

REFERENCE TITLE: runaways; alert systems

State of Arizona
Senate
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2026

SB 1782

Introduced by
Senators Gonzales: Alston, Diaz, Hatathlie, Kuby, Miranda, Ortiz, Sears,
Sundareshan

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 8-810, 41-1728 AND 41-1728.01, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES;
AMENDING TITLE 41, CHAPTER 12, ARTICLE 2, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY
ADDING SECTION 41-1738; RELATING TO ALERT SYSTEMS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 8-810, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
3 read:

4 8-810. Missing; abducted; runaway children; notification;
5 training; audit

6 A. Immediately or within twenty-four hours after receiving a report
7 made pursuant to section 13-3620 or receiving information during the
8 course of providing services that indicates a child who is a ward of the
9 court or who is in the care of the department is missing, abducted or a
10 runaway and the child's location is unknown, the department shall notify
11 the appropriate law enforcement agency to make the record entry as
12 follows:

13 1. For an abducted child, the Arizona criminal justice information
14 system.

15 2. For an abducted, missing or runaway child, the national crime
16 information center missing person database.

17 B. Immediately or within twenty-four hours after receiving a report
18 of a missing, abducted or runaway child, the department shall do the
19 following:

20 1. Report information on the missing, abducted or runaway child to
21 the national center for missing and exploited children.

22 2. Unless it is determined by the primary investigative agency that
23 it will hinder investigation or location efforts, contact the following
24 persons to obtain information about the child's disappearance:

25 (a) The child's parents.

26 (b) The child's known relatives.

27 (c) The child's out-of-home caregivers.

28 (d) The child's attorney.

29 (e) The child's guardian or guardian ad litem.

30 (f) The child's court appointed special advocate.

31 (g) The child's school, friends or household members or other
32 persons who may have relevant information about the circumstances
33 surrounding the child's abduction or disappearance.

34 (h) Any other persons known to the department who may have relevant
35 information regarding the child's location.

36 3. Unless it is determined by the primary investigative agency that
37 it will hinder investigation or location efforts, provide a notice of
38 disappearance in writing and telephonically to the following persons:

39 (a) The child's parents.

40 (b) The child's known relatives.

41 (c) The child's out-of-home caregivers.

42 (d) The child's attorney.

43 (e) The child's guardian or guardian ad litem.

44 (f) The child's court appointed special advocate.

45 (g) A judicial officer in any judicial matter involving the child.

1 (h) The duty assistant attorney general to initiate a motion for a
2 pickup.

3 (i) If the child is a member of an Indian tribe in this state, the
4 child's Indian tribe.

5 C. Immediately or within twenty-four hours after receiving a report
6 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, the department shall request the appropriate law
7 enforcement agency to determine if the situation meets amber alert
8 criteria, TURQUOISE ALERT CRITERIA PURSUANT TO SECTION 41-1728.01 or
9 ~~silver~~ SEEK AND FIND alert criteria pursuant to section 41-1728. The
10 appropriate law enforcement agency shall document its response regarding
11 amber alert, TURQUOISE ALERT or ~~silver~~ SEEK AND FIND alert criteria.

12 D. Within forty-eight hours after receiving a report of a missing,
13 abducted or runaway child, the department shall provide the local law
14 enforcement agency with, and the local law enforcement agency shall
15 provide to all local media outlets and post to social media platforms, all
16 of the following information regarding the child and, if known, the
17 child's abductor:

18 1. A complete physical description of the child and, if known, the
19 child's abductor.

20 2. The last known location of the child or, if known, the child's
21 abductor.

22 3. A description of the clothing the child or, if known, the
23 child's abductor was last known to be wearing.

24 4. A description of any vehicle that may be involved with the
25 child's disappearance.

26 5. Current photos of the child and, if available, the child's
27 abductor.

28 6. A law enforcement telephone number.

29 7. Information regarding any offered rewards.

30 E. The appropriate law enforcement agency shall update social media
31 platforms with updated information regarding the missing, abducted or
32 runaway child.

33 F. For a child who has been missing or abducted or who has been a
34 runaway for two or more years, the appropriate law enforcement agency
35 shall work, when possible, to create an age-appropriate progression image
36 of the child.

37 G. The department shall do all of the following on an ongoing basis
38 until a missing, abducted or runaway child is located or the child reaches
39 the age of majority:

40 1. Document in writing every effort the department has made to
41 locate the missing, abducted or runaway child within ten days after the
42 effort to locate the child is taken. The written document shall specify
43 the notifications and documentation sent to individuals and departments
44 pursuant to the requirements of this section.

1 2. Contact law enforcement every seven calendar days and document
2 the information provided and received.

3 3. For a child who has been missing or abducted or who has been a
4 runaway for two or more years, work with the national center for missing
5 and exploited children to create an age-progression image of the child.

6 H. The department shall immediately develop, refine, implement and
7 provide initial training to newly hired employees. A newly hired employee
8 must receive this initial training before any children are assigned to the
9 newly hired employee's caseload. The department shall conduct annual
10 training for department employees who have direct oversight of children
11 and the direct supervisors of those employees. The training shall include
12 department policies for locating missing, abducted or runaway children and
13 the requirements for ongoing efforts to locate a missing, abducted or
14 runaway child, unless it is determined by the primary investigative agency
15 that it will hinder investigation or location efforts. Monthly ongoing
16 department efforts shall include all of the following:

17 1. Continued contact with law enforcement agencies.

18 2. Continued contact with the child's parents, guardian or
19 custodian.

20 3. Continued contact with the child's known relatives.

21 4. Continued contact with current and former foster families of the
22 child.

23 5. Continued contact with the child's school.

24 6. Continued contact with known acquaintances of the child.

25 7. Continued in-person searching of locations and places where the
26 child may be found.

27 8. Continued review of any social media accounts that may be
28 associated with the child or the child's known acquaintances.

29 9. Continued efforts with law enforcement agencies in searching for
30 the child.

31 10. Continued search efforts with department field staff who have
32 access to databases that may help in the search for information or leads
33 regarding the missing, abducted or runaway child.

34 11. Referral to the department's office of child welfare
35 investigations for assistance if exigent circumstances exist.

36 12. Requesting that the appropriate law enforcement agency conduct
37 welfare checks at any location where the child may be.

38 I. Within twenty-four hours after a missing, abducted or runaway
39 child is located, the department shall do all of the following:

40 1. Inform all of the following:

41 (a) All law enforcement agencies involved in the child's case.

42 (b) The attorney general's office.

43 (c) The national center for missing and exploited children.

44 (d) Any individuals who have received notice pursuant to subsection
45 B, paragraph 3 of this section.

- 1 2. Have in-person contact with the child.
- 2 3. Obtain a medical exam for the child.
- 3 4. Assess the child's experiences while absent from care, including
- 4 screening to determine if the child is a sex trafficking victim, and
- 5 report to the appropriate law enforcement agency if it is determined that
- 6 the child is a sex trafficking victim.
- 7 5. Assess the appropriateness of the child returning to the child's
- 8 current placement.
- 9 6. Assess factors that contributed to the child's absence.
- 10 7. Determine the need for additional behavioral health services and
- 11 support.
- 12 8. Review the case to assess the primary factors that contributed
- 13 to the child being missing or abducted or a runaway and to the extent
- 14 possible and appropriate respond to those factors in current and
- 15 subsequent case decisions.
- 16 J. Within sixty days after September 14, 2024, the department shall
- 17 develop a checklist for department specialists. The checklist shall be
- 18 distributed to each caseworker to assist department specialists in
- 19 fulfilling the department's duties prescribed by this section. The
- 20 checklist shall have a mechanism to mark department duties as completed
- 21 within the timelines specified by this section.
- 22 K. Beginning ninety days after September 14, 2024, the department
- 23 shall provide a monthly report to the governor, the president of the
- 24 senate and the speaker of the house of representatives. The report shall
- 25 include all of the following:
- 26 1. The names of all current missing, abducted or runaway
- 27 children. The names of missing, abducted or runaway children shall be
- 28 kept confidential and may not be distributed outside of the monthly
- 29 report.
- 30 2. An acknowledgement that the department made the notifications
- 31 prescribed by this section within the prescribed time frames. If the
- 32 department failed to make the notifications ~~with~~ WITHIN the prescribed
- 33 time frames, the department shall include a detailed explanation of the
- 34 reason why the notifications were not made within the prescribed time
- 35 frames.
- 36 3. The department's compliance with ongoing search efforts made to
- 37 locate missing, abducted or runaway children.
- 38 4. The department's compliance with subsection I of this section.
- 39 5. On the return of a runaway child to the department's care, the
- 40 reason why the child ran away.
- 41 L. Within one hundred fifty days after September 14, 2024 and on a
- 42 monthly basis thereafter, the department shall submit to the joint
- 43 legislative budget committee, the senate health and human services
- 44 committee and the house of representatives health and human services

1 committee, or their successor committees, a report that includes all of
2 the following:

3 1. The department's compliance with all of the requirements of this
4 section.

5 2. The number of missing, abducted and runaway children.

6 3. The number of missing, abducted and runaway children who have
7 been found.

8 4. The percentage of times the department was in compliance with
9 the requirements prescribed in subsections A, B, C and D of this section.

10 M. If the report submitted pursuant to subsection L of this section
11 shows a less than ninety-five percent compliance rate with the
12 requirements prescribed in subsection L, paragraph 4 of this section for
13 more than four consecutive or nonconsecutive months in a twelve-month
14 period, the department shall establish a missing, abducted and runaway
15 children unit within the department. The missing, abducted and runaway
16 children unit shall have at least four employees with at least one
17 employee available twenty-four hours a day. The missing, abducted and
18 runaway children unit may enter into contracts with any vendor necessary
19 to ensure the department is in compliance with this section. If the
20 missing, abducted and runaway children unit is established, the unit shall
21 submit a report to the governor, the president of the senate, the speaker
22 of the house of representatives and the joint legislative oversight
23 committee on the department of child safety established by section
24 41-1292. The report shall do all of the following:

25 1. Identify the reasons why the department is not in compliance
26 with the requirements prescribed in subsections A, B, C and D of this
27 section.

28 2. Identify the methods by which the missing, abducted and runaway
29 children unit will achieve a ninety-five percent compliance rate with the
30 requirements prescribed in subsections A, B, C and D of this section.

31 3. Include organizational changes that the department will make to
32 ensure compliance with the requirements prescribed in subsections A, B, C
33 and D of this section.

34 4. Recommend legislative changes that are necessary to ensure the
35 department's compliance with the requirements prescribed in subsections A,
36 B, C and D of this section.

37 N. The legislature may convene an oversight committee to address
38 problems and deviations from policy and procedure and recommend corrective
39 action plans. The legislature shall request an annual independent audit
40 of the department's compliance with this section. If the independent
41 audit determines that the department is not in compliance, the department
42 shall contract with a consulting firm that is licensed by this state for
43 investigative services. The consulting firm shall present recommendations
44 to the oversight committee on how to improve compliance with this section.

1 (c) Believes that the missing person is in danger because of age,
2 health, mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions,
3 that the missing person is in the company of a potentially dangerous
4 person or that there are other factors indicating that the missing person
5 may be in peril.

6 3. There is information available that, if disseminated to the
7 public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

8 4. The department has been designated to use the federally
9 authorized emergency alert system for the issuance of seek and find
10 alerts.

11 C. The department shall request an activation of the emergency
12 alert system and issue a seek and find alert immediately pursuant to
13 subsection B of this section. A seek and find alert may not be denied or
14 delayed due to administrative processes, prior missing episodes or
15 discretionary assessments that are unrelated to the immediate risk to the
16 missing person's safety.

17 D. If the department issues a seek and find alert pursuant to this
18 section, the department shall provide the seek and find alert information
19 to any other entity that provides similar notifications in this state.

20 E. All law enforcement agencies in this state shall do all of the
21 following:

22 1. Develop, implement and regularly update training criteria
23 regarding the seek and find alert notification system ~~pursuant to this~~
24 ~~section~~. The training shall be comprehensive and shall create a solid
25 foundation of knowledge regarding the legal criteria and processes
26 involved in issuing ~~a~~ timely seek and find ~~alert~~ ALERTS.

27 2. Conduct seek and find alert notification training for all
28 employees of a law enforcement agency, at the time of hire and biannually,
29 who have direct involvement in missing person cases, including the
30 supervisors of these employees and communication dispatchers. The
31 training shall include a review of any department and state policies
32 regarding locating missing, abducted or runaway persons, with a specific
33 focus on seek and find alert procedures. The training shall be
34 comprehensive and shall create a solid foundation of knowledge regarding
35 the legal criteria and processes involved in issuing ~~a~~ timely seek and
36 find ~~alert~~ ALERTS.

37 F. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A SEEK AND FIND ALERT REGARDLESS OF
38 WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT HAS DETERMINED WHETHER THE MISSING PERSON IS A
39 RUNAWAY.

40 ~~F.~~ G. For the purposes of this section:

41 1. "Cognitive disability" has the same meaning prescribed in
42 section 36-551.

43 2. "Developmental disability" has the same meaning prescribed in
44 section 36-551.

1 Sec. 3. Section 41-1728.01, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
2 read:

3 41-1728.01. Turquoise alert system; requirements; definitions

4 A. The department shall establish the turquoise alert system as a
5 quick response system designed to issue and coordinate alerts following
6 the report of a missing person.

7 B. On the request of an authorized person at a law enforcement
8 agency that is investigating a report of a missing person, the department
9 shall request an activation of the emergency alert system and issue a
10 turquoise alert if all of the following conditions are met:

11 1. The missing person is under sixty-five years of age.

12 2. The law enforcement agency investigating the missing person
13 report:

14 (a) Has used all available local resources.

15 (b) Has determined that the person IS A RUNAWAY OR has gone missing
16 under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.

17 (c) Believes that the missing person is in danger or that the
18 missing person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person or that
19 there are other factors indicating that the missing person may be in
20 peril.

21 3. There is information available that, if disseminated to the
22 public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

23 4. The department has been designated to use the federally
24 authorized emergency alert system for the issuance of turquoise alerts.

25 C. If the department issues a turquoise alert pursuant to this
26 section, the department shall provide the turquoise alert information to
27 any other entity that provides similar notifications in this state.

28 D. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A TURQUOISE ALERT REGARDLESS OF
29 WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT HAS DETERMINED WHETHER THE MISSING PERSON IS A
30 RUNAWAY.

31 ~~D.~~ E. For the purposes of this section:

32 1. "Law enforcement agency" means the ~~Arizona~~ department of public
33 safety, a municipal police department, a county sheriff's office, a tribal
34 law enforcement agency ~~and~~ OR a federal law enforcement agency that
35 operates within this state.

36 2. "Person" includes a member of a federally recognized Indian
37 Tribe.

38 Sec. 4. Title 41, chapter 12, article 2, Arizona Revised Statutes,
39 is amended by adding section 41-1738, to read:

40 41-1738. Amber alert; rule; runaway

41 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT A RULE THAT AN AMBER ALERT SHALL BE
42 ISSUED IF THE MISSING CHILD MEETS THE CRITERIA TO ISSUE AN AMBER ALERT,
43 REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE CHILD IS A RUNAWAY.