



## AMBER ALERT TIMELINE

### 1996

- The AMBER Alert System began in Dallas-Fort Worth when broadcasters teamed with local police to develop an early warning system to help find abducted children.
- AMBER stands for America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response. The acronym was created as a legacy to 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was kidnapped while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas, and then brutally murdered.
- Other states and communities began setting up their own AMBER Alert plans as the idea was adopted across the Nation.

### 1996-2001

- The progress on developing and implementing AMBER plans throughout the country was not significant during this time. At the end of 2001, only four states had statewide AMBER plans.

### 2002

- The first ever White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children. AMBER Alert became nationally focused.

In conjunction with the conference, the President requested that the U.S. Attorney General appoint the first National AMBER Alert Coordinator. Deborah J. Daniels, Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs was appointed the first National AMBER Alert Coordinator.

### 2003

- On April 30, the President signed into law the PROTECT Act, which

comprehensively strengthened law enforcement's ability to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish violent crimes committed against children.

- The PROTECT Act codified the previously-established National AMBER Alert Coordinator role in the Department of Justice. The law tasked the Coordinator to:
  - ❖ Facilitate the development of the AMBER network
  - ❖ Support development of state AMBER plans and efforts
  - ❖ Help eliminate geographic gaps in AMBER networks
  - ❖ Provide regional AMBER network coordination
  - ❖ Establish guidance on criteria for issuing an AMBER Alert

### 2004

- Guidance was provided to law enforcement, broadcasters, transportation officials, and the public on AMBER Alert activation criteria.
- The Department of Justice does not mandate one set of criteria; however, as directed by the PROTECT Act and at the request of state coordinators, the Department developed and shared its suggested criteria for the issuance of AMBER Alerts.
- The guidance is designed to create a uniform, interoperable network of plans across the country and minimize potentially deadly delays due to confusion among varying jurisdictions.
- The Department's recommended criteria for issuing AMBER Alerts are as

follows:

- ❖ Law enforcement must confirm that an abduction has taken place.
- ❖ The child is at risk of serious injury or death.
- ❖ There is sufficient descriptive information of the child, captor or captor's vehicle to issue an Alert.
- ❖ The child must be 17 years old or younger.
- ❖ It is recommended that the child's name and other critical data be entered immediately into the FBI's National Crime Information Center. Information describing the circumstances of the abduction should be entered, and the case flagged as a Child Abduction.

- Most states' guidelines adhere closely to the U.S. Department of Justice's recommended guidelines.

## 2005

- In February, Hawaii became the 50<sup>th</sup> state to complete its statewide AMBER Alert plan, creating a network of plans nationwide.
- In May, the Department of Justice joined the wireless industry and other government officials to announce that wireless users can opt to receive geographically specified AMBER Alert messages on their wireless devices through an AMBER Alert wireless messaging system.
- In November, the Department launched an initiative to train Child Abduction Response Teams (CART) nationwide, designed to assist local law enforcement agencies responding to incidents of missing and abducted children. CART can be used for all missing children's cases; it can be deployed as part of an AMBER Alert, or when a child is abducted or missing but the abduction or disappearance does not meet the AMBER Alert criteria.

## 2006

- On May 25, the Department of Justice, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the Wireless Foundation teamed up with the Ad

Council to launch a national, multi-media public service campaign, including radio, newspaper, outdoor and Internet advertising to encourage the public to sign up to receive wireless AMBER Alerts.

- On July 19, the Department announced that it had initiated talks with tribal leaders to bring AMBER Alert to Indian Country to create a seamless AMBER Alert network nationwide.

## 2007

- On September 14, as part of the U.S. Department of Justice AMBER Alert in Indian Country Initiative, ten Tribal sites were selected to serve as demonstration sites for other Native American communities.
- NCMEC, the authorized agent of the Department of Justice responsible for the secondary distribution of AMBER Alerts, established a partnership with MySpace and the Transportation Security Administration to expand the secondary distribution network.

## 2008

- In May, the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) joined the AMBER Alert secondary distribution network.

## 2009

- All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have AMBER Alert plans. The AMBER Alert system has also been adopted in the Canadian provinces and continues to expand into the Mexican border states.

## 2011

- AMBER Alert Facebook pages are created for each state as well as a national page, allowing the dissemination of alerts to Facebook users.

## 2012

- On October 31, Google integrates AMBER Alerts into their Public Alerts service and

search engine.

- On December 18, an AMBER Alert notification is sent for the first time using the Wireless Emergency Alerts system.

### 2013

- On January 1, the Wireless Emergency Alerts system for AMBER Alerts officially starts.
- On January 13, AMBER Alerts go live on Twitter using the handle @AMBERAlert
- In February, an 8-month-old child is abducted from his home. A teenager saw the Wireless Emergency Alert message and notified her father, resulting in the first successful rescue of a child due to the Wireless Emergency Alerts system.

### 2014

- On April 7, a technology forum is held at NCMEC with industry leaders resulting in the development of the Federation for Internet Alerts, increasing the coverage of AMBER Alerts on the Internet.
- On May 26, the Official launch of Mexico's official AMBER Alert website: <http://www.alertaamber.gob.mx/> during the Alerta AMBER Forum in Mexico City

### 2015

- On January 13, Facebook expands their AMBER Alert resources and begins pushing alerts to people near the area where the child went missing. Bing integrates AMBER Alerts into their search engine function.
- On March 3, Google integrates AMBER Alerts into the Waze traffic app.

- On May 7, Jamaica held an international conference during Missing Children Awareness Week to coordinate efforts between countries to recover missing and abducted children. Jamaica has a child abduction alert called the "Ananda Alert" and has increased efforts to work with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to make sure missing and abducted children return home safely. There are 4,394 children who have been reported missing in Jamaica between January 2013 and March 2015.
- By June 30, more than 18,700 law enforcement officers and dispatchers have been trained through webbased courses offered by the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program as of this date. AMBER Alert's six online courses and modules are available 24/7 so participants can access learning when they need it and work at their own pace.
- On September 15, AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) launches new Tribal Database [www.tribaldatabase.org](http://www.tribaldatabase.org) which features information and resources important to the work of tribal communities in the areas of child protection, human trafficking and other aspects of law enforcement, public safety and social services. The tribal database website also offers direct access to the Tribal Database System designed for use by all Federally-recognized tribes.

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