

**Purpose**

To establish policy for the activation of a bulletin in the AMBER Alert Plan.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to ensure proper operating procedures during the activation and participation of an urgent bulletin in a child abduction case.

**A. What is the Amber Alert Plan?**

1. The AMBER alert plan is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases.
2. Broadcasters use the Emergency Alert System (EAS), formerly called the Emergency Broadcast System, to air a description of the abducted child and suspected abductor.
3. The goal of the AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of the child.
4. Only a law enforcement agency can request an activation of the Amber Alert System through the Maryland State Police.
5. Once law enforcement has been notified about an abducted child, they must first determine if the case meets the AMBER Alert Plan's criteria for activating an alert.

**B. Maryland AMBER Plan Criteria**

1. Law enforcement confirms a child has been abducted.
2. The child is under the age of 18.
3. Law enforcement believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
4. There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.
5. The child is believed to still be in the broadcast area.
6. The child's name and other critical elements have been entered into NCIC by police.

## C. How the AMBER Alert Plan works

1. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office verifies that a child has been abducted and is in danger of serious bodily harm.
2. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office will contact the Maryland State Police Headquarters Duty Office (410) 486-3101 and request an AMBER Alert Activation.
3. A Maryland State Police Child Recovery Unit will contact Cecil County Sheriff's Office and obtain the necessary information.
4. The AMBER Alert Information is sent via the Emergency Alert System to broadcasters, State Highway Administration, and Maryland law enforcement agencies.
5. Participating media outlets may broadcast the Amber Alert four times per hour for the first two hours after the initial alert.
6. After the first two hours, media outlets may broadcast the Amber Alert three times per hour for the next three hours.
7. Updated alerts may be broadcast if significant new information is developed or the child is located.
8. If the child is not located within twenty four hours, the alert is self-cancelling.

## D. Role of the Duty Officer on AMBER Alert Plan Activation

1. During the contact with Maryland State Police, the Duty Officer will furnish phone numbers of the conference room of the Department of Emergency Services.
2. Conference Room numbers are (410) 392-2060, 392-2061, 392-2062 and 392-2063.
3. The Duty Officer will notify the Criminal Investigations Supervisor.
4. The Duty Officer will notify the Dispatch Manager of the AMBER Alert.
5. The Criminal Investigations Supervisor will notify the on-call Investigator.
6. The Duty Officer will assign the necessary deputies to the conference room to handle the influx of calls.

## E. Role of the Investigative Supervisor on AMBER Alert Plan Activation

1. During an AMBER Alert, an investigative supervisor will respond to the Sheriff's Office in a timely manner.
2. The investigative supervisor will be assigned to the Department of Emergency Service's conference room.
3. The personnel assigned to the conference room will be comprised of Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Services' personnel.
4. Personnel assigned to the conference room will be assigned to answer the telephones and disseminate pertinent information.
5. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office AMBER Alert Call Information Check-Off Sheet (CCSO Form SO-187) will be completed by all personnel answering telephones in the conference room.
6. The investigative supervisor will determine if the calls/information are high, medium, or low priority.
7. The investigative supervisor will ensure that high priority information is immediately relayed to the dispatch center.
8. After six hours, the number of personnel in the conference room will be decreased as necessary.
9. Medium and low priority calls will be forward to patrol and the Criminal Investigations Division for follow-up.
10. A minimum of three people will be assigned to answer calls in the Department of Emergency Services' conference room.

## F. Command Center

1. The Department of Emergency Services' Emergency Operation Center will be used as a Command Center for the Sheriff's Office and assisting agencies.
2. The Investigative Supervisor will coordinate efforts between the Patrol Division, Criminal Investigations Division, and assisting allied agencies.

## G. Investigation

1. Any AMBER Alert activation incident will be forwarded to the Criminal Investigation Division for investigation.

2. The Criminal Investigation Division will be assigned the investigation until the child is located.