise, the code adopted today can help mobilize public responses to missing Black persons who make up roughly 35% of missing persons over 18 years old despite being 12% of the U.S. population.

Tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies originate alerts using the Emergency Alert System by selecting from a group of event codes based on the nature of the situation. For example, “CAE” signifies a Child Abduction Emergency, otherwise known as an AMBER Alert. The new “MEP” alert code for missing and endangered persons who do not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert will enable a more rapid and coordinated response to these incidents.

In addition to the new Emergency Alert System code for TV and radio alerting, the new rule will facilitate alerts on wireless phones. Missing and endangered persons alerts will be sent through the Wireless Emergency Alert system through the use of existing alerting methodologies, which will ensure a swift implementation of the new code. The FCC expects these wireless alerts will utilize the existing Imminent Threat class and the Public Safety Message WEA alert class.

Action by the Commission August 7, 2024 by Report and Order (FCC 24-83). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

PS Docket Nos. 15-91, 15-94

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*