

## AMBER Alert

The AMBER Plan was created in 1996, as a powerful legacy to 9-year old Amber Hagerman, a bright little girl who was kidnapped while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas, and then brutally murdered. The AMBER Plan evolved after the outraged community suggested that radio stations broadcast alerts to provide immediate response and to prevent future incidents.



**Amber Hagerman**

### *During an Alert . . .*

The best source for information and continuing updates during an alert is the Department of Public Safety's Website, [www.dps.alabama.gov](http://www.dps.alabama.gov).

#### **Resources**

Alabama Department of Public Safety  
Alabama Bureau of Investigation  
Internet Crimes Against Children  
Missing and Exploited Children's Center  
[1-800-228-7688](tel:1-800-228-7688)

Administrative Division  
Public Information/Education  
[\(334\) 242-4445](tel:334-242-4445)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
[1-800-843-5678](tel:1-800-843-5678)

Alabama Broadcasters Association  
[\(205\) 982-5001](tel:205-982-5001)



**ALABAMA'S Amber Alert Plan**  
**Alabama Bureau of Investigation**

P.O. Box 1511  
Montgomery, Alabama 36102-1511  
[\(800\) 228-7688](tel:800-228-7688)

## ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



# ALABAMA'S AMBER ALERT PLAN



[\(800\) 228-7688](tel:800-228-7688)

# Alabama's Amber Alert Plan

Alabama's AMBER Alert is a voluntary partnership among law enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases.

Statistics show that in the most serious child abduction cases, 74 percent of the children murdered by non-family members are killed within the first three hours of their abduction.

The AMBER Alert Plan focuses on those critical moments immediately after an abduction occurs to disseminate as much useful information as possible to the public.

This immediately galvanizes the community to assist in the search for the child and abductor before it is too late.

Alabama's AMBER Alert Plan became operational in June 2003.

## When Are AMBER Alerts Issued?

AMBER Alert is a powerful program that is activated only when each of the following five criteria is met:

- Law enforcement confirms a child has been abducted;
- The child is younger than 18;
- Law enforcement believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death; and
- There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.
- The Child's name and other critical data elements have been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.

## How Does AMBER Alert Work?

The Alabama Department of Public Safety coordinates the program and is responsible for activating the AMBER Alert system after receiving a request from a law enforcement agency.

DPS activates the state Emergency Alert System (formerly the Emergency Broadcast System) using the Child Abduction Emergency code, which is specifically designed for AMBER Alert.

DPS sends the information regarding the abduction to all television and radio broadcasters throughout the state. DPS also sends out an e-mail with the text of the alert and posts the alert to the department's Web site, [www.dps.alabama.gov](http://www.dps.alabama.gov).

Radio stations interrupt programming to announce the alert, and television stations and cable systems run a "crawl" on the screen.

As a result, all Alabamians can be on the lookout for the missing child and the abductor's vehicle.

Law enforcement agencies then receive and respond to incoming telephone calls regarding the alert.



## AMBER Alert Frequently Asked Questions

### What does AMBER stand for?

AMBER stands for **A**merica's **M**issing **B**roadcast **E**mergency **R**esponse.

### Are national AMBER Alerts issued?

National AMBER Alerts are not issued, however AMBER Alerts may be issued in multiple states. If there is credible information that a child is in or traveling to a particular state a request can be made to issue an Alert in that state.

### Can a private citizen request an AMBER Alert?

No. Citizens who witness a child abduction should call 9-1-1 immediately to report the incident. Once the law enforcement agency determines that the criteria has been met, they will contact the Alabama Department of Public Safety to request an AMBER Alert.

### Are law enforcement agencies required to activate an AMBER Alert for an abducted child?

The AMBER Alert is not mandatory. It is one of the many tools that law enforcement may use to recover an abducted child.

### How long does it take to complete the notification process and alert the public regarding an AMBER Alert?

Once all the information is received from the requesting law enforcement agency it is disseminated within minutes.

### How can I receive AMBER Alerts?

Subscribe at [www.dps.alabama.gov](http://www.dps.alabama.gov).

### What can I do to help during an AMBER Alert?

If you witness a child abduction, call 9-1-1 or your local law enforcement immediately. Be sure to note important information such as the physical description of the child and suspect, the make, model license plate and direction of travel of any vehicles involved and the location of the abduction. If you have not witnessed the abduction but believed you have seen the person or vehicle described in an active AMBER Alert contact your local law enforcement agency or 9-1-1.