

# SOUTH CAROLINA AMBER ALERT

A Partnership of Broadcasting and Law Enforcement

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## OVERVIEW

### **PURPOSE OF THE SC AMBER ALERT**

The South Carolina AMBER Alert is a partnership of law enforcement and broadcasting to alert the public in cases of child abduction. Citizens will be provided information about the abduction so they can aid law enforcement in locating the child.

### **WHO ACTIVATES THE AMBER ALERT?**

Upon notification by a police department or sheriff's department, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division is the only entity that can activate the SC AMBER Alert.

### **ACTIVATION CRITERIA**

An AMBER Alert will be activated only when the following criteria are met.

- ~~///~~ The law enforcement agency believes that the child has been abducted (taken from their environment unlawfully, without authority of law, and without permission from the child's parent or legal guardian).
- ~~///~~ The child is 16 years old or younger, and the law enforcement agency believes the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- ~~///~~ The individual is 17 years old or older, and is believed to be at risk for immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death due to a proven physical or mental disability.
- ~~///~~ All other possibilities for the victim's disappearance have been reasonably excluded.
- ~~///~~ There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the victim, suspect, or vehicle used in the abduction.

### **HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?**

- ~~///~~ Local law enforcement agency determines that a case meets the criteria for AMBER activation
- ~~///~~ Local law enforcement agency notifies SLED
- ~~///~~ SLED distributes AMBER Alert to broadcast stations via email and fax. Stations immediately air the AMBER Alert message, and continue to air the message at 15 minute intervals for the next three hours, or until the alert is cancelled.
- ~~///~~ SLED will distribute AMBER Alert to all South Carolina law enforcement agencies
- ~~///~~ SLED will distribute AMBER Alert to SC DOT for activation of traffic advisory signs
- ~~///~~ Via broadcast messages and highway signs, citizens will be advised to call 911 if they have information regarding the abduction.

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## HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE SC AMBER ALERT PROGRAM?

For information regarding the law enforcement aspects of the SC AMBER Alert program, contact:

**Jeffrey Moore**

SC Sheriffs' Association

7338 Broad River Road

Irmo, SC 29063

Phone: (803) 749-0265

Fax: (803) 732-0325

Email: [SHERIFFSC@aol.com](mailto:SHERIFFSC@aol.com)

For information regarding the broadcast aspects of the SC AMBER Alert program, contact:

**Shani White**

South Carolina Broadcasters Association

One Harbison Way, Suite 112

Columbia, SC 29212

Phone: (803) 732-1186

Fax: (803) 732-4085

Email: [Shani@scba.net](mailto:Shani@scba.net)

### Related Website Links

National Center For Missing and Exploited Children

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

SC Branch of NCMEC – Columbia, SC

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

SC Law Enforcement Division

[www.sled.state.sc.us](http://www.sled.state.sc.us)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 12, 2002  
Columbia, South Carolina

## Joint Task Force To Develop South Carolina Amber Alert System

The S.C. Sheriffs' Association, the S.C. Police Chiefs' Association, the South Carolina Broadcasters Association and the State Law Enforcement Division have announced plans to develop a statewide protocol for alerting the public in the case of child abduction. Now being implemented in some 18 states across the country, the Amber Alert is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement and broadcasters. In South Carolina, the plan will be rolled out in stages over the next several months.

A joint committee of law enforcement representatives and broadcasters has been established to advance this initiative. By resolution, Governor Hodges appointed Chief Robert Stewart of SLED to coordinate state government assistance. Rich O' Dell, General Manager of WLTX-TV in Columbia and President-Elect of SCBA, will be the point person for the broadcasters. "South Carolina broadcasters have a deep commitment to public service, and working hand-in-hand with law enforcement has always been a key partnership. But, the issue of child abductions prompted the association leadership to take this special action," said O'Dell. Representation from the SC Branch of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the SC Department of Transportation will also be central to this effort. Chief Stewart commented, "The basic structure for a law enforcement/broadcast partnership of this type has been in place in South Carolina for many years; our new effort will focus on strengthening and enhancing the systems already in place. We will build on Richland County's Malcolm Alert, Charleston's Lowcountry Amber Plan, Greenville County's Alert System and other plans currently under development to expand the statewide system. Activation criteria for the South Carolina Child Alert will be developed to ensure it works at peak efficiency as a law enforcement tool." Governor Hodges said, "As governor and a parent of two young sons, I am committed to making South Carolina as safe as possible for our children. The development of a statewide Amber Alert System is yet another step in that direction."

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### Law Enforcement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2002  
Columbia, South Carolina

## South Carolina Implements Amber Alert System

At a press conference today on the State House grounds in Columbia, there was formal announcement of the South Carolina AMBER Alert System.

Representative Chip Limehouse, opened the conference and officially announced implementation of the new statewide plan. The South Carolina AMBER Alert program is a voluntary partnership of law enforcement and broadcasting to alert the public in cases of child abduction. Listeners and viewers are given information about the abduction so they can assist law enforcement in locating the child.

Jeffrey Moore, who heads the SC Sheriffs' Association, provided background on the initial SC alert, the development of state plans across the country, and detailed how the new plan for our state was developed. Chief Robert Stewart of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division is the state's point person for law enforcement, named to that spot by Executive Order of the Governor's office. At the conference, Chief Stewart recapped the longstanding and strong partnership between law enforcement and broadcasting and explained the many ways modern technology will broaden and enhance the new plan. The SC Department of Transportation will be a vital partner in the program introducing the use of electronic highway message signs as one of the powerful communication tools. The detailed activation criteria for the plan were presented as well as operational protocol for law enforcement and broadcasting. Rich O'Dell, who serves as the Chair of the AMBER Committee for the South Carolina Broadcasters Association reviewed the role of broadcasters in the program and announced the overwhelmingly positive results of the statewide test of the plan. 192 radio stations and 30 television stations have declared their participation as AMBER Alert station partners. Margaret Frierson, of the South Carolina branch of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children closed the conference delivering the national perspective from NCMEC, and introducing special guests that included family members of South Carolina child abduction victims.

Media in attendance were provided a packet of information that included background press release, overview of the new program, list of AMBER Alert Joint Task Force member organizations, AMBER Alert activation criteria, and contact information. Those materials are attached herewith.

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