

# **DALLAS/FORT WORTH LOCAL EAS AREA AMBER CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT PLAN**

## **OVERVIEW**

The Amber Plan is a cooperative effort between approximately 40 radio and television stations in Dallas/Fort Worth and local law enforcement agencies in North Texas. The plan calls for law enforcement agencies to provide radio stations with an alert upon the immediate confirmation of a child abduction. All participating radio stations will break programming to broadcast the alert and any subsequent information provided by the police.

A concerned citizen contacted one of the radio stations and suggested the child abduction alert idea following the abduction and murder of nine-year-old Amber Hagerman. The general managers of all the radio stations in Dallas/Fort Worth agreed and created the program as a community service. Since that time it has been responsible for saving the lives of several children.

Each police department in North Texas has the contact names and confidential fax numbers of two radio stations that serve as the local primary EAS stations for the area. The police department issuing the alert will send a fax to these primary stations.

The two contacts from the stations will confirm the receipt and accuracy of the fax transmission and will then alert the other participating radio stations through the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

Approximately 30 radio stations, most of which are members of the Association of Radio Managers in Dallas/Fort Worth, are committed to this plan. All radio stations in Dallas/Fort Worth receive the alerts via their EAS receivers. There are a few stations in the area that do not belong to the Association, however these stations are encouraged to participate as a community service. In addition, most of the television stations in the area participate as well. Each station will direct every citizen to their local police department.

Since every station is on the air 24 hours a day, there is always someone in the station. The stations have anticipated this component and have developed measures to assure the consistency of the program regardless of the time.

## **Police Procedures**

For police to activate The Dallas/Fort Worth Amber Plan, two criteria must be met:

- 1) The child should be 17 years of age or younger, or with a proven mental or physical disability, and

2) Police must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

These guidelines are in place to make it clear when an activation should and should not happen. If both criteria are not met, The Amber Alert should not be activated. Police and broadcasters in North Texas have agreed that The Amber Plan should not be activated for "runaways." While each case must be judged individually, most "child custody" situations also fall outside the criteria.

### **Advice to Law Enforcement in Setting Up Your System:**

- 1) Incorporate a standardized form into your department's child abduction protocol. Police should have information that will be helpful to the public. For example, knowing what the child was wearing or a description of the car possibly used in the abduction.
- 2) Provide confidential fax numbers to officers who will coordinate communication with the two radio stations, WBAP and KSCS. If you prefer, pre-program the fax number into your department's fax machine for easy reference in the future.
- 3) Distribute a test fax to the primary radio stations to confirm the system is in place. Be sure to indicate on the standardized form that your department is conducting a test. Request the primary radio stations conduct a call back to your department.

### **Upon confirmation of a child abduction in your area:**

- 1) Determine and prepare information for public distribution. The information should be written in clearly understood terms, not in police "shorthand."
- 2) Designate department contact for radio stations. Include name and phone number on standardized form.
- 3) Fax the document to the designated primary stations.
- 4) The primary radio stations will immediately call your department to confirm the information. Upon confirmation, the radio stations will immediately proceed with distributing the information to the other participating radio stations, via the Emergency Alert System.
- 5) Subsequent updates from your department can be provided to the primary stations at your discretion. Upon closure of the child abduction case distribute a final bulletin to the primary radio stations.

## **Radio Station Procedures**

The following protocol will be followed:

1) Fax is received from police agency at WBAP and KRLD (the primary news radio stations in Dallas/Fort Worth). WBAP and KRLD communicate with each other upon receipt of Amber activation fax, to insure that each has received the information.

2) WBAP and KSCS (the primary EAS stations for Dallas/Fort Worth) activate EAS to transmit Amber Activation. Category is "Child Abduction Emergency" or "CAE", which is the EAS code approved by the FCC for use in Amber Alerts. All radio stations in Dallas/Fort Worth are already monitoring either WBAP or KSCS on their EAS receivers, and have adapted the new CAE code.

3) After transmission of the digital data bursts that trigger your receiver, WBAP and KSCS transmit the Amber Tone, followed by the text message from the police agency. There will be no reference to WBAP or KSCS in the Amber activation.

Following transmission of the message, the digital data bursts to terminate the message will be transmitted. At that point, the audio message from WBAP or KSCS will be in your EAS receiver. Stations then have an option of either re-transmitting the audio, or transcribing the message and doing your own broadcast.

As stated above, this procedure gives the receiving stations complete flexibility to either re-transmit the audio received with the EAS activation or re-voice the message with the receiving station personnel.

Once the Amber Alert is distributed via the EAS activation, the information will also be posted on the [www.dfwamberalert.com](http://www.dfwamberalert.com) website.

## **WBAP/KSCS Internal Protocol**

BOARD OPERATOR - Receive the Amber Alert from a police agency via fax.

NEWSROOM – Call KRLD to verify that they have also received the fax.

NEWS ROOM - Alert KSCS, KTYS, and KESN that an amber alert is about to be issued.

BOARD OPERATOR - Prepare E-A-S transmitter:

BOARD OPERATOR - Confirm that the newsperson on duty is ready to read the amber activation. Remind the anchor not to use the WBAP call letters or their name.

BOARD OPERATOR - Play the activation open...followed by the E.A.S eight-second tone. Then, play the "Amber" sounder.

(After tone establishes) NEWS ANCHOR - Read the alert message.

ANCHOR OPEN: "This is an activation of the amber network at the request  
Of . . . . (name of issuing agency) . . . .

READ BODY OF ALERT

ANCHOR CLOSE: "We now resume regular programming."

BOARD OPERATOR - Play the end of message tones (EOM). After three digital bursts, resume regular programming.

NEWS ROOM - Provide FM Control Room with a copy of the fax from the police agency.

NEWS ROOM - Write a summary of the activation.

NEWS ROOM - Update the dfwamberalert.com website during even numbered months. (Feb-Apr-June-Aug-Oct-Dec)

WHEN THE ALERT IS OVER - Issue a cancellation at the order of the Issuing police department. The board op will set up like a standard Amber Alert...the difference is the anchor announces that the alert has been cancelled by the issuing law enforcement agency.