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**ARKANSAS**

**PLAN**

Revised 03/25/20

The *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* is a statewide initiative between law enforcement, news media and the public, with the shared objectives of using a dependable information delivery system to help quickly locate abducted children and bring them home safely. The *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* provides law enforcement the ability to disseminate information and photographs across the state, following the initial report of an abducted child. The *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* is a law enforcement tool and not designed to be relied upon as the sole means of recovery.

While this is part of a national effort, there is not one, unified plan or set of standardized criteria among states. Some states have statewide plans, while others have plans that operate on a regional or metropolitan level, with each plan operating independently of one another. In fact, there are over 100 plans across the United States. The *Arkansas AMBER Alert* *Plan* is a statewide plan that can interface with other plans if so requested.

**The *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* is not:**

* the only resource to be used
* applicable to every situation
* for every missing child
* designed for custodial conflicts

**Child Abduction and Missing Child Defined**

In very general terms, child abduction is the unauthorized taking of a child from a person with a right to custody by a person without a right of custody. The taking can be by force, enticement, luring, fraud or other means.

By federal law, specifically the Missing Children’s Assistance Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. § 5772), a missing child is any individual less than 18 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to his/her legal custodian. Arkansas law (A.C.A. § 12-12-205), defines a missing child as any person who is under eighteen (18) years of age; whose residence is in Arkansas or is believed to be in Arkansas; whose location is unknown or who has been taken, enticed, or kept from any person entitled by law or a court decree or order to the right of custody; and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.

***Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* Criteria**

The *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* will only be activated if the situation meets the minimum criteria for activation of an AMBER Alert and upon authorization of the Arkansas State Police (ASP) Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Commander or his/her designee. ASP is the filtering agency, which forwards the information for public dissemination. It will be used **only** for child abduction cases, and it will not be used for an incident involving a runaway or for most parental abduction cases, unless the circumstances are determined to be life-threatening to the child. Below is a list of the minimum reporting criteria that must be met by a local law enforcement agency before an AMBER Alert will be issued.

**Minimum Reporting Criteria:**

* There is reasonable belief by law enforcement that an actual **ABDUCTION** has occurred.
* Law enforcement believes that the child is in **IMMINENT DANGER** of serious bodily injury or death.
* There is enough **descriptive information** about the **victim and the abduction** for law enforcement to issue an AMBER ALERT to assist in the recovery of the child.
* The abducted child is **under 18 years of age**.
* The child’s name and other critical data elements, including the CHILD ABDUCTION FLAG, have been **entered into the National Crime Information Center** (NCIC) system.

***Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* Protocol**

When a local law enforcement agency first receives a report of an abducted child and begins to consider the use of the *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan*, a department commander from the local law enforcement agency should immediately contact the ASP CID office or Troop Headquarters in their area. ASP will in turn notify the CID Company Commander or CID Sergeant, who will assist the local law enforcement agency with the threat assessment. When conducting the threat assessment, the local law enforcement agency will be asked to provide as much descriptive information as possible about the victim, any known suspect information, known travel information, and victim or suspect photographs. A special agent may be assigned to assist the local law enforcement agency with the threat assessment and investigation.

After assessing the information provided by the local law enforcement agency, the Company Commander or CID Sergeant will contact the CID Division Commander and make a recommendation regarding the issuance of an AMBER Alert.

When an *AMBER Alert* has been authorized, the following procedures will be followed:

* ASP Troop “*A”* Telecommunications Operators will prepare an electronic template using information from the AMBER Alert Initial Reporting Form ([ASP 500](https://powerdms.com/link/IDS/document/?id=134769)) for the AMBER Alert announcement. This information will provide descriptive information about the missing child, associated suspect(s), and means of transportation. The announcement will include a telephone number for the respective Troop Headquarters and the local law enforcement agency that will be used by the public to report information related to the missing child.
* ASP Troop “A” Telecommunication Operators will work with the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) to provide suspect vehicle and license plate information that may be displayed on Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) maintained by ARDOT.
* ASP Troop “A” Telecommunications Operators will work with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to provide information that can be broadcast in a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) in a text message format to wireless carriers.
* The ASP Public Information Officer (PIO) will disseminate the information related to the abducted child and suspect to the public via social media and the ASP website.

**Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory**

If the circumstances of the disappearance of a child do not meet the *Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* criteria, a Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory ([ASP 502](https://powerdms.com/link/IDS/document/?id=304256)) may be issued. ASP can take the available information from the requesting law enforcement agency and forward that information to media outlets from the agency's current statewide media contact list, as well as social media outlets. The telephone number for the law enforcement agency making the request for a Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory will be listed for the public to contact.

A Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory may be upgraded at any time to an AMBER Alert if the facts of the case warrant. A police chief, sheriff or their authorized designee should follow the Minimum Reporting Criteria guidelines set forth in the ***Arkansas AMBER Alert Plan* Criteria**section of this plan.

An authorized local law enforcement supervisor must complete the *Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory Request form*, and email or fax the form to ASP, Troop “*A”* Communications Center in Little Rock.

Authorization of a Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory is delegated to the ASP CID commander or his/her designee. If a Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory notification is authorized, ASP will disseminate information contained in the initial reporting form, along with a current photograph of the missing child or person through an electronic mail server maintained by the ASP. Using an e-mail template, the Troop *“A”* Telecommunications Operator will transcribe the necessary information from the initial reporting form onto the template. The photograph may be included as an attached file or sent separately when the photograph becomes available. The e-mail will be sent to a list of subscribers to include both print and broadcast newsrooms across the state. The Missing/Endangered Child Media Advisory does not utilize WEA or DMS and will not interrupt programming.

The ASP PIO will disseminate the information to the public relating to the missing child via social media and the Arkansas State Police web site.