

Webinar Transcript | Maximizing the First Three Hours: Rapid Child Abduction Response for Indian Country

Welcome to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar Maximizing the First Three Hours-- Rapid Child Abduction Response for Indian Country. This is going to be presented to you today by David Chewiwie and Francis Bradley. My name is Tanea Parmenter and I will be moderating for you today. This webinar was provided under an award provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, and supported by the AMBER Alert Indian Country Program. The opinions expressed by presenters in their oral or written material are theirs alone, and do not necessarily represent those of the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College, or OJJDP.

In conjunction with our mission, our webinar series works to bring together state, local, and tribal subject matter experts to present and discuss critical issues related to missing, abducted, and exploited children. Poll questions are asked during the webinar so that we can better understand you, the audience, and provide the most useful information to you. They'll only be open for a short period of time, so please respond promptly.

Let's begin with our first poll question. The question is, what type of work assignment does the participant work in? 20% of you from Tribal Law Enforcement, 17% from Advocacy, and 61% from Other. I'm pleased to introduce you to today's presenters, David Chewiwie and Francis Bradley Sr. David Chewiwie joined Fox Valley Technical College on June 15th, 2021, as a training associate for AMBER Alert and Technical Assistance. David's family is from the Pueblo of Isleta, New Mexico, and he is a tribal member.

He joined the United States Marine Corps out of high school, and after his enlistment, went to work for the Orange County Sheriff's Department in Southern California. During his law enforcement career, he worked many assignments, including Patrol Investigations, Special Investigations, Gang Enforcement Team, and Special Operations. That is where he developed an interest in working on missing person cases.

He pursued training and expertise in Missing Persons, and after retirement in 2018, he began to work as Team Adam Consultant with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, where he also joined the Child Abduction Response team liaison for San Diego and Orange Counties. He remained active with Orange County Sheriff's Department as a reserve deputy assigned to search and rescue, and he specializes in land search operations.

Francis Bradley Sr. is enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and a career Indian Country police officer with over 41 years experience. Officer Bradley currently works for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation as a former chief of police, and served as the Director of Tribal Police and Criminal Investigation Programs for over 18 years, and graduated from the FBI National Academy, Session 232. He's been called upon to represent Indian Country at local, state, and national levels, and helped develop policies and advocate for the betterment of public safety services to Indian Country and enhance the quality of life for Native people.

All right. Our learning objectives today is we're going to make sure that you have the necessary tools. We're going to discuss the assessment of missing or abducted children incidents from Indian Country. You'll also learn preplanned response strategies and resources specific to Indian Country. We're going to discuss how to overcome resources and training challenges for missing child abductions. So from here, I'm going to go ahead and leave it with our presenters, Francis and David. Thank you.

Thank you, Tanea, for that [AUDIO OUT] and thank you, everyone, for attending. Today, Francis and I will be talking about the first three hours after a child goes missing or is abducted. Those first three hours are critical, and according to a Washington State study in 2006, it revealed that out of the 735 child abduction homicide cases that they studied, 76% of the time, when a child was killed, it was within the first three hours. So in Indian Country, that's even more important, because Indian Country has certain challenges that we have to deal with on tribal lands. So combine that with the need for prevention and risk reduction, a well-planned, well-prepared and organized response is critical in Indian Country.

So when we talk about maximizing the first three hours, one important factor to remember is that these are high-risk, low-frequency incidents. Now, what that means is that these incidents are rare. Child abductions that are-- let's say stranger abductions, for instance-- those incidents occur very rarely, and even missing child incidents, where a child goes missing and it's not known what may have happened to that child, those are also rare occurrences.

And what happens with those is that it does not allow law enforcement agencies to develop a muscle memory, so to speak. Now, law enforcement agencies will respond to a lot of types of incidents during their career. But some patrol officers, investigators, even supervisors may not get a chance to respond to these types of critical incidents. And so they require training, they require preparation. And they require to put a lot of things into motion to be able to make sure that that response goes smoothly, that it's not only efficient, but effective as well.

With that being said, like what Dave was talking about, there are two key points we'd like you all to remember when we're talking about these first three hours. And those key points are our ability to increase the likelihood of finding and bringing that missing child home safely, and then just remember this again-- you'll hear this again-- remember the term high-risk, low-frequency. We'll be mentioning this more as we go along.

And in my career, it's been over-- it's going to be 42 years soon. And just like what David was talking about, these are high-risk, low-frequency events. Just in coming to work here at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, the last two missing child incidents that I can remember happened in the resort, right within the hotel. Children left their rooms and ended up inside the hotel. So that's kind of one way of looking at missing children, but it's still a missing child. And in both those cases, they were resolved rather quickly-- within the first couple of hours of the children going missing. So just keep those in mind.

So prevention, preparation, and rapid response are key to this. Some of the key elements are the importance of calling police right away. So what we want to do is we want to dispel some of those myths in Indian Country, which-- there are some misconceptions about when the police should be called, if they should be called right away, if there needs to be a waiting period, whether families, and relatives should begin a search. Sometimes the search is started, and a search will last an hour or two hours, and then the police will be called.

And so it's important that everyone knows that there is no required waiting period. Some things, like knowing that children can be abducted even when they're close to home-- doesn't mean where they go somewhere, or if they're at school, or they're coming back from school, or a playground, or wherever. Children can still be abducted even if they're close by.

That's very true, David. Because when you look at it from the standpoint of-- what are the first things that we do as parents, as caretakers, as our children are-- they're outside playing, they're outside doing something. They may have gone to a relative's house or something. But one of the first things that we do when we start looking for them is start to call around. And that takes time as well, until we start to realize that, hey, there's something wrong here.

And we begin calling more relatives and start talking to our neighbors. Hey, have you seen my kids? Have you seen my kids? And usually, the last people to be called are law enforcement, the public safety. And remember, there isn't an organization out there that has a policy that says that-- well, in Indian Country, all the organizations I've met, worked for, we don't have a policy that says there is a required waiting period. There is none. There is no required waiting period to report a missing child or person.

So that's one of the key points that we'd like you to remember out of this, also, is that this is critical that our community members and those who we serve know this, so that they can call us right away to start to assist them in looking for the children. That's part of the prevention and risk reduction. David?

So part of that prevention and preparedness is having just a basic conversation with your child-- having an honest, non-threatening conversation about some of the risks and some of the real dangers that are out there, some things like approaching vehicles, whether they're known or unknown-- a child shouldn't do, talking about having supervision, even when they're in their own front yard. Like I said, children can be abducted even when they're close to home, in their neighborhood street, parks, anything close to home.

And sometimes, we feel a little bit more comfortable around our own space, but like we mentioned before children still need to be supervised they're near us. And teaching parents or guardians to be aware of strangers within their community. And Francis, you can speak to this a little bit more, about some of the--

Yes, David. In fact--

--communities in Indian country, as well.

Yes. In fact, think about it from your jurisdictions, and from your neighborhoods, and where you live, and so forth, especially for our tribal law enforcement partners out there. When you think about it, most of the time, you get these calls about suspicious people, vehicles, things like that in your neighborhoods, on your roads, in your area. That's one of the first key parts of knowing who's out there, what's going on, and so on and so forth.

But there are some basic principles in making sure our children stay safe. And we as parents and guardians play a significant role in helping keep our community safe. That's what I mean. We know what's out there. We know what our neighborhoods are like. We know what our driveways are like. These kinds of things.

We get a lot of calls in Fort McDowell about suspicious people and vehicles. So pretty much, our neighborhoods-- they're really in tune with who's around. So again, that's about stranger danger and things like that, who's in our community. And again, in our communities, we all know when someone is out of place. You know what I mean by out of place and suspicious?

With knowing these types of persons or suspicious activities, they should be reported to your local police. And that's one of the things that in the community I currently work in, our community members are really good. At that other places I've been-- and it could be this way in your jurisdictions as well-- is that usually, you're the last ones to call, because it's like, OK, I don't want to bother them. It's nothing.

But you know, you've got a lot of roadways, you've got a lot of people passing through your communities. You've got a lot of activity. And you know when something looks out of place. So David?

Yeah, exactly. Thank you. So let's talk about some of our resources. Like I said, preparedness and planning are key to this. So we look at our internet safety resources. There's a lot of areas. There's a lot of resources for getting information about internet safety programs for children.

And the timing is just right, because historically, Indian Country has been behind the curve in getting broadband and internet access to tribal communities. And now that government and private sector are investing in internet and broadband, more native communities are getting access. And so as that expands, so do the threats of predators, and luring, and sextortion, and so many other different internet threats. So parents need to be aware and educated as far as what's out there and how to combat some of the threats to children that are on the internet.

Another thing that is very important in that preparedness is to have a child ID kit. There are multiple resources to obtain a child ID kit, but it should have some of the basics, like photographs of the child, victimology information-- victimology, meaning some of the things that they like to do, where they like to go, who they hang out with, those kind of things. It should have a DNA sample is very easy to obtain-- fingerprints, dental records. And it's something that would be kept at home, something for the parent to have for when a patrol officer responds for that missing child incident, that it's easily, readily available to law enforcement. Francis?

Yes, David. In fact, I am right now putting some resources in that you could look for and use right now, when it comes to making yourself more aware, just like the child ID kits that David was talking about. There are things that you can do as well. Like, DNA. You ever talk do you ever think about collecting DNA?

Well, what if your child has an old toothbrush? Your child has an old toothbrush. They use it all the time, and they're through with it. You know, take that old toothbrush from that child, put it in a container-- an airtight, sealed container-- and keep it there. That has the child's DNA on it.

So look at that look at that type of way of getting DNA for your children. Then again, there are a lot of law enforcement public safety fairs that go on where you could get a ID kit. The FBI also has a link on one of their web pages where you can get this type of information on putting together your own kit. And then again, think about dental records. Dental records also can help provide information for your children as well. So again, there are a lot of resources out there for us to use to make sure that we have, like, DNA and photographs, and things like that for our children. David?

Yeah, for sure. There are a lot of different awareness campaigns that will include topics like sextortion, luring, internet safety, sex trafficking, and other things to keep our kids safe online. Also, there are information on social media, informational flyers for, presentations at school. Law enforcement agencies also sometimes have their web pages that will contain some of this information.

Now, when you look at that, also think about this. Of course, we work for the AMBER Alert in Indian Country program in the Fox Valley Technical College. If you go to the AMBER Alert page, you'll see there are a lot of resources there as well, not only for any country, but for preparation for law enforcement agencies and others that could help in providing you with ideas, ways, and things that you could think about preparing yourself for when a child goes missing.

So look at the AMBER Alert website as well, and other sites, such as what NCMEC has, what the FBI has. Even the Idaho-- you could go to the Idaho Uniform Crime Reporting website for more resources, and to help further your training and education on missing children. David?

So let's talk about putting a plan in place. One of the things that we have, and specifically in Indian Country, is we have certain challenges that we have to overcome in Indian country-- things like jurisdictional issues, large and often rural tribal lands, the resources that are available or not available, in many cases. The broadband issues, internet, that we talked about a little bit ago. Cell phone service or equipment or infrastructure, our roads, the distance, and being able to respond to some of these incidents. And one big issue-- and Francis, you can probably talk to that as well-- is that some of the addresses in Indian Country sometimes are hard to find unless you know that area well.

Right. In fact, there are a lot of places in Indian Country where we work today that don't have rural addressing systems. It could be go to the-- get off the State Route 000, and you go on County Road 123, and then you get to the fork in the road, take the left one till you get to the big tree fallen tree, then you go right-- those are the kind of directions we may honestly get when we get into Indian Country.

And again, a lot of our challenges that we start to look at are things like no rural addressing, large land spaces, vast land spaces-- because, again one of there are two key factors when you work in Indian country. One of them is the large land bases, the distances between where people live, work, play. Also, when you think about it-- this is also an asset, when you think about it-- is the relationships we have-- large families living in clustered areas, or large families within those areas. But there are challenges that we meet and have.

So again, equipment is another one. Radio communications can be limited. Like Dave was saying, broadband is limited. Things like that could really cause you some challenges, especially when it comes to response and gathering information and getting that information out.

Yeah. Well said. And in addition to that, also, you have the stress factor, and sometimes, a minimal training on these type of topics. So it's important to put a plan in place. And that training, as we always emphasize here, in AMBER Alert in Indian Country is that some of that training has to be specific to tribal communities, because different tribal communities have different needs.

There are things in addition to the preparation, response, rapid response, and planning that we talked about. It's also things like cultural awareness, you know? Language, respect, tribal liaison assistance-- a lot of these different things that need to come into play in Indian Country. It's vital that tribal council and law enforcement have a working relationship, cooperation, and collaboration, and it's also vital that those mutual aid agreements between agencies-- tribal agencies and non-tribal-- be put in place beforehand, so that there are things like standardized reporting, canvassing forms, checklists, those things that are used uniformly between different agencies.

And it's also very important that in that preparation phase, that there should be some kind of a self-assessment so that that tribal agency can say, this is what we have available at our disposal 24/7, in case something happens. And this is what we don't have, or this is the training that we need, or these are the resources that we need to get ahead of time, so that we put all of those things in place, so that it maximizes those first three hours of our response.

And that is very, very true, Dave. When you think about it in this light also, as with anything we do in our tribal communities, we must be aware of the culture-- the culture of the community, the culture of the tribe, the culture of the nation. What is family? What are the local customs of the tribe, community we are serving?

Those are the things that we need to know when we're working within our jurisdiction. And those of you that aren't in law enforcement-- these are things you could take into consideration, or you should take into consideration when it comes to how we're going to be responding and working on missing children. And this next question, this next thing is really about, is the tribal law enforcement agency multi-jurisdictional? What are your working relationships?

What are your working relationships with our tribal partners? Like, if the police services are not, who are the police services provided by? Are they provided by the tribe? The BIA? The county? The state? What are the relationships between the police and the community? David had mentioned that before.

And again, preparation is key to operational efficiency, especially when it comes to our high-risk, low-frequency incidents. You heard that before, and we're talking about it again. The AMBER Alert website has training and other materials such as checklists for us to use in responding to, gathering information, and to use during the gathering of information during that missing child incident.

Now, with that being said, David hit on this point also-- when was the last time you trained on your plan? Do you have a plan? AMBER Alert Indian Country can help with the training and technical assistance to try to put those plans in place. In fact, next week, my agency, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, is holding a tabletop exercise-- a missing child in Indian Country tabletop exercise.

And that's going to test my jurisdiction's ability to respond to deal with a missing child. And I can tell you right now, there are some things I see in even our own policy that have holes in it, that are going to put me in a place where it's, like, OK. We've got to make some policy adjustments, but we also need to look at updating our plan. David?

Thank you, Francis. Well said. And it looks like we have another poll question. So our poll question is, how many child abduction incidents have you responded to, whether as a law enforcement officer or in other assistance capacity?

So it looks like we have about 42% that said none, 42% that said 1 to 5, 6% said 6 to 10, and 9% that did over 10.

With the responses you all have given, I can tell you now in my tenure, my 42-year career tenure, I'm with the 1 to 5 group, which is telling you right there, it's a low-frequency event. But it's high-risk. David?

Yeah. Thank you. And that's very true. And that's why this training is so critical. So now that we've looked at some of our preparation and our preparedness or planning, those things that need to go into place, let's look at our initial response. So one of the very important parts about this is just having a well-coordinated response. Knowing some of the things that you want to put into place before you go-- and we're talking individually, not department-wise.

But individually, having some of those things in place, because these are not only high-risk, low-frequency, but they are stressful events. You've got a child that's missing, and you want to go there, and you want to make sure that you remember everything that you need to do. But every level, whether it's patrol, or supervisory, or investigative-- everyone has their own responsibilities that they need to put in place so that this is efficient, that it's uniform, and that it's consistent with what needs to be done in order to locate that child.

So it needs to be well-coordinated. And if you do that, it also helps with reducing that uncertainty and that fear that the parents or the guardians may have. It will aid in that long-term cooperation with your agency and other agencies, if you go into a unified command. And it's also going to be instilling that agency's command staff, knowing that all of the things that you put together or your initial response, they were well done, they were well-coordinated, and that they can just take it from there and continue the search and the investigation as well.

Again, when you think about the initial response, you all who work in Indian Country out there, think about it. Think about where you are right now. If you're like me, in my agency, there's usually just a couple of us on at any one time. We run two shifts. We run a day shift and we run a night shift. So we're running 12-hour shifts.

Our policies-- we've got to have at least two people on. We're fortunate if we have three, or if there's three of us. Usually, it's a sergeant and an officer. So again, think about, realistically, about where you are right now and what's happening.

And then think about this initial response. What is it going to be like? What is it that's going to happen? Think about that. What kind of response are you going to have? Is it well-coordinated, or what's it going to be like? Think about your real resources. David?

So there are a lot of assets that you may request that may take a little bit of time to prepare, to stage, to put into place. There may be-- in Indian Country, obviously, we have large areas to cover. So some of the resources and assets that we may need right away may take a while to get to us. So that's why we have to start thinking about, as we start receiving this type of a call, what assets can I start putting into place right now? What can I start requesting or at least putting on standby prior to my arrival?

If you have air assets already with your agency, or you already have that plan in place through mutual aid, where you're going to get this from another agency, then you could start requesting this, knowing that you're going to have to cover a lot of area, and you want these assets to start responding. They could be search and rescue assets. And they may or may not all respond, but at least they may have some assets they may put on standby, and there may be assets that they may actually deploy to the location to start with the search.

Another thing is just confirming that some of that information that you receive is factual. It's not just speculation, because sometimes with many families, they will have someone else call, and the parent may not be the person on the phone. So we need to actually verify a lot of that information. And one of the things that we want to start off with is that search of the residence, whether or not that child is missing from the residence.

That's very true. In a lot of the cases that I've responded to or my team has responded to, one of the first things in-- if you want to call it a cardinal rule of missing children and searching for them is, first of all, search the residence thoroughly, inside and out, where that child lives at, where that child plays at, where that child sleeps at. This is so critical.

I got reminded this again by our fire department when we were working with them on a missing child, or just the most recent one, last summer. It was, hey, Officer Bradley, did you search the residence? No, I just got here. Let's search the residence. So we got reminders of that.

Think about that. And then think about your rapid response resources. Think about community emergency response teams. Do you have those?

Think about the tribal programs and employees that are out there that can help you. Think about the school officials and staff. Again, the ability to respond in a timely manner and obtain clear and accurate information on that missing child is critical during this time. David?

OK. So, like I mentioned before, how much information do we have? And based on that information, you have to make some type of assessment. What type of situation, what type of scenario do I have? Could it be a parental abduction?

Are there issues, medical issues? Is it something like a child being on the autism spectrum? Do we just have no idea of where this child went?

So one of the things that works, that's effective in these type of responses, is having different responses for different types of scenarios. And whether you write these responses down, whether you have them in your computer, it's important one that, one, you trained on them, but also that you have these available, and that you don't have a singular focus on what this child abduction, or what this missing child case may be.

If you keep an open mind as to what type of scenarios you have, you can respond, and you can put your response into play based on different types of scenarios, and not just one. If you maintain a singular focus on just one, it may lead you down one path and waste a lot of time where it may be something else that's going on. And so that situational risk assessment is very important, something that should be done with your supervisor as well.

So let's talk about some of our right now resources. What are the things that we need right now? And this is where that checklist comes in. And the checklist is very, very important, because like I said, these are stressful events. We don't want to miss anything. So it's important that we go right down the line and look at if we have a checklist for different types of scenarios.

And even just a basic missing child checklist is going to include a lot of different things that need to be put into place. And also, having that initial canvass document, which our investigator will probably put into place, speaking with our parents, the guardians, the reporting parties, the friends or relatives-- when was the child? Last seen where were they last seen? Who were they with?

A lot of those type of things that we ask, and that it's consistent with everybody doing some basic reporting information, especially if it's a child abduction, like the vehicle information, the photo of the child, their ID kit-- any of the victimology information that we can get. Information from their friends, as well as social media because that's very important. That's something that investigations will need to follow up on very quickly.

Yes. In fact, one of the things that-- I was typing some answers to some questions, so I forgot to mention this earlier in the effective response strategies. Remember, our police dispatchers are trained information gatherers, and as such, are the first point of contact in most cases when someone is reporting a child missing. We need to ensure our community knows this, and that the information given to them is also, in most cases, immediately given out to our police officers, who are the boots on the ground, and who are out, who will be out responding, looking for that child and responding to that scene at the same time.

The questions that they ask, a lot of times, may seem repetitive, but in most cases, are part of a systematic way to make sure information is obtained as quickly as possible during a missing child investigation, such as the child's name, age, and description, and last time seen. And when we talk about that right now resources-- think about, for my colleagues out there who work the field, what are your right now resources? What are you carrying?

Are you carrying a handheld FLIR? Are you carrying binoculars? Do you have night vision capability? Those are the kind of things that we're thinking about. Do you have your checklist in your vehicles? Those kind of things.

What do you have with you? If you're like me, if you look into my patrol vehicle, there's no room-- there's barely any room for me to sit, because of all of the things that I'm carrying. I've worked in Indian Country for a long time, and a lot of times, we work by ourselves, and our resources that we need to have our anything and just about everything. I mean, right now, shoot, you look in my vehicle, you'll see my night vision, you'll see my binoculars, but you'll also see a car jack and a crossbar, because those are the kind of things that we need to have. David?

Yeah. Thank you. So let's talk about that supervisor role. We think about supervisor role, supervisor responding to the scene and taking that supervisory look at what's going on and making sure that things are done-- also, we look at the supervisor, or somebody who's going to come in and approve that report, making sure that we enter the child into NCIC and check that Native box, which is very critical, which will activate a lot of our-- whether it's AMBER Alert, or in some states, there is a Native Alert as well-- but some of those things that are critical for getting the word out right away.

But also, it's very important for that supervisor to be there to assist us with that risk assessment-- the risk assessment and the assessment of the situation. What is it that you actually have? And based on what you have, how are you going to respond? What are the assets that you're going to request and to put into place?

Command and control is very important, because one, it's going to take a lot of that responsibility off of your shoulders if you're the responding officer. It's going to take a lot of those questions and those inquiries that are coming in from, whether it may be tribal council, it may be command staff, it may be the media. The media may have gotten word about this.

And it's going to take all of those things off of your shoulders so that you can more effectively focus on getting this initial cursory search that you need to get done so that you can start deploying other resources, other personnel, to start their searches. Where are those areas that you think that are high probability that you may be able to search right now? Some of those assets that are coming in. Some of those resources-- you want to be able to deploy those right away. And so you want to have that supervisor there to also request things like your investigations, and other resources that you need to do.

They'll also set up a command post not at the residence, but away from the residence. But that mobile command post may come with extra things that a supervisor might carry, like mapping, computers, other things that's going to help them assign personnel to do an effective and a thorough search of the area. Some supervisors, like myself-- I had the capability to not only do area mapping, but also to do things, to do searches, where we had no idea. We would start from a place last scene and do concentric circles, which just meant just-- as we received more personnel on scene, that we would just widen the area up, kind of like layers of an onion, so to speak.

And so we had the capability to do that. And also, a search and rescue initial notification. Because a lot of agencies have it within their policy where when a child goes missing, or a person goes missing, that search and rescue is initially called automatically. Not all agencies have that. But I think it's a good idea, because they can at least give you a consultation and say, yeah, we're going to-- based on what you're telling us, we're going to deploy some resources, or we're going to send a search dog, for example.

We can get that to you right away. We'll put our ground teams on standby. We could send air assets. We can send a lot of different things. And those things take time, so it's important for that supervisor to know so that they can start getting those things into place and working.

Now, remember-- my partners in Indian Country, and those who work around Indian Country, think about this. Sometimes, this is all-in-one. This is the one and the same person. The responding officer-- he may be that supervisor. He may be the officer in charge of that particular shift. He also may be the investigator.

In most cases, that's what it's going to be. Remember, when we talk about Indian Country, we may have a 1-in-3 person. You know? He may be in charge of three different things. Based upon the initial responding officer's information, the supervisor will be making whatever determination is needed to provide direction to the investigation at hand and begin resource gathering and dealing with the jurisdictional issues faced in the case ahead, our missing person investigation.

Remember, jurisdiction is going to play a part in all what we do in Indian Country. Now, some advice I was once given-- make sure your network is composed of people you know and can call upon when you need to. Far better to have a working relationship before trying to build one as you're investigating a missing child's case. Most agencies and departments already have mutual aid agreements in place. However, resources are still available to our agencies even without these formal agreements. Remember, most Sheriff's departments in this country are charged with search and rescue. David?

Yeah. That is a great point. And one thing to remember is that just like that patrol officer should have a checklist of things that they need to put in place to increase the likelihood that this child is going to be found, that supervisor should also have their own checklist of things that they need to be putting in place, as well as that investigator. Because that investigator has a lot of different things that go into place, a lot of moving parts that they need to make sure that they put into place as well-- things like SORNA, the Sex Offender Registration and Notification.

They can start looking at what are some of the sex offenders in the area, and they can start working accordingly with other investigators and making assignments to that it can also look at confirming all the information that they got from that patrol officer, starting to work some of the background stuff, or some of the social media information, starting their initial canvass resources and getting their initial canvassing form, and start deploying people. It may be a mutual aid situation where other people may come in. And so these things need to be well-organized. And so that investigator is going to do all of this stuff.

The other thing to remember is that you may have one or more scenes to protect. The place last scene, or the residence may be a place that may turn into a crime scene, or a scene that we need to protect for forensics. So that investigator is going to look and assess at every one of those different locations and see what we need to protect and how we need to examine these locations.

They're also going to put together some of their missing persons flyers. There are other organizations and agencies that will also assist with this, but the investigator may also have their own software in place to where they can put this out quickly. That investigator will also want to look at what additional resources and personnel they have that they can put into place to start coordinating not only that investigation, but also to assist with the search.

That's very true. When you look at it, most of our investigators are great when it comes to investigations, and have some really vast networks-- more than what an officer may have on the patrol side. However, that doesn't mean they can handle everything. We're all a team, and our mission is finding that missing child safely.

So that's our mission. So keep that in mind. Again, jurisdiction is going to play a big role in where we're going, especially if we know we have a child who's been abducted. David?

Yeah, absolutely. And we look at other resources and other capabilities that we may have. And like I said, these are important to put into place before-- way before-- we ever have one of these incidents. The last thing that we want to do is to put all of these things in place, or build a plane as we're flying it, so to speak. And so what we want to do is we want to have these things, like air resource capabilities, whether it's helicopters or fixed wing assets that we want to bring in there.

They're going to cover a lot more area, and they can cover things like nighttime, where they can use a FLIR, or a forward-looking infrared system to detect body heat. Those kind of things. So they'll have a lot more area and terrain that we could put-- before we can put any assets on them, they can start already looking at those things.

And like I said, initial search and rescue is very important. If it's not in your policy, then at least you look at it as something where when a child goes missing, that we notify them. And if they choose not to respond, at least they know that there is this incident that that's working right now. It's active. And we need to start putting things in place to be ready for when they do call us, or when we decide to deploy a ground team in addition to search dogs and those type of capabilities.

Again, as a reminder, aircraft, canines, and other resources such as volunteers are there, but we need to make sure that we can contact them and bring them in on whatever it is we're fighting. As previously mentioned, there are challenges that come with each type of resource. OK? There are. Time is one of those challenges. Distance is another one of those challenges.

So think about that. And then when it comes to each type of resource, one being staging of volunteers. You're going to start having people come and say, I want to help, I want to help, I want to help. What do you do with your volunteers? When we start thinking about that, we have to start thinking about, do we have a certified emergency response team that's already been vetted? Or do we have a bunch of volunteers that are coming that you don't know anything about? They're there to help, yes, but have you vetted them yet?

When you think about that-- also, the use of aircraft. That use of that aircraft could disturb that crime scene. OK? And then, again, community volunteers vetting is a big part of what we're going to be faced with in one of our challenges. David?

Yes. That's very true. And one of the very critical components about all of this when you have that response is just getting the word out. You want to be able to get the word out effectively and efficiently, and to as many areas and likely areas that this child-- if it's a child abduction, that this child may be taken to, or if we don't know, that we get out to as many locations as we can. And so how do we broadcast that? We're going to look at our local or tribal multi-agency countywide broadcasts.

Do you have your local broadcast range? And then do you have an emergency channel where you can broadcast this to a lot of different agencies? And we also can use, nowadays, social media-- your local law enforcement page, your news media, bringing in your PIO and start getting the word out to news stations, radio. A lot of tribal lines may use radio as their primary.

We can look at reverse 911, AMBER Alerts, obviously. WEAs, or wireless emergency alerts, Native missing alerts, and any other type of alert that you can use. But the important thing is just to get that word out as quickly, and also targeted if there are different areas that we think that the likelihood is higher that we may find this child.

Yes. Especially in Indian Country, you're going to find that most Native communities have local radio stations. They have a local tribal government web page. They have a local emergency notification system in place. And most of the time social media is going to be the biggest way the word gets out about a child being missing. David?

So something that's very critical in this, like I talked about before, is that initial neighborhood canvass. We want to be able to use a standardized form, go door to door in a very methodical and organized way, do our area-- open area campus searches in a certain way-- so that we can be able to better have the likelihood of finding this child, but also to explain what we're doing and hand it off as we need to do. But that standardized canvass form is critical, because it needs to go into our leads management system eventually.

And we don't want to miss anything as we're going along. We want to make sure that we have our mobile command post, but that-- we're using that to effectively direct all of the deployments that we're going to use-- like I talked about, whether it's a line search in an open area, or you're going to use concentric rings or circles because you don't know what happened to this child.

But also, another thing is also to find out if you have any working video systems anywhere. If we can get a direction of travel, for instance, and that's all we have on video, that's good enough. If you're in an area that's open to the public, like you're at an event, you may be able to have multiple cameras present to determine exactly what happened and where that child may have gone.

OK. When we talk about that-- let me move it to the next portion of what we're going to be dealing with, search and rescue resources. Like drones-- they're quick to be capable, to be deployed. Do we have handheld FLIR? Do we have ability to make geo-based maps? Do we have a search team available to us? These are the things that we're looking at. Again, these are things that are available to us.

Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. We have to look outside the box at different types of things that we may be able to use for ourselves-- like you mentioned, like the handheld FLIR and other resources. So yeah. Well said.

And so after the initial search, now what do we do? So like I said, the reasons for doing a well-organized search is, one, the likelihood of finding that child is better. But also, we have to be able to hand this entire search and investigation off to a command staff. It may go to an incident command. It may go to your command staff.

And they have to know that this was done right. You don't want them to have to go redo your work, or start a different search, or have things that were lost or missing in the initial process. That's why it's so important to do this critically, and that it increases our chances of finding this child.

Also, another thing to remember is it is important to assign a family liaison, only because the family also wants, constantly, to know what's going on. And also, there are other things that we're going to need to be getting from that family. We want to have their cooperation, and we want to be able to help them as we're moving this process along, especially in those initial hours.

Now, after the initial search, now what? The search and investigation continues, and by this time we should have a direction as to what type of case do we have, and whether to issue an AMBER Alert or not. Remember, in our investigations, jurisdiction and what type of crime plays a role insofar as how the investigation proceeds in our jurisdictions. That's where my tribal law enforcement partners out there-- think about that.

We should know by now. Do we need to do an AMBER Alert? Or do we not need to do an AMBER Alert? What more do we need to do? So just keep those in mind.

Again, all of these resources that we're talking about, if you go to the AMBER Alert website, you'll find a lot of this information there. amber-ic.org. You'll find a lot of it there. And then again, look at what is available to us as far as those resources are concerned.

So we have this information available to us. One of the questions that was asked earlier in the question and answers is that, where do we get this? How do we get this information to our community members? How do we get this information for ourselves? That information is there. So David?

Yeah. Thank you. So it is important that we take a look at the Amber site so that we can get some of this information. So some of the key takeaways for today are one, time is your enemy. That's what we were talking about-- those very first three hours are so critical.

And so because time is our enemy, we have to be as efficient and as effective as we possibly can within those first three hours. And I kept saying over and over and over during the presentation is that the preparation, the response-- yeah, rapid response is important, but if you put things in place beforehand, you're going to have a greater likelihood that that child is going to be recovered, and recovered safely.

And again, remember-- our key points, our two key points to help us with our response, handling, and investigation of missing children-- investigation and finding the children-- are these things that we mentioned. Preparation is the biggest one. Take the time now. Look at what you have available to you. Look at your community resources. Look at your resources that you have available through your tribal nations.

Look at who your partners could be. Start to prepare now. Don't wait. It's inevitable that it's going to happen. It will happen. And when it does, the more you're prepared, the better off you're going to be.

So we will take a little bit of time, just a couple of minutes, for Q&A. I know Francis has been answering some of your questions in the background. Is this information disseminated in communities or presentations offered to them, is one question that came in?

Yes, it is. Again, when you think about it, on the AMBER Alert website, you can ask for technical assistance. Our agencies can ask for technical assistance. There are information available to them there, that we can offer to our communities to help us in taking care of the need for when our children go missing or they have to be searched for. Again, those resources are there.

Great. And then what is the best procedure for parental abduction that's taken on tribal lands and working with tribal law enforcement?

One of the biggest things that we're going to run into with that particular question there is this-- the jurisdiction. Remember that on all tribal lands and all tribal nations, once you talk about abduction in general, and depending on where that child goes, it becomes a federal crime, at that point. And the FBI will become involved, and will probably become the lead agency working with that tribal law enforcement and investigation department and the local tribal law enforcement in finding that child as well. So a lot of it plays as what happens with the jurisdiction? It becomes federal.

I see one question about, who do you speak with if your state agency isn't working with you on AMBER Alerts? A lot of that is-- if we're talking about a law enforcement partner, a tribal law enforcement agency or partner, if you look on the AMBER Alert page, and you go to the AMBER Alert in Indian Country, there is a map of the United States in there. You hit that state that you're in where your tribal nation may be and find your-- it'll tell you who your AMBER Alert coordinator is for that state. And you, you can begin talking with them as well. But we can also help you with technical assistance-- get to this point where you can start building your working relationship with your AMBER Alert partner within the state.

OK. So Francis and David's contact information is there. Thank you for your participation today.