

POLICY

334

EFFECTIVE DATE

12-29-17

**Eugene
Police Department**



AMBER Alerts (Public Alerts)

334.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The safety of Oregon's children is a priority and the state should use every resource available to protect them. The first few hours after a child is abducted are critical to the safe recovery of that child, and it is essential to utilize maximum public participation in the efforts of law enforcement to locate the child.

The AMBER (**A**merica's **M**issing: **B**roadcast **E**mergency **R**esponse) Alert Program, using the Emergency Alert System (EAS) in conjunction with television, radio, website portal, and state highway message boards, provides timely emergency information to the public regarding a child abduction.

Through these means, the public will be notified of the circumstances of a child's abduction and how they can assist law enforcement in the child's recovery. The goal of the AMBER Alert program is the safe return of an abducted child by establishing an effective partnership between the community, the media, and law enforcement.

334.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Abduction is defined as an incident in which a child is reported to be involuntarily missing from the person(s) having care-taking responsibilities for the child. (Absent an eyewitness to the abduction, agencies should have reliable evidence that the child's disappearance was not voluntary prior to initiating an AMBER Alert request.)

334.2 AMBER ALERT ACTIVATION CRITERIA

- (a) The AMBER Alert system should only be activated when the following criteria are met:
- Law Enforcement officials have confirmed that an abduction has occurred; and
 - The child is 17 years or younger; and
 - Law Enforcement officials believe that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death; and
 - There is adequate descriptive information available to believe that its dissemination to the public could help locate the child, suspect, and/or suspect's vehicle; and
 - The child's name and other critical data elements, including the child abduction (CA) and AMBER Alert (AA) flags, must be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.

(b) The AMBER Alert should not be used for cases involving runaways, or missing children in which there is no evidence of foul play, or child custodial disputes that are not reasonably believed to endanger the life or physical health of a child. AMBER Alert is also not designed to be used in cases of missing adults.

Additional information regarding the use of Amber Alerts can be found in the Oregon State Police Amber Alert Plan Manual found at the following link:

http://www.oregon.gov/osp/AMBERALERT/Pages/program_criteria.aspx

334.3 ALERT RESPONSIBILITY

The employee receiving the abduction report will notify the Watch Commander or appropriate Investigations Supervisor as soon as practical. The Watch Commander or Investigations Supervisor will then determine whether or not the abduction meets the criteria for triggering an AMBER Alert.

334.4 PROCEDURE

(a) If it is determined through the preliminary investigation that the abduction fits the criteria for an AMBER Alert, the Watch Commander or designee will contact the Oregon State Police Northern Command Center (OSP NCC) in Salem at 503.375.3555 to request activation of an AMBER Alert and will provide them with the information listed in subparagraph 334.4(b).

(1) The investigating officer will provide the necessary information to the Watch Commander or designee, and that person will coordinate with the NCC for activation of the AMBER Alert and the release of the information.

(2) When the decision is made to activate an AMBER Alert, the Watch Commander will consult with the appropriate Division Manager and determine if the Oregon State Police or Eugene Police Department will staff the tip line phones. (Callers will be instructed to call the toll-free AMBER Alert tip line, 1-866-5AMBER5. If we are able to staff the tip line phones ourselves, a phone number to which calls will be transferred must be provided to OSP.)

(3) Prior to sending out the AMBER Alert message, consideration should be given to ensuring adequate staffing for the tip line, 911 lines, and also the media line. AMBER Alerts generate significant public and media interest; It is likely that a high volume of calls from the public and media will be received. Reassigning personnel from other units should be considered.

(b) The Public Information Officer (PIO), Watch Commander, or Investigations Supervisor will prepare an initial news release that includes all available information which might aid in locating the child, such as:

- The child's identity, age, physical and clothing description
- Photograph if available
- The suspect's identity, age, physical and clothing description, if known
- Pertinent vehicle license number and description if known
- Detail regarding location of incident, time the victim was last seen, direction of travel, potential destinations, etc., if known
- Name and phone number of the PIO or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
- A telephone number for the public to call in with leads/information

- (c) E-mail and fax the news release to the local television and radio stations and to the Oregon State Police for activation of the Emergency Alert System. The PIO will provide additional news releases and/or briefings as needed.
- (d) At least two detectives should be assigned to screen and assign leads received at the tip center.
- (e) Records will enter information on the abducted child, suspect vehicle, and suspect into LEDS and NCIC as soon as feasible. The suspect's name, if known, should be entered in the "AKA" moniker field. The child's name and other critical data elements---including the child abduction (CA) and AMBER Alert (AA) flags---must be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system in order to trigger resources of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the FBI.
- (f) Records will send a statewide Administrative Message (AM) via LEDS with the information, with the text beginning with the words "Oregon AMBER Alert."
- (g) The information in the news release should also be forwarded to the dispatch center so that general broadcasts can be made to local law enforcement agencies.
- (h) The individual responsible for making notifications shall also consider the following resources as the circumstances dictate:
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI local office)
 - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (800.843.5678)
- The FBI and NCMEC will have received notification of the AMBER Alert via the NCIC computer entries. If needed, the OSP Missing Children Clearinghouse is available to assist agencies with any additional notifications or to serve as the liaison with NCMEC.
- (i) The supervisor of the unit investigating the abduction, or other individual responsible for making notifications, will prepare and fax to the previously described locations follow-up news releases with updates regarding the search and investigation.
- (j) The NCC needs to be contacted immediately upon locating the abducted child in order to coordinate the cancellation of the issued AMBER Alert. In addition, those entities which were advised of the abduction should be advised that the child has been located.

334.5 PREPARATION

This department is registered on the AMBER Alert Web Portal at www.oregonamberalert.com and will receive information on any AMBER Alerts in the area.

The department will ensure all personnel are trained on AMBER Alert criteria and the process to activate an AMBER Alert.

David N. James
Interim Police Executive Director