

CHAPTER 369

AN ACT establishing a “Blue Alert System” and supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.52:17B-194.12 “Blue Alert System.”

1. a. The Attorney General shall establish a “Blue Alert System” which shall provide a Statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information in order to facilitate the apprehension of persons suspected of killing or seriously injuring law enforcement officers and to aid in the location of missing law enforcement officers. The program shall be a voluntary, cooperative effort between State and local law enforcement agencies and the media, including but not limited to print, radio, and television media outlets.

b. The Attorney General shall notify the media serving the State of New Jersey of the establishment of the Blue Alert System, and invite their voluntary participation.

C.52:17B-194.13 Criteria for activation of blue alert.

2. a. For the purposes of this act, “lead law enforcement agency” means a law enforcement agency that is conducting an investigation to apprehend a person suspected of seriously injuring or killing a law enforcement officer, or is investigating the disappearance of a law enforcement officer who went missing while on duty under circumstances that warrant concern for the officer’s safety.

b. A Blue Alert authorized pursuant to this act may be activated if all of the following criteria are met:

(1) the lead law enforcement agency confirms that a law enforcement officer has been seriously injured or killed, and that a suspect has not been apprehended, or that a law enforcement officer is missing while on duty under circumstances warranting concern for the law enforcement officer’s safety;

(2) there is sufficient descriptive information about the person suspected of seriously injuring or killing a law enforcement officer or the circumstances surrounding a law enforcement officer’s serious injury, death, or disappearance indicate that the activation of a Blue Alert may assist in locating a suspect or missing law enforcement officer; and

(3) the lead law enforcement agency requests that a Blue Alert be initiated.

c. Nothing in this section shall require that a Blue Alert be initiated if the criteria under paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection b. of this section are met but it is determined by the lead law enforcement agency that the activation of a Blue Alert would cause public harm or would compromise an ongoing investigation.

C.52:17B-194.14 Participation of media outlets.

3. a. Any media outlet that participates in the Blue Alert System established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2019, c.369 (C.52:17B-194.12) may voluntarily agree, upon notice of the issuance of a Blue Alert, to inform the public of a missing law enforcement officer, a person suspected of killing or seriously injuring a law enforcement officer, or any other circumstances surrounding the death, serious injury, or disappearance of a law enforcement officer within the service regions of that media outlet. The notice shall be provided through the lead law enforcement agency.

b. The alerts shall terminate upon notice from the lead law enforcement agency.

c. The alerts shall include a description of the missing officer or person suspected of killing or seriously injuring a law enforcement officer and other information the lead law

enforcement agency may deem appropriate. The lead law enforcement agency shall, in a timely manner, update the media with new information regarding the missing officer or suspect when appropriate.

d. The alerts also shall provide information concerning the method by which members of the public who have information relating to the missing officer, potential suspect, or circumstances relating to the death, serious injury, or disappearance of a law enforcement officer may contact the lead law enforcement agency.

C.52:17B-194.15 Public education campaign.

4. The Attorney General, with the assistance of the participating media, shall develop and undertake a public education campaign to inform the public about the Blue Alert System.

C.52:17B-194.16 Guidelines.

5. The Attorney General may adopt guidelines to effectuate the purposes of this act.

6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh month following enactment.

Approved January 20, 2020.