

## California Highway Patrol

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is responsible for the statewide coordination of AMBER Alert and the other emergency response activities associated with the California Child Safety Amber Network (CCSAN).

In this role, CHP provides law enforcement agencies with valuable assistance in the following areas:

- Activation of regional and statewide EAS
- Activation of Changeable Message Signs on California highways
- Creation and distribution of posters/flyers
- Coordination of emergency response functions
- Administration of child abduction prevention programs

## How you can help

The public plays a critical role in the success of the AMBER Alert Program.

- If you witness a child abduction, contact your local law enforcement agency or call 911 immediately. Provide information on the location of the abduction and a description of the victim, suspect and/or any vehicle involved.
- If you hear an AMBER Alert, watch for the child, suspect and/or the vehicle described in the alert. Immediately report any sightings by calling 911 or the phone number included in the alert. (Do not call 911 to request information about the abduction.)

## What parents can do

Parents should talk to their children about safety and teach their children about rules for staying safe. For information on "Child Safety", visit the California Attorney General's Office, Crime and Violence Prevention Center Web Site at [www.ag.ca.gov/cvpc](http://www.ag.ca.gov/cvpc).

## For more information:

### California Highway Patrol

(800)-TELL-CHP (835-5247)

[www.chp.ca.gov](http://www.chp.ca.gov)

### Governor's Office of Emergency Services

[www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov)

- Emergency Digital Information System  
[www.edis.ca.gov](http://www.edis.ca.gov)

### Office of the Attorney General California Department of Justice

[www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov)

- Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit  
[www.ag.ca.gov/missing](http://www.ag.ca.gov/missing)
- Missing Children Hotline:  
(800)-222-FIND (222-3463)
- Office of Victim Services  
(877)-433-9069 (toll free)
- Crime and Violence Prevention Center  
[www.ag.ca.gov/cvpc](http://www.ag.ca.gov/cvpc)

### National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMC)

(800)-THE-LOST (843-5678)

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

CALIFORNIA

AMBER  
ALERT

Child Abduction  
Regional Emergency



# What is California AMBER Alert?

California's **A**merica's **M**issing: **B**roadcast **E**mergency **R**esponse Alert, or AMBER Alert, is a statewide innovative program that partners the State's law enforcement community, media broadcasting agencies and the public in locating abducted children. It provides the public with immediate and up-to-date information about a child abduction via widespread media broadcasts and solicits the public's help in the safe and swift return of the child. AMBER Alert is a key component of the California Child Safety Amber Network (CCSAN), a comprehensive plan that provides for a coordinated and rapid response to child abductions throughout California. One of the most important aspects of AMBER Alert is the partnerships formed between the local law enforcement officials and media broadcasters, who are working together to establish an AMBER Alert plan specific to each community's needs.

## AMBER Alert Guidelines

- AMBER Alert may be activated only by law enforcement agencies.
- AMBER Alert is intended only for the most serious, time-critical child abduction cases.
- AMBER Alert is not intended for cases involving runaways or parental abductions, except in life-threatening situations.

## Criteria For Activating An AMBER Alert

Law enforcement agencies are required by law to ensure that the following conditions are met before activating an AMBER Alert:

- The agency has confirmed that an abduction has occurred
- The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or of proven mental or physical disability
- There is reason to believe the victim is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death
- There is information available that, if disseminated to the general public, could assist in the safe recovery of the victim

## Why AMBER Alert was created

The AMBER Alert concept was first introduced in California in 1999 as a regional program in several communities throughout the State. In 2002, legislation called for statewide protocols and procedures to assist local law enforcement communities in developing and implementing their own AMBER Alert plans.

The State's AMBER Alert is modeled after the nationwide *AMBER Plan*, which was developed in 1996 after nine-year old Amber Hagerman was abducted and brutally murdered near her home in Arlington, Texas. Amber's death had such an impact on her community that it prompted law enforcement agencies and the Texas Association of Radio Managers to develop an emergency alert plan to help recover abducted children. Communities throughout the country have since adopted similar plans, with the common goal of returning abducted children to safety by employing the media to enlist the public in immediate search efforts.

## Getting the word out

Law enforcement agencies have a number of resources available to publicize urgent information about child abductions:



### Emergency Alert System

The federal Emergency Alert System (EAS) is designed to inform the public in the event of civil emergencies, such as earthquakes or severe weather. EAS interrupts local radio and television programming to broadcast the messages, which are normally preceded and concluded by distinctive tones. Absent extenuating circumstances, law enforcement agencies are required by law to activate the EAS in all child abduction cases meeting the AMBER Alert criteria.

### Emergency Digital Information Service

The Emergency Digital Information Service (EDIS) automatically relays official information about emergencies to the news media and the public via e-mail, text pager, web site and satellite. EDIS serves two important functions in AMBER Alert:

- Allows law enforcement agencies to send emergency broadcasts to the media via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS)
- Allows law enforcement agencies to create child abduction posters on the Internet, and automatically notifies the media, law enforcement and other concerned agencies when the posters become available.