



Middlefield Police Department – Amber Alert

Middlefield Police Department considers the disappearance of a child to be an investigative priority. Based on facts and totality of the circumstances in the early stage of the investigation, officers must make decisions regarding all resources within and available to the department needed to bring the case to a successful conclusion. Experience has shown that a non-family abduction will most likely result in the injury, sexual assault and/or death of a child.

In cases where facts and circumstances establish that a non-family member has abducted a child, the Middlefield Police Department will respond in a manner that holds the greatest chance for the safe return of the child and the apprehension of the abductor(s). The response will include a thorough and aggressive investigation utilizing a comprehensive plan and all available governmental and private resources.

Studies of cases in which a non-family member abducted a child have documented a window of opportunity of about three (3) hours where police are likely to recover the child unharmed. Therefore it is critical that as much accurate information be gathered as quickly as possible in an effort to establish the criteria for activating the Amber Alert.

What is the Amber Alert? (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response)

In January of 1996, nine year-old Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered. Her body was discovered four days later in a drainage ditch about four miles away. The Dallas Amber Plan was developed in July of 1997 to help safely recover missing children that police believe have been abducted. The Amber Plan is now used nationally and is dedicated to all the children nationwide who have been abducted.

The power of free, over-the-air electronic media is the best way to quickly reach the greater northern Ohio citizens who may have information leading to the return of a missing or abducted child. The plan is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, transportation agencies, and the wireless industry to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child-abduction cases. Broadcasters use the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to air a description of the abducted child and the abductor(s).

Child: Means a person who is under eighteen (18) years of age (2151.011 (B) (1) (a) ORC)

Adult: Means an individual who is eighteen (18) years of age or older (2151.011 (2) ORC)

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to establish procedures to be followed in child abductions. 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" with as much intense investigative efforts and resources as possible. The reasons for stranger abductions are many and varied. The motivation involved may be related to 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.

Participating Agencies and Organizations

THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT is a cooperative effort between local area law enforcement, radio and television stations, Verizon, Ohio Lottery, Clear Channel Outdoors, and the Cuyahoga County Division of Emergency Services.

Participating radio and television outlets agree to re-broadcast the AMBER ALERT message every fifteen (15) minutes for the first two (2) hours, and once an hour for the next twenty-two (22) hours. After that time, the broadcast stations can decide whether or not to continue coverage.

Steps for Activation

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

Amber Alert Activation Criteria

The AMBER ALERT requires an executive officer at a participating law enforcement agency to verify that all four (4) specific criteria listed below have been satisfied:

1. The child is under eighteen (18) years old.
2. There is credible information that suggests the child was forcibly or intentionally removed or lured away from their location and remains missing.
3. The law enforcement agency believes the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
4. The child has been missing for less than twenty-four (24) hours.
5. There is enough descriptive information about the child, alleged abductor(s), and/or abductor(s) vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast will help.

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 Amber Alert

1. The missing child is believed to have run away from home.
2. The missing child has been taken by a non-custodial relative in a child custody case.
3. Missing adult (eighteen (18) years of age or older).
4. A police search for other criminals (murder suspects, bank robbers, etc.).
5. A child missing more than twenty-four (24) hours.
6. Media may be used in situations that do not qualify for Amber Alert, via Emergency Media Notification. The key difference is that an emergency alert message is not transmitted.

Cancellation of the Amber Alert

Upon the confirmed recovery of the child by any law enforcement agency and once confirmed by the initiating agency, the initiating agency will immediately call Emergency Services to cancel the alert.

Missing Child Recovery Plan

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

1. Enter the missing juvenile through LEADS and NCIC.
2. Send a LEADS administration broadcast to all Ohio law enforcement terminals.
3. Send a NLETS(National Law Enforcement Tele Communication System) broadcast message to adjacent states.
4. Contact 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. Have both liability and authorization form signed (optional, not required).
6. Contact County Child Services for possible assistance or information.
7. Contact, A Child is Missing Inc. (ACIM) at 954.763.1288 fax 954.763.4569.
8. Use a Locator Program.
9. Reverse 911, if available.
10. Ohio State Patrol for their special AMBER ALERT LEADS assistance.
11. News Release to the media including photograph.

12. Contact broadcasting agencies for their assistance.
13. Contact Beyond Missing Flyer Program 415.461.3463.
14. Fire Departments or volunteer groups to help search for the missing child.
15. Contact other law enforcement agencies for assistance.
16. State of Ohio Children's Clearing House Hot Line at 1.800.325.5604.
17. Child Alert Foundation Posters (check with your county Sheriff).
18. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (FBI)
19. Canine Units / Mounted Units
20. Alzheimer's Association / Greater Cleveland Chapter 216.721.8457

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

PURPOSE

1. This committee will meet periodically to review and implement any procedural changes to better serve THE NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT
2. Within fourteen (14) day, 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 activation procedures
 - c. 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.

NORTHEAST OHIO AMBER ALERT ACTIVATIONS
As of October 31, 2002 this program was officially in place.

**highlighted activations did not satisfactorily met the criteria

1. Maple Hts PD issued an AMBER Alert on September 23, 2002 – 5 yr old female child abducted by male from her home in Maple Hts. Successfully recovered in Euclid.
2. Cleveland Hts issued an AMBER Alert on September 28, 2003 – Missing 14 yr old girl believed to have run away from home. The Review Board determined that the Cleveland Hts AMBER activation did not meet the criteria required.
3. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on March 5, 2003 – 2 yr old forcibly removed from his mother’s custody. Successfully recovered.
4. Lakewood PD issued an AMBER Alert on March 9, 2004 – 3 yr old female child taken by father. Successfully recovered unharmed.
5. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on March 23, 2004 – 4 month old boy who had been abducted in a stolen car. Child recovered with no harm.
6. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on June 29, 2004 – 2 yr old boy taken by his 14 yr old aunt in an unauthorized car. Child and aunt recovered unharmed.
7. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on July 14, 2004 – 5 month old girl who had been taken by an acquaintance of the natural mother and had failed to return the child at the agreed time. Child successfully recovered in Youngstown, OH unharmed.
8. Amherst PD issued an AMBER Alert on September 7, 2004 – 15 yr old girl who had been forced to leave her residence by an 18 yr old male and an 18 yr old female. Successfully recovered.
9. Lakewood PD issued an AMBER Alert on September 10, 2004 – 2 yr old boy who had been taken by the babysitter of the natural mother and failed to return the child. Child recovered unharmed.
10. North Olmstead issued an AMBER Alert on October 31, 2004 – 14 month old boy who had been forced to leave his residence by his father. Successfully recovered.
11. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on January 1, 2005 – 5 day old female child left with a family friend. Successfully recovered.
12. Cuyahoga County Sheriffs Office – January 21, 2005 – 2 children with father. Successfully recovered. The Review Board determined that the AMBER Alert activation did not meet the criteria required.
13. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on June 25, 2005 – 2 children with father. Successfully recovered.
14. Fairlawn PD issued an AMBER Alert on August 18, 2005 – Grandfather took autistic grandson. Successfully recovered.
15. Copley PD issued an AMBER Alert on September 10, 2005 – Estranged father took child. Felon/drug abuse. Child recovered successfully. Criteria met.
16. Huron PD issued an AMBER Alert on October 1, 2005 – Successful. Criteria met.

17. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on February 5, 2006 – 2 yr old taken by boyfriend in inclement weather, threatened harm to mother and child. Successful. Criteria met.
18. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on June 17, 2007 – Estranged husband took child and threatened harm. Successful. Criteria met.
19. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on December 22, 2007 – Aunt took child and did not communicate for 21 hours. Aunt felon/drug user. Successful. Criteria not met.
20. Garfield Hts PD issued an AMBER Alert on May 14, 2008 – Shoplifting suspect escaped with child, not her own. Suspect saw the AMBER Alert and dropped the child off. Successful. Criteria not met.
21. East Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on December 3, 2008 – father filed false report of child abduction. Would not cooperate with investigation, both charged. Successful. Criteria met.
22. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on February 18, 2012 – 2 yr old girl along with mother abducted by boyfriend. Tragically both were found murdered by the boyfriend who committed suicide. Criteria were satisfactorily met.
23. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on March 26, 2012 – 4 yr old male was lured away by an adult male living in the home. The boy and abductor were seen walking on a street in East Cleveland. Someone recognized them from the Alert and notified the police. The boy was rescued unharmed and the abductor was arrested. The criteria were satisfactorily met.
24. Cleveland PD issued an AMBER Alert on April 18, 2012 – 4 young children that the father threaten to kill during a physical assault on the mother. The father then proceeds to the four different school and removed the children. He was apprehended before causing harm to the children. The criteria were satisfactorily met.
25. Chagrin Falls PD issued an AMBER Alert on May 28, 2012 – 3 young children were taken by their mother. The children and mother were located several hours later safe and unharmed in Pennsylvania. After careful review and discussion of the information provided, the Review Board decided the criteria were not satisfactorily met.