



Deborah J. Daniels
Assistant Attorney General
Office of Justice Programs

Progress Report on the National AMBER Alert Strategy

In October 2002, at the first-ever White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children, President Bush directed the Attorney General to designate a Justice Department officer to lead the effort in coordinating the AMBER Alert system nationwide. Deborah J. Daniels, Assistant Attorney General for Office of Justice Programs, was appointed by Attorney General John Ashcroft to serve as the first National AMBER Alert Coordinator. Since that time, under her leadership and with guidance from the National AMBER Alert Advisory Group, a strategy was developed and implementation began. The Advisory Group is composed of victims, law enforcement, broadcasters, and officials from the Departments of Justice and Transportation.

Over 130 children have been recovered since AMBER Alert began in 1996. *To date, 100 children, or three-quarters of the total number of all recoveries have occurred since October of 2002, when the AMBER program became a coordinated national effort.* Communities, states, and jurisdictions are working together and across state lines as the vital link in the national strategy to bring abducted children home.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR AMBER ALERT:

- **Assess current AMBER activity nationwide**
- **Create a coordinated AMBER network**
- **Communicate "lessons learned"**

PROGRESS REPORT to date:

- **Assess current AMBER activity**
 - ▶ Determined status of local, statewide, and regional AMBER plans to identify national trends, characteristics, and current procedures.
 - ▶ Evaluated available technology and developed AMBER Alert draft technology standards to promote cooperation between state communications systems.
 - ▶ Held the first-ever AMBER Alert Technology Conference in December 2003 which provided 65 AMBER coordinators access to new technology to enhance AMBER communications. A conference report is posted on the Office of Justice Programs AMBER Alert web site: www.ojp.usdoj/amberalert/.
 - ▶ Developed an implementation plan for ongoing monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track national AMBER Alert progress and changes.

- **Create a coordinated AMBER network**
 - ▶ Provided training and guidance on plan development and enhancement for law enforcement, broadcasters, and transportation representatives through regional summits and missing children training courses.
 - ▶ Established federal, state, and local partnerships and promoted agreements among states and communities to develop a seamless network.
 - ▶ Partnered with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children on convening the first Southeast Conference on Missing and Exploited Children (to be held in June 2004), which includes an AMBER Alert component.
 - ▶ Provided criteria guidance on issuance of AMBER Alerts (available on the AMBER Alert web site: www.ojp.usdoj/amberalert/).

- **Communicate “lessons learned”**
 - ▶ Held the first-ever National Training Conference on AMBER Alert in August 2003, which brought together teams from every state to receive training, AMBER plan development, and share best practices.
 - ▶ Presented the national strategy at over 35 conferences held by broadcasters, law enforcement, and juvenile justice organizations.
 - ▶ Held a meeting in February 2004 with national and state broadcasters and media representatives obtaining input into a process for expanding and enhancing the AMBER Alert system from a broadcaster/media perspective.
 - ▶ Raised public awareness through the creation of a national AMBER Alert web site: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/amberalert/; media appearances; training videos; and the production and distribution of an AMBER Alert brochure.
 - ▶ Expanded the AMBER Alert web site to include a “Toolkit” of resource material for use in commemorating National Missing Children’s Day – May 25, 2004.
 - ▶ Participated in the production of Public Service Announcements on missing and abducted children to be used in television, radio, print, and internet media.
 - ▶ Integrated AMBER Alert information into existing training programs and publications.

PLANS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2004

- Convene the Second National Training Conference on AMBER Alert to report on progress of National AMBER Alert Strategy and dialogue with participants about individual plan issues and successes (scheduled for September 8-10).
- Increase the number of regional summits and localized training specific to the needs of a community.
- Improve communications among plan coordinators through creative use of the Internet and develop a newsletter to include information about sites, technologies, and success stories.
- Develop a report to the White House and the Congress on the activities of the National Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of the AMBER plans of each state.
- Make available a “Best Practices” report from the Department of Transportation.

AMBER Alert Progress 1999-to date		
Year	Number of Recovered Children	Number of Statewide AMBER Plans Implemented
1999	8	1
2000	8	1
2001	2	2
2002	26	28
2003	72	14
2004 (to date)	18	2
Total	134	49

updated 5/28/04