



AMBER Alerts - Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

WHAT ARE WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS?

- Wireless Emergency Alerts, or WEAs, are free messages sent directly to your cell phone, warning you about severe weather, AMBER Alerts, and threats to safety in your area.
- WEA messages about threats in your location are sent by your state and local public safety officials, the National Weather Service, and the President.
- WEA messages about America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alerts are sent from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in accordance with instructions from the state AMBER coordinator.
- WEAs are a new technology and may already be on your wireless cell phone or other wireless device.
- WEAs are no more than 90 characters and will provide brief critical information about a threat in your location or an AMBER emergency
- The WEA notification is designed to get your attention and alert you with a unique sound and vibration.
- WEAs resemble a text message on your cell phone or other wireless device – but WEAs will not interrupt calls in progress.
- WEA messages allow AMBER alerts to be sent to cell phones in a geographically targeted affected area.
- WEAs are one-way alerts that are sent to any mobile device in range of a particular broadcasting cell tower-limiting alerts to the impacted area.
- WEAs are not affected by network congestion.
- Wireless customers will not be charged for the delivery of WEA messages and may contact their wireless mobile provider to opt-out of AMBER alerts.

UNIQUE SOUND AND VIBRATION

- The unique sound and vibration (Common Audio Attention Signal and Vibration Pattern) you receive when a WEA message is broadcast are prescribed in part 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations for use in alert messaging only.
- The unique sound and vibration cadence are particularly helpful to people with hearing or vision-related disabilities.

WILL I RECEIVE AMBER ALERTS ON MY CELL PHONE?

- WEA messages could save lives. Do not ignore these messages!
- You do not need to sign up to receive AMBER Alerts as they will come through your radio, TV, or a WEA-compatible mobile device in the form of a WEA, etc.
- WEAs only contain basic information so if you receive a WEA, seek additional information from the other sources, such as radio or TV.
- WEAs instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and the safe recovery of the missing child.
- To find out if your mobile device is capable of receiving WEA alerts, contact your cellular service.
- For more information on WEA alerts, go to Ready.gov: <http://www.ready.gov/warning-systems-signals>

BACKGROUND ON AMBER ALERTS

- AMBER Alert program is a voluntary partnership between law-enforcement agencies, broadcasters, transportation agencies, and the wireless industry, to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child-abduction cases.
- The NCMEC became an active IPAWS alerting authority in December 2012.
- The NCMEC works with state and local law enforcement to release AMBER Alerts over secondary distribution mechanisms, including WEA.