

**LOCAL LAW NO. 5 OF 2009  
COUNTY OF ROCKLAND  
STATE OF NEW YORK**

(Introduced by: Hon. Robert D. Jackson)  
(Co-Sponsors: Hon. Edwin J. Day, Hon. Philip Soskin, Hon. Alden H. Wolfe)

Mr. Jackson offered the following Local Law, which was seconded by the Entire Legislature and adopted:

A local law establishing a Silver Alert system in Rockland County.

Be it enacted by the legislature of the county of Rockland as follows:

**Section 1. Name of local law**

This law shall be known as “the Rockland County Silver Alert System.”

**Section 2. Legislative intent.**

Seventy percent (70%) of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia patients are cared for at home by family members, in what are often extraordinary and moving acts of love and devotion during the progress of the disease, which on average lasts between five and fifteen years, and is marked by progressive symptoms that over time make the patient completely dependent on their caregivers.

A common behavior of this disease that causes great concern for families and caregivers is wandering, and the risk to these vulnerable individuals increases exponentially the longer they remain missing. There have been several recent incidents in which an individual diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or other form of dementia has engaged in wandering, and the locality was not equipped with the tools necessary to locate them in a timely manner, with the unfortunate result that these individuals never returned home to their families.

A number of states and municipalities as well as the federal government have either developed or are considering a “Silver Alert” System, similar to the Amber Alert System, which allows local law enforcement to disseminate to media outlets vital information about these vulnerable citizens who have wandered from their caretakers, to aid in the search and safe return of these individuals to those responsible for them.

In response to concerns raised by Triad (a volunteer group with a focus on senior safety, consisting of three types of agencies - sheriffs, police and senior citizens) regarding persons with cognitive impairments, the Rockland County Legislature, in its ongoing mission to provide essential services to protect its vulnerable population, intends by this law to establish a Silver Alert System. This system will provide rapid dissemination of information regarding missing senior citizens and other individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other cognitive disorders to the public in an effort to expedite the search and safe recovery of those individuals.

### **Section 3. Definitions.**

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

- A. **COUNTY** – The County of Rockland, New York.
- B. **SILVER ALERT SYSTEM** – a system that will provide the rapid dissemination of information regarding missing senior citizens and other individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other cognitive disorders.

### **Section 4. Procedures.**

- A. The County Sheriff's Department in conjunction with the various town and village police departments shall establish a Silver Alert System, develop guidelines and set up procedures for issuing a Silver Alert, and maintain a database of media, organizations and other outlets to be notified when a senior citizen or other individual suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other cognitive disorder is reported missing.
- B. The Sheriff's Department will work jointly with the various town and village police departments within the County and the Alzheimer's Association National MedicAlert + Safe Return Program to rapidly disseminate information regarding missing senior citizens and other individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other cognitive disorders.
- C. The relevant police department will issue a Silver Alert, unless it is deemed inappropriate due to particular circumstances, each time a senior citizen or other individual suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other cognitive disorders is reported missing to the relevant police department.
- D. The Silver Alert distributed to the public may contain the following information, if available:

1. the missing individual's name;
2. the missing individual's age;
3. a physical description of the missing individual, including, if known, a description of the clothing the individual was last seen wearing;
4. the last location where the missing individual was seen; and
5. the description of any motor vehicle the missing may be driving, its license plate number and the direction in which it was last seen traveling.

**Section 5. Severability.**

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this local law or the application thereof to any person, individual, corporation, firm, partnership, entity or circumstance shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, effect or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this law or in its application to the person, individual, corporation, firm, partnership, entity or circumstance directly involved in the controversy in which such order or judgment shall be rendered.

**Section 6. Effective date.**

This local law shall take effect one hundred and twenty (120) days after it is filed with the New York State Secretary of State.

The vote resulted as follows:

Ayes:	14	(Legislators Bierker, Coker, Darden, Day, Grant, Hood, Jr., Jackson, Meyers, Murphy, Schoenberger, Soskin, Sparaco, Wolfe, Cornell)
U. A. Nay:	01	(Legislator Michel)
Absent:	02	(Legislators Jobson, Moroney)

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