



Policy Number: 314 – Emergency Notification Systems

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Approved By: Denis Otterness, Chief of Police

314.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for alerting our campus communities and the public to important information and soliciting public aid when appropriate.

314.2 POLICY

Public alerts that include Emergency Notifications, Timely Warnings, and Public Safety Advisories may be employed using the Montana State University Billings Emergency Notification System (ENS). In addition, local radio, television, press organizations, social media, text messaging, and other groups may be utilized to notify the public of incidents, or enlist the aid of the public, when the exchange of information may enhance the safety of the community. The type of alert that is utilized will be based upon each individual situation and alert criteria.

314.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

314.3.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Montana State University Billings Police Department (Department) should notify a Department supervisor as soon as practicable upon learning of a situation where a Public Safety Advisory, Timely Warning, or Emergency Notification should be considered.

314.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor apprised of the potential need for a public alert is responsible for making the appropriate notifications based upon the circumstances of each situation. The supervisor shall promptly notify the Chief of Police and the Assistant Chief of Police when a public alert may be necessary. Emergency Notification System alerts, along with all other public alerts, should be coordinated in conjunction with University Communications and Marketing.

The Department supervisor in charge of an investigation that prompts a public alert is also responsible for:

- a. Updating alerts.
- b. Canceling alerts.
- c. Ensuring all appropriate reports are completed.
- d. Preparing an after-action report of the investigation to be forwarded to the Assistant Chief of Police.

314.4 AMBER ALERTS™

AMBER Alerts™ are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding abducted children.

314.4.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria are required for activation:

- a. A child is missing and is 17 years of age or younger or has a proven physical or mental disability.
- b. Law enforcement reasonably believes a child has been abducted or has disappeared under suspicious circumstances.
- c. Law enforcement believes the child is in imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury.
- d. Information exists that could assist the public in the safe recovery of the missing child.

314.4.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating an AMBER Alert:

- a. A Department supervisor will contact the Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) Help Desk, coordinate activities with City/County dispatch and the Billings Police Department.
- b. The Department supervisor will ensure the missing child is entered into National Crime Information Center (NCIC) appropriately.
- c. The Department supervisor will ensure the Chief of Police and Assistant Chief of Police are notified
- d. The Chief of Police, or their designee, will coordinate with University Communications and Marketing to manage what may be a significant media response.

314.5 MISSING AND ENDANGERED PERSON ALERT

Missing and Endangered Person Alerts (MEPA) are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person when circumstances fail to meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert, however, the Department has determined a public alert may still be helpful. See also University Police Department Policy #312 – Missing Persons.

314.5.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria should be considered for issuance of a MEPA:

- a. Circumstances do not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert.
- b. The missing individual is missing under unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances.

- c. The missing individual is believed to be in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, or environmental or weather conditions; is believed to be in the company of a potentially dangerous person; or is believed to be put in peril due to some other factor.
- d. Information exists that could assist the public in the safe recovery of the missing person.

314.5.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating a MEPA:

- a. The Department supervisor will contact the Montana DOJ Help Desk.
- b. The Department supervisor will ensure the missing/endangered person is entered into NCIC appropriately.
- c. The Department supervisor will ensure the Chief of Police and Assistant Chief of Police are notified
- d. The Chief of Police, or their designee, will coordinate with University Communications and Marketing to manage what may be a significant media response.

314.6 BLUE ALERTS

Blue Alerts are used to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a violent criminal who has seriously injured or killed a local, state or federal law enforcement officer. Blue Alerts may also be used if a peace officer is missing in connection with his/her official duties, or if there is an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to seriously injure or kill a peace officer (§ 44-2-801, MCA).

314.6.1 CRITERIA

The following criteria shall be utilized to determine if a Blue Alert should be issued in any of the following situations (§ 44-2-801, MCA):

- a. A peace officer has been seriously injured or killed in the line of duty and all of the following apply:
 - 1. An individual suspected to have caused the injury or death is at large.
 - 2. The individual poses a serious threat to the public, to other peace officers or both, as determined by a law enforcement agency.
 - 3. Sufficient information exists such that the issuance of a Blue Alert would materially assist in the capture of the individual.
- b. A peace officer is missing in connection with official duties.
- c. An imminent and credible threat exists that an individual intends to cause serious injury to or death of a peace officer.

314.6.2 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for initiating a Blue Alert:

- a. The Department supervisor will contact the Montana DOJ Help Desk.

- b. The Department supervisor will ensure the Chief of Police and Assistant Chief of Police are notified.
- c. The Chief of Police, or their designee, will coordinate with University Communications and Marketing to manage what may be a significant media response.

314.7 EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

An Emergency Notification will be published to the University community in the event of a confirmed significant emergency, or dangerous situation, involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors occurring on our campuses. Emergency Notifications may be published via email, text messaging, social media, public address system, University telephone systems, electronic messaging boards or any other means deemed appropriate. An immediate threat, as used herein, encompasses an imminent or impending threat such as, but not limited to:

- a. Fire in a building
- b. Terrorist incident
- c. Armed intruder
- d. Bomb threat
- e. Civil unrest or rioting
- f. Explosion
- g. Nearby chemical or hazardous waste spill
- h. Outbreaks of contagious diseases such as meningitis or COVID-19
- i. Earthquakes
- j. Extreme weather conditions

This does not apply to non-campus buildings or property

314.7.1 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for issuing an Emergency Notification:

- a. Contact the Chief of Police or Assistant Chief of Police
- b. The Chief of Police, or their designee, will coordinate with University Communications and Marketing.
- c. Enter and publish the appropriate notification in the University Emergency Notification System.
- d. During rapidly evolving threats the Department will coordinate the publishing of Emergency notifications with University Communications and Marketing and Communications and/or University Information Technology staff to expedite the notification and its timeliness.
- e. When time permits verify that the message has been delivered and that there are no system errors.

314.8 TIMELY WARNINGS

A Timely Warning may be issued for any Clery Act crime that occurs on Montana State University Billings Clery geography that is considered by the institution to represent a serious or continuing threat to students, faculty, staff and visitors. Timely Warnings should be issued as soon as pertinent information is available and in a manner that withholds the victim's name as confidential. Timely Warnings may be published via email, text messaging, social media, electronic messaging boards or any other means deemed appropriate.

Clery Crimes that should be considered for Timely Warnings include but are not limited to:

- a. Homicide
- b. Robbery
- c. Aggravated Assault
- d. Burglary
- e. Motor Vehicle Theft
- f. Arson
- g. Sexual Intercourse Without Consent
- h. Sexual Assault

314.8.1 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for issuing a Timely Warning:

- a. Determine if the incident meets the need for a Timely Warning based upon Clery requirements
- b. Notify the Chief of Police or Assistant Chief of Police as soon as practicable.
- c. Coordinate the delivery of the Timely Warning with University Communications and Marketing.
- d. Enter and publish the appropriate notification in the University Emergency Notification System, to include a required safety tip.
- e. During rapidly evolving threats the Department will coordinate the publishing of Emergency notifications with University Communications and Marketing and/or University Information Technology staff to expedite the notification and its timeliness.
- f. When time permits verify that the message has been delivered and that there are no system errors.

314.9 PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORIES

A Public Safety Advisory may be issued when the nature of an incident is not immediate or life threatening. A Public Safety Advisory may or may not be associated with a crime. Public Safety Advisories contain important information for the University community to stay informed about a situation or incident that may raise a safety or security concern. A Public Safety Advisory may be used to alert the University community during incidents that don't meet the criteria for an Emergency Notification or Timely Warning. Public Safety Advisories are issued

to allow students, faculty, staff and visitors the opportunity to make personal safety decisions. A Public Safety Advisory may be published via email, text messaging, social media, electronic messaging boards or any other means deemed appropriate.

314.9.1 PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure for issuing a Public Safety Advisory:

- a. Determine if the incident meets the need for a Public Safety Advisory.
- b. Notify the Chief of Police or Assistant Chief of Police as soon as practicable.
- c. Coordinate the delivery of the Public Safety Advisory with University Communications and Marketing.
- d. Enter and publish the appropriate notification in the University Emergency Notification System.
- e. When time permits verify that the message has been delivered and that there are no system errors.