

# Narragansett Police Department

40 Caswell Street, Narragansett, RI 02882

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**Policy 320.08**

**Amber Alert**

## 01 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the Amber Alert Policy in the State of Rhode Island. Statistics show that the first few hours after child abduction are the most critical. The AMBER ALERT program will provide Rhode Island law Enforcement agencies another valuable tool to recover abducted children.

## 02 Policy

The Narragansett Police Department will participate in the Amber Alert Program for abduction cases, which fit the outlined criteria.

## 03 Definitions

Amber Alert: The Rhode Island AMBER Alert is a voluntary, cooperative program between law enforcement agencies and local broadcasters to send an emergency alert to the public when a child has been abducted and it is believed that the child's life is in danger. Area radio and television stations have agreed to interrupt regular programming to broadcast.

Search: Any systematic planned searching method or technique designed to conduct a thorough check of a building, residence, woods, fields, vehicles, bodies of water, or elsewhere for information about the missing child. The AMBER Alert provides law enforcement agencies with another tool to help recover abducted children and quickly apprehend the suspect.

Rescue: Use of personnel, equipment, and other available resources during emergencies which aid and assist in preservation of life.

## 04 Procedures

### A. Initiating an Amber Alert

1. An officer has reason to believe a child has been abducted.
  - a. A "child" is someone seventeen (17) years of age or younger. Other cases involving older children can be considered if specific factors warrant.
2. The officer believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate the child is in serious danger of bodily harm or death. Circumstances may include:
  - a. Child is abducted and there are witnesses to the crime.
  - b. Child is missing but there is evidence of foul play, and police believe the child was abducted.

- c. Vehicle was stolen or car-jacked and a child was inside the vehicle.
  - d. A child is missing and particular consideration is given to their behavior or mental capacity in some way contributing their disappearance.
  - e. The Amber Alert is not normally used for runaway or parental abduction cases, unless there is specific reason to believe the life of the child is in severe danger.
3. There must be enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast will help.
4. Contents of Amber Alert worksheet should include:
- a. Name, age, and physical description of the child.
  - b. Description of the child's clothing.
  - c. Location and time the child was last seen.
  - d. Description of possible suspects.
  - e. Last known direction of travel and possible destination.
  - f. Contact number for the public to call with information.
  - g. Name and number of the contact person for the media.
  - h. A recent photograph of the abducted child.

B. Amber Alert Implementation Process

1. Law enforcement agency confirms that a child has been abducted and that the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate the child is in serious danger of bodily harm or death.
2. Law enforcement agency obtains descriptive information for Amber Alert, and identifies specific point of contact within the agency.
3. Law enforcement agency concludes that an Amber Alert is warranted.
4. Law Enforcement agency forwards information to the Rhode Island State Police Headquarters by fax, e-mail and any other forms of delivery, if available.
5. Rhode Island State Police confirms with the law enforcement agency that an Amber Alert is requested and warranted. The responsibility and decision to activate the Amber Alert program rests with the designated officer of the Rhode Island State Police.
6. Rhode Island State Police and the law enforcement agency determine incoming information handling procedures.
7. Rhode Island State Police broadcast Amber Alert information over inter-city police radio and forward information by fax, e-mail and any other means to broadcast media, and other Governmental agencies, as appropriate, including, but not limited to, the Department of Transportation.
8. Rhode Island State Police notifies EMA and informs response team members to respond to EMA Headquarters. A member of the Narragansett Police Department must also respond to EMA to answer phones.
9. Rhode Island State Police contact broadcast media by phone to ensure information is received and verified.

10. Broadcast media distribute information at least three times per hour for two hours. RIDOT activates message boards.
11. Information from general public is received and forwarded as appropriate.
12. The public will be told to call 46-AMBER (462-6237).

C. Supervisory Functions

1. Field Supervisors shall monitor all missing person incidents and respond directly to the scene of those involving children confirmed missing by the first responding officer(s).
2. Supervisors shall verify that the first responder has performed essential activities such as securing the scene, searching the home, gathering descriptive information and photographs, and entering all pertinent information into NCIC files.
3. Supervisors shall determine if additional patrol officers/detectives are needed to assist in the investigation and direct those units to saturate the area in a systematic pattern.
4. Once it has been determined that a child is missing under circumstances that will most likely require assistance from additional agencies and organizations, the supervisor shall determine what additional personnel, resources, equipment, and agencies are needed. Supervisors shall keep the OIC informed of any outside recourse needs to assist in these cases.
5. Where coordination or activities will be necessary, supervisors shall establish a command post from which investigative efforts can be directed.
6. Supervisors shall ensure coordination/cooperation among all personnel involved in the investigation and search effort.

D. Recovery of Missing Child and Case Closure

1. In cases involving juveniles, officers will ensure that:
  - a. The juvenile receives medical attention, if necessary, in a timely manner.
  - b. Initial questioning of the youth identifies the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance, any individual who may be criminally responsible and/or whether an abusive or negligent home environment was a contributing factor.
  - c. Parents, guardians, and/or the person reporting the missing juvenile are notified in a timely manner.
  - d. Where indicated, follow-up action will include filing of an abuse and neglect report with the Department of Children, Youths, and Families.
  - e. The case report will include a complete report on the whereabouts, actions, and activities of children while missing.
  - f. Upon location of a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified or updated (cancel TTY and N.C.I.C., if applicable), phone call or fax to "A Child is Missing" network to update on recovery. (See attachment).
  - g. Where indicated, criminal charges will be filed.

#### E. Search and Rescue

1. Certain incidents or particular circumstances involving juveniles may demand a search be undertaken immediately.
2. The goal of the Narragansett Police Department is to provide a timely, effective response to situations and incidents that preserve life and to reduce the potential for loss of life, serious injury, or other harm.
3. The Uniform Patrol Division Officer-in-Charge will be in charge of all search and rescue efforts.
4. Any request for specialized assistance beyond local available resources will be approved by the Chief of Police or his designee.
5. Documentation of the search and rescue situation will be recorded in an official report.

By Order Of:

Chief of Police