



INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN

Highly publicized child abductions throughout the country have put the spotlight on the AMBER ALERT program, a cooperative effort between law enforcement agencies and the media to quickly disseminate public information about an abducted child.

The Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Committee along with the Ohio Attorney General's Office, local law enforcement, the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Safety, Cuyahoga Emergency Communications Systems (CECOMS) and local media stations have worked in partnership to bring the AMBER ALERT program to our community. Speed is essential when trying to rescue an abducted child. That is why it is imperative that law enforcement and the media react quickly and get the word out to the community. **THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN** is the answer because it activates an alert process that can engage the entire community to look for both the child and the alleged abductor(s). Experience has shown that a significant number of child abductions have been resolved because of extensive radio and television coverage.

THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN was modeled after several plans already established throughout the United States.

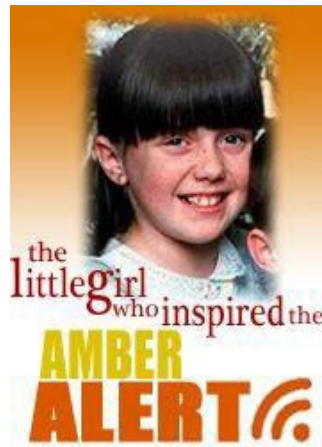
THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN covers nine (9) counties:

1. Ashtabula County
2. Cuyahoga County
3. Erie County
4. Geauga County
5. Huron County
6. Lake County
7. Lorain County
8. Medina County
9. Portage County

Table of Contents

PAGE	
Introduction to the Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Plan	1
Table of Contents	2
History of the AMBER Alert	3
Purpose	4
Participating Agencies and Organizations	4
Scope of AMBER Alert	5
Criteria for Activation	5
Steps for Activation	6
Cancellation of the AMBER Alert	8
Criteria Not Qualified for the Northeast Ohio Amber Alert Activation	8
Missing Child Recovery Plan	9
The Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Review Board	10
Introduction to the Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Committee	11
Agency Training Request Form	12
AMBER Alert Success Stories/Debriefs	13

AMBER ALERT: AMERICA'S MISSING BROADCAST EMERGENCY RESPONSE



In January 1996, nine-year-old Amber Hagerman was riding her bicycle when a neighbor heard the girl scream. The neighbor saw a man pull Amber off her bike, throw her into the front seat of his pickup truck, and drive away at a high speed. The neighbor called police and provided a description of the suspect and his vehicle, but couldn't recall much else. Arlington, Texas police and the FBI interviewed other neighbors and searched for the suspect and vehicle. Local radio and TV stations covered the story in their regular newscasts. Four days later, Amber's body was found in a drainage ditch four miles away. Her throat had been cut. Her kidnapping and murder remain unsolved.

A concerned citizen contacted a Dallas, Texas radio station suggesting the idea that Dallas radio stations should repeat news bulletins about abducted children just like they do severe weather warnings. The idea was presented to the general managers of the radio stations in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. They agreed that such a program would provide an important public service and might help save the life of a child.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), since the initial program launch in 1996, through December 2022, at least 1,133 children have been confirmed as safely recovered due to an AMBER Alert being issued. According to NCMEC, in 2022, there were 181 AMBER Alert activations issued in the United States involving 227 children. Of these 181 AMBER Alerts, 180 cases resulted in a recovery, 16 of which were successfully recovered as a direct result of the AMBER Alert being issued.¹

The Amber Alert Plan was launched in Ohio on January 1, 2003.

¹ 2022 AMBER Alert Report, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Analysis of AMBER Alert Activations in 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to establish procedures to be followed in child abductions, or endangered missing children reports. This plan will outline the law enforcement agency's response in a manner that holds the greatest chance for the safe return of the child and the apprehension of the alleged abductor(s). The first few hours of the investigation of an abducted child may determine whether the eventual outcome is successful or not. Experience has shown that in cases where children have been victims of stranger abductions, there exists a "window of opportunity" lasting only a few hours in which police are likely to successfully recover the child unharmed. To capitalize on this opportunity; it is imperative that the investigation be "front loaded" using as much intense investigative efforts and resources as possible. The reasons for stranger abductions are many and varied and may include sexual gratification, narcotics, revenge, money and any other provocation the mind can imagine. It is therefore crucial that the law enforcement agency research their respective activities and files to determine if any connection or motive can be established related to the child's disappearance.

- **NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT COMMITTEE CONTACTS**

Committee Chairman:

Chief John Majoy, Newburgh Heights Police Dept. 216.641.5545 (dispatch)

Amber Alert Coordinator

Cuyahoga County Department of Public Safety/CECOMS:

Jacquelynn Costa, Quality Assurance Supervisor 440-703-3560 (office)/216-771-1363 (24/7 Comm Ctr)

- **PARTICIPATING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

The NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN is a cooperative effort between local area law enforcement, radio and television stations, and Cuyahoga County Department of Public Safety and Justice Services/CECOMS.



SCOPE OF AMBER ALERT

The **NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT Plan** will include communities that are reachable by broadcast stations participating in this plan.

CRITERIA FOR ACTIVATION

The AMBER ALERT requires an executive officer at a participating law enforcement agency to verify that all five (5) specific criteria listed below have been satisfied:

- (1) The local investigating law enforcement agency confirms that an abduction has occurred.
- (2) An abducted child is under eighteen years of age.
- (3) The abduction poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to a child.
- (4) A law enforcement agency determines that the child is not a runaway and has not been abducted as a result of a child custody dispute, unless the dispute poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the child.
- (5) There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, the abductor, and the circumstances surrounding the abduction to indicate that activation of the alert will help locate the child.

If the criteria are met, alert information must be organized for public distribution. This information can include a description and pictures of the missing child, the alleged abductor(s), alleged abductor's vehicle and any other information available and valuable to identifying the child and alleged abductor(s).

CRITERIA NOT QUALIFIED FOR A NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT ACTIVATION

Based on the above criteria, the following situations do **NOT** qualify for the AMBER ALERT activation:

- Missing child believed to have run away from home.
- Missing child taken by a non-custodial or custodial relative in a child custody case not in harm.
- Missing adult (eighteen (18) years of age or older).
- Police search for other criminals (murder suspect, bank robber, etc.).

CECOMS ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

The AMBER ALERT can **ONLY** be implemented by a law enforcement agency. Should a citizen call in and request a broadcast, the citizen shall be referred to their local law enforcement agency.

- Law enforcement agencies participating in this plan will call CECOMS (Cuyahoga Emergency Communication System) at 216.771.1363 to request an AMBER ALERT activation.
- Law enforcement will email the required AMBER Alert activation forms to CECOMS@cuyahogacounty.us (if unable to email, fax to 216.443.5705 – **fax should be used as a last resort only**)
 - The AMBER Alert Activation packet can be downloaded from: tiny.cc/amberalert OR <https://www.cuyahogacounty.gov/psjs/divisions/cecoms/amber-alert>
 - The AMBER Alert Activation Packet includes the following:
 - Descriptive information for abducted child(ren) and suspect
 - The exact message to be transmitted through IPAWS/EAS
 - Cell phone ping request form
 - ALPR activation form (only needed if vehicle is involved)
- Once the activation packet is received, CECOMS will contact the requesting agency and verify all information contained therein
 - It is imperative that a manned telephone number is provided to CECOMS for follow up communications with Incident Command.
- Once all information is confirmed, CECOMS will:
 - Transmit the AMBER ALERT message via the IPAWS/Emergency Alert System (EAS).
 - Contact the National Weather Service and convey the AMBER ALERT message. The National Weather Service will then broadcast the message via NOAA Weather Radio System.
 - Email the **AMBER ALERT URGENT INFORMATION FORMS**, including the exact AMBER ALERT message, to local media outlets and agencies including the Ohio Lottery Commission, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol. CECOMS maintains a list of media outlets that have requested to receive the AMBER ALERT information.
 - Contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children to report the child abduction case at 1.800.843.5678; this is a 24-hour hot-line. Email activation packet to amberalerts@ncmec.org
 - Obtain cell-phone subscriber and ping location information (Agency Request)
 - Activate the Wireless Emergency Alert System (WEA).

- IPAWS/WEA activations will be limited to initial activation, additional descriptive or vehicle information, and/or extensions of an AMBER Alert activation from one region of the state to ours
 - All other supplemental updates will be disseminated through local media partners and mass notification systems other than IPAWS
- If vehicle information is available, CECOMS will activate the county-wide Fixed License Plate Reader System (FLPR), and request OSP Hubs activate FLPR readers at the Ohio Turnpike gates
 - CECOMS will contact LAMAR Advertising to post the information on the digital billboards.
 - Enter the AMBER Alert into EMResource to disseminate alert information and photographs to regional hospitals and free-standing Emergency Departments
- Once the activations process is complete, CECOMS will contact the requesting law enforcement agency and advise them that the AMBER ALERT message has been sent via the Emergency Alert System, the National Weather Service NOAA Weather Radio, and all media outlets and agencies that have requested to receive the AMBER Alert message.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Law enforcement shall complete the following tasks (these tasks should be completed simultaneously while CECOMS activates the Alert):**
 - Enter the missing juvenile through LEADS and NCIC using the AA MKE.
 - NCIC entry M UST be completed within two (2) hours of the initial report to law enforcement.
 - Send a LEADS administration broadcast to all Ohio law enforcement terminals.
 - Send a NLETS (National Law Enforcement Tele Communication System) broadcast message to adjacent states.
 - Contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children to report the child abduction case at 1.800.843.5678; this is a 24-hour hot-line. CECOMS shall email the activation packet to amberalerts@ncmec.org
 - Follow your department's policy for all available resources that could be of help in locating the child, including activating local or regional CART Teams.

OHLEG activation – enter suspect/vehicle/victim info – alerts media about AA

The Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and the US Secret Service have robust Intelligence units that are available 24/7. Resources include but are not limited to; Cell Tracking Truck which can locate vehicles in the same manner that phone pings are done; Review of multiple cameras throughout the State of Ohio; social media searching and monitoring; and various bulletins. The OSP Intel unit can be reached at 614-799-6525. Ohio BCI Can be reached at 234-400-3612.

CANCELLATION OF THE AMBER ALERT

Upon the confirmed recovery of the child by any law enforcement agency, the original requesting agency will immediately contact CECOMS at 216.771.1363 and advise them of the cancellation. The initiating agency will then send all CANCELLATION **FORMS** to CECOMS at **CECOMS@cuyahogacounty.us**. CECOMS will email the cancellation notice to all participating media outlets and agencies and the National Weather Service. Upon receipt of this notice agencies will contact CECOMS via phone and confirm the cancellation.

ENDANGERED MISSING CHILD RECOVERY PLAN:

If the criteria for the AMBER ALERT activation are NOT met and/or in addition to an AMBER Alert, Law enforcement should consider utilizing the following agencies and/or services to help locate the missing child.

1. Enter the missing juvenile through LEADS and NCIC within 2 hours.
2. Send a LEADS administration broadcast to all Ohio law enforcement terminals.
3. Send a NLETS (National Law Enforcement Telecommunication System) broadcast message to adjacent states.
4. Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to report the missing child case at 1.800.843.5678; this is a 24-hour hot line.
5. Contact County Child Services for possible assistance or information.
6. Contact, a Child is Missing Inc. (ACIM) at 954.763.1288 fax 954.763.4569.
 - Has a charge for their services – first one free then will invoice an agency for \$500/yr.
7. Use a locator program.
 - NCMEC – still available, locally hosted – no 24-hr. support
8. Reverse 911, if available.
9. Ohio State Patrol for their special AMBER ALERT leads assistance – Intelligence Unit.
10. News Release to the media including photograph.
 - CECOMS will issue a Media Alert
11. Contact broadcasting agencies for their assistance.
12. Contact beyond Missing Flyer Program 415.461.3463.
13. Fire Departments or volunteer groups to help search for the missing child.
14. Contact other law enforcement agencies for assistance.
15. State of Ohio Children's clearing House Hot Line at 1.800.325.5604.
16. Child Alert Foundation Posters (check with your county Sheriff).
17. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (FBI)
18. Canine Units / Mounted Units
19. Alzheimer's Association / Greater Cleveland Chapter 216.721.8457
20. California/Florida amber Plans – alerting technology outside of Amber
21. Contact Cleveland Missing – 216-232-6470

The above list of services/agencies is provided to assist Law Enforcement but is not intended to be limited to other means law enforcement may find useful.



THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT REVIEW BOARD

The Review/General Board will consist of the following members:

Committee Chairperson

John T. Majoy, Chief of Police, Newburgh Heights Police Department

Committee Members

Jacquelynn Costa, Quality Assurance Supervisor, Cuyahoga Emergency Communications System

Dan Deroos WOIO

Matthew Neil Chief of Police, Montville Township Police Department, Medina County

Troy Onesti, ODOT, District 12 Representative

Lisa Raffurty, CECOMS Manager, Cuyahoga County

John Saraya, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation

Ronald Raines, Captain, Ohio State Highway Patrol

Todd Corbin, Sheriff Huron County

Patricia Wain, Chief Streetsboro Police Department

Sheriff Terry Grice, Medina County Sheriff's Office

Lt. Gary Gibbons, Geauga County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Phil Stammitti, Lorain County Sheriff's Office

Detective Sgt Alexis Harvey – Erie County Sheriff's Office

PURPOSE

1. This committee will meet periodically to review and implement any procedural changes to better serve **THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN**.
2. Within fourteen (14) days, the law enforcement agency that activates the alert will submit a follow-up report to the Review Board's Chairperson.
3. This follow-up report will consist of:
 - a. copies of all the forms used to activate the alert,
 - b. a general report with any positive or negative comments regarding the
 - c. activation procedures, and
 - d. a synopsis of the conclusion of the investigation.
4. Within 14 days of receipt of the law enforcement agency's report the Chairperson will convene a meeting of the Review Board and the law enforcement agency designee that activated the alert for review of the activation to help ensure accuracy, and clarify any procedural issues.
5. Members of the Review Board will disseminate activation findings to committee members within 14 days.
6. Provide NCMEC alert information via an After-Action Survey
 - a. NCMEC uses this information to determine AMBER Alert metrics for the year



INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT COMMITTEE

Committee Structure:

1. Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Executive Board:

- a. One chief of police or sheriff who serves as the chairperson
- b. A supervisor from the Cuyahoga County CECOMS
- c. A member of the local media
- d. One fiduciary appointee at the discretion of the chairperson

2. Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Committee:

- a. Each member of the Executive Board
- b. One chief of police or sheriff (or their designee) from each of the nine counties
- c. One member from the Ohio Department of Transportation
- d. One member representing a 9-1-1 telecommunication center
- e. Two members of the public

3. Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Review Panel:

- a. Each member of the Executive Board
- b. One chief, sheriff or their designee from each of the nine NEO AMBER Alert Committee counties with a minimum of five required for a quorum when voting
- c. Only law enforcement will be permitted to vote on reviews

(Please use Law enforcement letterhead)

REQUEST FOR AGENCY TRAINING

If you are located within CECOMS EAS activation region and participate in **THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT PLAN**, you may request agency training by emailing information requested on this form.

Topics: AMBER Alert Activation/Cancelation Procedures, LEADS Entries, AMBER Packet Completion, what to expect during an AMBER Alert Activation, AMBER Alert Review Committee Responsibilities, Endangered Missing Child Procedures, Endangered Missing Adult Procedures, CECOMS Media Alerts, conducting “TEST” AMBER Alert Activation Procedures for Dispatchers and Issuing Officials.

COST: FREE (All materials are provided)

Training Time: 2-3 hours

EMAIL: jcosta@cuyahogacounty.us
Jacquelynn Costa, Quality Assurance Supervisor,
Cuyahoga Emergency Communications System (CECOMS)
Phone: 440-703-3560 Fax: 216.443.5705

NAME: _____

AGENCY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOST CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

CITY: _____ COUNTY: _____

AGENCY FAX NUMBER: _____

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: _____

DATE(S) OF TRAINING REQUESTED: _____

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT REVIEW BOARD SUCCSSES STORIES

June 17, 2023

- Cleveland, OH (Successful)
- On June 17, 2023 at 19:32 hours, CECOMS received a request from the Cleveland Police Department to activate an AMBER Alert for two children taken from Cleveland by their non-custodial mother. It was reported that the children were supposed to be turned over to Child and Family Services, but the mother failed to show up with the children. The children's mother was experiencing a mental health crisis and advised that she believed the children had demons in them and she had to rid them of those demons. She advised that she would kill the children to rid the demons. This activation initially began regionally, however, further investigation determined that the mother may take the children out of state, so the alert was expanded to state wide. The state-wide activation opened Ohio State Highway Patrol resources, the Intelligence unit assisted in locating the children. They were safely located in Waterloo Indiana. The AMBER Alert Review Committee determined that this activation met all criteria.

August 30, 2023

- Cleveland, OH (Successful)
- On August 30, 2023. CECOMS was advised by Cleveland PD of their intent to activate and AMBER Alert for two missing children, taken from their home in Cleveland by their custodial mother. The mother brought her other 11-month-old child to MetroHealth Emergency Department who was determined to be brain dead. Due to this Child and Family Services determined the remaining two children should be removed for their safety. When CFS attempted to remove the children from the home the mother fled with them. Due to the condition of the 11-month-old that was brought to the ED, Cleveland PD determined that the children were in serious danger and an AMBER Alert was needed. The after-action review of this activation determined that all criteria were met for this alert.

December 24, 2023

- Lakewood, OH (Successful)
- On the morning of December 24, 2023 CECOMS was advised by Rocky River PD of their intent to activate an AMBER Alert for a 1 year old female taken by her custodial mother after the mother stabbed her husband. There was limited information available since the actual incident occurred overnight. Due to the fact that the mother had harmed her husband, Lakewood PD was concerned for the safety of the 1 year old female. On December 29, 2023, the missing child was turned into the Police Department and appeared to be healthy. She was subsequently turned over to the custody of Child and Family Services.