

# FCC Consumer Advisory

## The Amber Plan

The Amber Plan, a feature of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), aids in the rescue of kidnapped children.

### Background

The AMBER Plan is named for a 9-year-old girl kidnapped and later found dead. In response to that tragedy, radio stations agreed to repeat news bulletins about abducted children, hoping that the bulletins might help save the life of a child.

The name now stands for **A**merica's **M**issing: **B**roadcast **E**mergency **R**esponse.

### It Works Like This:

Once law enforcement officials confirm a missing child report, an Amber Alert is sent to radio stations, television stations, and cable companies, and can be text messaged without charges to some wireless telephone subscribers. Broadcasters interrupt programming to relay the information using the EAS to voluntarily deliver the information to the community – the same concept that is used during severe weather or national emergencies. A description of the abducted child, suspected abductor, and details of the abduction are broadcast to millions of listeners and viewers. (The Alert is read after a distinctive sound tone and the announcement: “This is an AMBER Alert.”) The Alert also provides information about how members of the public who have information relating to the abduction may contact the police or other appropriate law enforcement agency.

The goal of AMBER Alerts is to galvanize an entire community, adding millions of extra eyes and ears to watch, listen, and help in the safe return of the child and apprehension of the suspect.

Law enforcement officials will activate an AMBER Alert if:

- They believe an abduction has occurred and the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death.
- They have enough descriptive information about the victim and the abduction for an AMBER Alert to assist in the recovery of the child.
- The abduction is of a child age 17 years or younger.

(More)



## What You Can Do:

Under a program operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), subscribers of participating wireless service providers can receive AMBER Alerts as text messages on their wireless devices without being charged. Check with your wireless service provider to determine whether it participates in this program. To register to receive Alerts and designate the geographic area (up to five zip codes) for which you wish to receive them, go to [www.wirelessamberalerts.org](http://www.wirelessamberalerts.org). You can use this same address to stop receiving Alerts if you no longer wish to participate. If you change your wireless service provider, you must re-register.

In any case, if you see a child, adult, or vehicle fitting an AMBER Alert description, immediately call the telephone number given in the AMBER Alert and provide authorities with as much information as possible.

## Remember:

AMBER Alerts are only used for the most serious child abduction cases, when authorities believe a child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death, not for runaways or many parental abductions.

## For More Information

For more information on the AMBER Plan, visit the NCMEC Web site at [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com). For information about other communications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau Web site at [www.fcc.gov/cgb](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb), or contact the FCC's Consumer Center by e-mailing [fccinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:fccinfo@fcc.gov); calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554.

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11/6/08\*

