(FAQ) AMBER Alert Notifications - Cell Phones, Television and Radio

Cell Phones – Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

- What is the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system?
  - The WEA system is an initiative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), The Wireless Foundation (CTIA) and the wireless industry to notify the public of dangerous situations. According to the CTIA, the WEA system provides mobile consumers with notifications regarding:
    - Presidential Alerts – Alerts issued by the President or a designee.
    - Imminent Threat Alerts – Alerts that include severe man-made or natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc., where an imminent threat to life or property exists; and
    - AMBER Alerts – Alerts that meet the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) criteria to help law enforcement search for and locate an abducted child. DOJ criteria can be found at [http://www.amberalert.gov/guidelines.htm](http://www.amberalert.gov/guidelines.htm)

- Why am I receiving alerts on my wireless device, when I did not subscribe?
  - All WEA capable wireless devices are automatically “opted-in”.

- How do I disable alerts on my wireless device?
  - You may only disable Imminent Threat and AMBER Alert notifications. Contact your wireless provider for further instructions, which may vary by phone model and wireless carrier.

- Can I receive WEA text-like alerts without the audible tone?
  - Yes. Set your wireless device to silent or vibrate, however, be aware those settings will affect other wireless device functions.
• Why did my wireless device not receive a WEA alert?
  o Only WEA capable wireless devices will receive an alert. Contact your wireless provider to determine if your phone model is “WEA capable”. If your device is “WEA capable” and you did not receive a notification, it is possible the alert area did not involve your geographical location.

• Will WEA alerts disrupt text, calls or data sessions that are in progress?
  o No.

• Will I receive WEA notifications on my wireless device for Silver, Blue and Endangered Missing Persons alerts?
  o No. The WEA system only supports Presidential, Imminent Threat and AMBER alerts.

• Is there a cost involved with receiving WEA alerts, or will the notifications count against my wireless plan limitations?
  o No. There is no cost to receive WEA notifications. Text messaging limits within your wireless plan are not affected.

• Are WEA notifications considered text messages?
  o No. WEA notifications employ a new technology designed to avoid network congestion, however, appear on your wireless device similar to a text message.

• Who issues WEA AMBER Alert notifications?
  o The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) determines which entities have the ability to request the issuance of WEA AMBER alerts. The state’s AMBER Alert network, managed by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), is authorized by NCMEC to request WEA AMBER alerts, on behalf of law enforcement. Texas regional AMBER Alert networks also have the potential/ability to coordinate WEA AMBER Alert usage with NCMEC.

• During what hours are WEA AMBER Alert notifications issued?
  o The state’s AMBER Alert network, managed by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), has limited their issuance of WEA AMBER Alert notifications between the hours of 6:00 AM and 11:00 PM, to include holidays and weekends. WEA AMBER Alert hours of notification (initiated by Texas regional AMBER Alert networks) could differ.

• How many times will I be notified of a single child abduction incident via the WEA system?
  o Only once, in order to prevent public desensitization.
• Why does the WEA AMBER Alert notification only contain vehicle information?
  o WEA alert messages are limited to 90-characters (to include spaces). Vehicle information is the only practical child abduction data available for message standardization within a 90-character format.

• Why am I receiving WEA AMBER alerts, regarding a child abduction that did not take place in my city/county? Are WEA AMBER alerts always issued statewide?
  o Not all WEA AMBER alerts in Texas are issued statewide. AMBER alert geographical areas are determined by investigative case information, relating to the actual child abduction. Because suspects sometimes utilize a vehicle to rapidly transport a child, the selected alert area could represent a large geographical region.

• Who do I contact if I see the vehicle?
  o Immediately call “9-1-1”, or your local law enforcement agency.

Television & Radio – Emergency Alert System (EAS)
To include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) All Hazards Weather Radio.

• What is the Emergency Alert (EAS) system?
  o The EAS serves as a national public warning system, requiring broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio services (SDARS) providers, and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) providers to allow the President to address the public during national emergencies. State and local authorities may also use the EAS to alert the public of specific emergency situations, to include severe weather and AMBER alerts.

• Why am I receiving alerts on my television/radio, when I did not subscribe?
  o Broadcasters and television stations are required by law to interrupt programing, in order to notify the public of specific emergency situations.

• How do I disable alerts on my television/radio?
  o This is not possible if your television or radio is activated and receiving network broadcasts.
• Why did my television/radio not receive an EAS alert?
  o It is possible the alert area did not involve your geographical location.
• Will I receive EAS notifications on my television/radio for Silver, Blue and Endangered Missing Persons alerts?
  o No. The EAS system only supports AMBER alerts.
• Who issues EAS AMBER Alert notifications?
  o The state’s AMBER Alert network, managed by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), has an agreement with the National Weather Service (NWS) to activate the EAS system during AMBER Alerts issued by DPS, on behalf of law enforcement. Regional AMBER Alert networks in Texas could also form an agreement with the National Weather Service, or a local primary radio station with the ability to activate the EAS system in their region.
• During what hours are EAS AMBER Alert notifications issued?
  o 24/7, to include holidays and weekends.
• How many times will I be notified of a single child abduction incident via the EAS system?
  o Only once, in order to prevent public desensitization.
• Why am I receiving EAS AMBER alerts, regarding a child abduction that did not take place in my city/county? Are EAS AMBER Alerts always issued statewide?
  o Not all EAS AMBER alerts in Texas are issued statewide. AMBER alert geographical areas are determined by investigative case information, relating to the actual child abduction. Because suspects sometimes utilize a vehicle to rapidly transport a child, the selected alert area could represent a large geographical region.
• Who do I contact if I see the vehicle, child or suspect?
  o Immediately call “9-1-1”, or your local law enforcement agency.