

for hire) individuals involved with the provision to children under the age of 18 of child care services shall assure that all existing and newly-hired employees undergo a criminal history background check. All existing staff shall receive such checks not later than May 29, 1991. Except as provided in subsection (b)(3), no additional staff shall be hired without a check having been completed.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the term “child care services” means child protective services (including the investigation of child abuse and neglect reports), social services, health and mental health care, child (day) care, education (whether or not directly involved in teaching), foster care, residential care, recreational or rehabilitative programs, and detention, correctional, or treatment services.

(b) Criminal history check

(1) A background check required by subsection (a) shall be—

(A) based on a set of the employee’s fingerprints obtained by a law enforcement officer and on other identifying information;

(B) conducted through the Identification Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and through the State criminal history repositories of all States that an employee or prospective employee lists as current and former residences in an employment application; and

(C) initiated through the personnel programs of the applicable Federal agencies.

(2) The results of the background check shall be communicated to the employing agency.

(3) An agency or facility described in subsection (a)(1) may hire a staff person provisionally prior to the completion of a background check if, at all times prior to receipt of the background check during which children are in the care of the person, the person is within the sight and under the supervision of a staff person with respect to whom a background check has been completed.

(c) Applicable criminal histories

Any conviction for a sex crime, an offense involving a child victim, or a drug felony, may be ground for denying employment or for dismissal of an employee in any of the positions listed in subsection (a)(2). In the case of an incident in which an individual has been charged with one of those offenses, when the charge has not yet been disposed of, an employer may suspend an employee from having any contact with children while on the job until the case is resolved. Conviction of a crime other than a sex crime may be considered if it bears on an individual’s fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children.

(d) Employment applications

(1) Employment applications for individuals who are seeking work for an agency of the Federal Government, or for a facility or program operated by (or through contract with) the Federal Government, in any of the positions listed in subsection (a)(1), shall contain a question asking whether the individual has ever been arrested for or charged with a crime involving a child, and if so requiring a description of the disposition of the arrest or charge. An application

shall state that it is being signed under penalty of perjury, with the applicable Federal punishment for perjury stated on the application.

(2) A Federal agency seeking a criminal history record check shall first obtain the signature of the employee or prospective employee indicating that the employee or prospective employee has been notified of the employer’s obligation to require a record check as a condition of employment and the employee’s right to obtain a copy of the criminal history report made available to the employing Federal agency and the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the report.

(e) Encouragement of voluntary criminal history checks for others who may have contact with children

Federal agencies and facilities are encouraged to submit identifying information for criminal history checks on volunteers working in any of the positions listed in subsection (a) and on adult household members in places where child care or foster care services are being provided in a home.

(Pub. L. 101-647, title II, §231, Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4808; Pub. L. 102-190, div. A, title X, §1094(a), Dec. 5, 1991, 105 Stat. 1488.)

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 13041 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

AMENDMENTS

1991—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 102-190, §1094(a)(1), substituted “May 29, 1991. Except as provided in subsection (b)(3), no additional staff” for “6 months after November 29, 1990, and no additional staff”.

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 102-190, §1094(a)(2), added par. (3).

CHAPTER 205—AMBER ALERT

Sec.	
20501.	National coordination of AMBER Alert communications network.
20502.	Minimum standards for issuance and dissemination of alerts through AMBER Alert communications network.
20503.	Grant program for notification and communications systems along highways for recovery of abducted children.
20504.	Grant program for support of AMBER Alert communications plans.
20505.	Limitation on liability.

§ 20501. National coordination of AMBER Alert communications network

(a) Coordination within Department of Justice

The Attorney General shall assign an officer of the Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator of the AMBER Alert communications network regarding abducted children. The officer so designated shall be known as the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Department of Justice.

(b) Duties

In acting as the national coordinator of the AMBER Alert communications network, the Coordinator shall—

(1) seek to eliminate gaps in the network, including gaps in areas of interstate travel;

(2) work with States to encourage the development of additional elements (known as local AMBER plans) in the network;

(3) work with States to ensure appropriate regional coordination of various elements of the network; and

(4) act as the nationwide point of contact for—

(A) the development of the network; and

(B) regional coordination of alerts on abducted children through the network.

(c) Consultation with Federal Bureau of Investigation

In carrying out duties under subsection (b), the Coordinator shall notify and consult with the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning each child abduction for which an alert is issued through the AMBER Alert communications network.

(d) Cooperation

The Coordinator shall cooperate with the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal Communications Commission in carrying out activities under this section.

(e) Report

Not later than March 1, 2005, the Coordinator shall submit to Congress a report on the activities of the Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of the AMBER plans of each State that has implemented such a plan. The Coordinator shall prepare the report in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation.

(Pub. L. 108–21, title III, §301, Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 660.)

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 5791 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20502. Minimum standards for issuance and dissemination of alerts through AMBER Alert communications network

(a) Establishment of minimum standards

Subject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Department of Justice shall establish minimum standards for—

(1) the issuance of alerts through the AMBER Alert communications network; and

(2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts issued through the network.

(b) Limitations

(1) The minimum standards established under subsection (a) shall be adoptable on a voluntary basis only.

(2) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in consultation with State and local law enforcement agencies), provide that appropriate information relating to the special needs of an abducted child (including health care needs) are disseminated to the appropriate law enforcement, public health, and other public officials.

(3) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum extent practicable (as determined by the

Coordinator in consultation with State and local law enforcement agencies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through the AMBER Alert communications network be limited to the geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery of the abducted child concerned.

(4) In carrying out activities under subsection (a), the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of the AMBER Alert communications network.

(c) Cooperation

(1) The Coordinator shall cooperate with the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal Communications Commission in carrying out activities under this section.

(2) The Coordinator shall also cooperate with local broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies in establishing minimum standards under this section.

(Pub. L. 108–21, title III, §302, Apr. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 661.)

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 5791a of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 20503. Grant program for notification and communications systems along highways for recovery of abducted children

(a) Program required

The Secretary of Transportation shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for the development or enhancement of notification or communications systems along highways for alerts and other information for the recovery of abducted children.

(b) Development grants

(1) In general

The Secretary may make a grant to a State under this subsection for the development of a State program for the use of changeable message signs or other motorist information systems to notify motorists about abductions of children. The State program shall provide for the planning, coordination, and design of systems, protocols, and message sets that support the coordination and communication necessary to notify motorists about abductions of children.

(2) Eligible activities

A grant under this subsection may be used by a State for the following purposes:

(A) To develop general policies and procedures to guide the use of changeable message signs or other motorist information systems to notify motorists about abductions of children.

(B) To develop guidance or policies on the content and format of alert messages to be conveyed on changeable message signs or other traveler information systems.

(C) To coordinate State, regional, and local plans for the use of changeable message signs or other transportation related issues.