

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AMBER ALERT DEPLOYMENT PLAN
BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY: *TRANSCORE*®

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Kansas Department of Transportation AMBER Alert Deployment Plan Background and Recommendations

May 2005

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Introduction

The AMBER Alert Deployment planning process is intended to investigate, document, and present recommendations for integrating AMBER Alerts within the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) current resources. AMBER Alert messages are sent to KDOT from the Kansas Bureau of Investigations (KBI). This planning process documents information gathered during workshops specific to the KDOT AMBER program conducted in each of the six districts. In addition, the project team visited with a KDOT 511 (traveler information) representative, each of the neighboring States, and the Kansas Bureau of Investigations (KBI) to define issues associated with integrating KDOT activities with activities of other agencies and departments. This document provides a series of recommendations intended to allow KDOT an efficient and effective way to provide the resources and policies necessary to deploy an improved statewide AMBER Alert Program.

Project Definition

This project investigated integration issues associated with AMBER Alerts within the context of KDOT's current resources. AMBER Alert information (messages) are generally sent to KDOT from the Kansas Bureau of Investigations (KBI). In order for KDOT to disseminate messages sent by KBI there is a certain amount of formatting and processing by KDOT. This plan will address the methods, both manual and automated, that KDOT works with, in addition to integration issues for policies, procedures, message dissemination, and communication issues. A set of recommendations define this deployment plan for statewide AMBER Alert for KDOT. This plan focuses on the identified responsibilities and coordination required for KDOT's AMBER Alert program and participant. The deployment plan contains coordination priorities, integration requirements, costs and deployment schedules for implementing AMBER Alerts statewide using KDOT resources.

History of AMBER Alert

In January of 1996 in Arlington, Texas, nine year old Amber Hagerman was playing in front of her house when a neighbor, alerted by Amber's scream, witnessed a man forcing her into his pickup truck and sped away. The neighbor called police with a description of the man and pickup truck, but unfortunately was unable to remember much else. While police and the FBI searched for Amber, local television and radio stations covered the

story in their regular newscast. Four days later, Amber's body was discovered only four miles from her home. Her kidnapping and murder remain unsolved.

Following a suggestion from a local citizen, a Dallas radio station decided to implement a plan to repeat broadcasts of information related to a child abduction at regular intervals, similar to what they do for severe weather warnings. The Dallas AMBER Plan was started in July 1997, to help safely recover missing children police believe have been abducted. Since then, the program has successfully recovered eight children and expanded to other cities and states nationwide.

Although the AMBER Plan is named after Amber Hagerman, this national program is dedicated to all children nationwide who've been abducted. The acronym AMBER stands for America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Alert. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, up to 4600 children are abducted by strangers every year (about 12 children nationwide every day).

AMBER Alert Criteria

AMBER Alert criteria presented here is taken from the Kansas AMBER Alert Program website, www.ksAMBER.org.

It is very important that the AMBER Plan not be overused as too many notifications take the urgency out of an alert. Therefore strict guidelines have been established to ensure the importance of the AMBER Alert remains intact.

In order to issue an AMBER Alert there must be enough information to report on the victim or suspect, their descriptions, direction of travel, or other substantial facts that the public can look out for.

- The child must be 17 years or younger, or possess a physical or mental handicap.
- The evidence must show the child is in immediate threat of great bodily harm or death.
- The evidence must also show the victim is likely to be in the broadcast area.
- In order for an AMBER Alert to be issued, information is required in at least one of the following ways:
 - The victims or suspects information or descriptions
 - The direction of travel
 - Or, other substantial facts the public can look out for

Kansas Bureau of Investigations – Integration

The Kansas Bureau of Investigations (KBI) is the lead agency for the AMBER Alert Program in Kansas. Kyle G. Smith, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs for

KBI, is the contact person within KBI and is on-call 24-hours a day, should an incident occur.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) was established in 1939 by the Kansas Legislature to combat crime and assist local enforcement agencies. Within the state of Kansas, 72% of local law enforcement agencies have less than 10 personnel; KBI is a centralized resource for these smaller local law enforcement agencies. The KBI is a division of the Office of Attorney General whose director is appointed by the Attorney General. When established, the KBI was directed to conduct investigations at the request of the Attorney General and local law enforcement and to maintain state criminal justice records. Due to the KBI's overarching responsibilities across the state of Kansas it is appropriate they lead the AMBER Alert Program. The Attorney General's office leads the AMBER Alert Task Force in Kansas.

When an AMBER Alert is reported to a local law enforcement agency that agency fills out a form on the Kansas Criminal Justice Information System (KCJIS) web-portal system and then follows up with a fax to the KBI. Once the KBI communications department receives the information, they will telephone Mr. Smith and brief him on all the details of the incident. KBI starts with an initial investigation, which may take them one hour past the abduction report to collect enough information to issue an AMBER Alert. After carefully considering all the factors of the particular incident, he will determine if they meet the AMBER Alert criteria and then, if approved, will issue an AMBER Alert.

During an Amber alert, Mr. Smith will personally announce the AMBER Alert on WIBW, a local radio station, using their Emergency Alert System (EAS) system which will then interrupt broadcasting on all radio and television stations in Kansas to play the Amber Alert message. KBI is considering installing its own EAS system in order to streamline this process.

AMBER Alerts are disseminated in a number of other ways, with the objective of getting the information out to as many reporting sources as possible in the shortest amount of time. Other dissemination modes are listed here:

- Email messages sent via an established email-tree,
- Website postings at the Kansas AMBER Alert website (www.ksamber.org) maintained by KBI.

At this same time Denise Wheeler at the communications desk of KBI faxes an abbreviated alert message to KC Scout (www.kcscout.net) and sends a text message to the National Weather Service (NWS) alert system. NWS uses a computerized generated voice in its alerts and KBI has experienced some complications with this system.

Mr. Smith felt that a list-server via the internet held the most potential for efficiently and effectively distributing AMBER Alert emails to the largest audience in the future. He also noted the process is labor intensive at this time. The KBI is also considering sending Amber Alerts to the Kansas Lottery where Amber Alert information can be printed out from a lottery machine and posted at all locations where lottery tickets are sold during an alert.

The public can report a sighting or call if they have any information to share with KBI in one of three ways, 1) local 911, 2) 1-800-KS-CRIME, or 3) their local law enforcement department. The local sheriff's department bears the responsibility to weed out tips received on phone lines. Each call made to the tips-hotline comes to the KBI office on a specially designated number and a phone with a special ring tone used only during AMBER Alerts.

During an alert, KBI updates the AMBER web page, which is updated every 15 minutes even if there have not been any new developments in the case.

When the AMBER Alert is lifted, KBI will send an email to all addresses in the email tree. The AMBER Alert will run for four to six hours. If the situation has not been resolved within that time period, then the AMBER Alert status expires, and the situation is deemed a "kidnapping" putting it in the jurisdiction of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

Mr. Smith felt that training was the key to handling AMBER Alerts properly. He would like to investigate online training, possibly using SBC grants, or technology grants.

In 2003 and 2004, there were national conferences on AMBER Alert programs where agencies shared their progress and experiences with the program. From these conferences the KBI has learned how Utah and Washington use a single portal, one button to notify everyone. Most states would like to implement a one-stop portal. KBI sees this one-stop portal as their next step in automating the AMBER Alert process in Kansas, through automation human error in the process is reduced. Utah has offered software to implement one-stop portal programs and Kansas hopes to look into this in the future.

Secondary alerts have been defined in the event the AMBER Alert criteria has not been met but an important message still needs to be relayed to the public. A neighboring state might consider issuing a secondary alert, even if it is an AMBER Alert in Kansas.

Mr. Smith noted a successful AMBER Alert Program involves three key areas; law enforcement, technology, and publicity (public acceptance of the program).

Mr. Smith had the following closing thoughts on the AMBER Alert program and interface with KDOT:

- Scout Signs – Issue of how much information to put up. Currently the KDOT policy is to have "tune in to local radio" on the sign. Mr. Smith supported the addition of "or dial 511"
- Regional messages - KBI is not in favor of regional alerts because it is too easy for an abductor to quickly travel into another region where the AMBER Alert may not be posted.
- Making KBI information input easier - Department of Motor Vehicles has a customized web page so that tag type with exact tag number can be generated by KBI. This is helpful for posting accurate pictures of car tags for suspects.
- Faxes – KBI would like to stay away from any reliance of disseminating AMBER Alert information via faxes. This is labor intensive and not as reliable as other forms of communication.

- Long-term wish list for KBI includes a one-stop portal for disseminating AMBER Alerts. A short-term wish is that additional publicity can be generated for agencies and businesses to participate on the list-serve system.
- KBI noted their appreciation to KDOT for the use of KDOT meeting rooms for training at district offices across the state.

District Involvement

To determine the level of involvement by each of the KDOT districts, the planning process began with an outreach effort at each of the six districts. The consultant project team and ITS Unit held workshops at each KDOT District office in an effort to learn the current understanding of the AMBER ALERT program and discuss integration ideas for AMBER Alerts at the district level. The AMBER Alert Workshops also provided an opportunity to solicit information on KDOT’s resources, available means of communications, and personnel suggestions in each of the districts. The objective of the workshops was to determine the level of interest a District might have in developing a statewide AMBER Alert program and, if so, how this integrates into their existing communication methods and process. A number of common themes were heard at each of the workshops as well as important issues relating perhaps to only a few of the districts. For instance, understanding communication limitations and differences from district to district is important when developing recommendations for the AMBER Alert Deployment Plan. Many good ideas and discussions were generated through this workshop process and have been incorporated into the recommendations. The workshop process allowed the project team to investigate integration issues associated with KDOT’s participation in a statewide AMBER Alert Program.

The AMBER Alert workshops consisted of participant introductions, an AMBER Alert presentation, and discussion with participants. The AMBER Alert presentation, along with the recorded comments and questions from participants, is included as Appendix A and B of this document.

Table 1 provides a list of dates and locations for each AMBER Alert workshop.

Date	District	Location
July 13, 2004	6	Garden City
July 14, 2004	3	Norton
July 15, 2004	2	Salina
July 19, 2004	1	Topeka
July 20, 2004	5	Hutchinson
July 21, 2004	4	Chanute

Table 1 Workshop Information

Workshop Summary

While each of the workshops proved to be valuable and useful, some common themes emerged from each of the workshops. These included KDOT's role with AMBER Alerts, overall communication methods, the use of changeable message signs and associated policies, field personnel responsibilities, local radio station support, and statewide versus regional AMBER Alerts. This section of the document summarizes the comments and discussions attributed to the themes mentioned above. These high level areas are summarized in this section, but for further detail please refer to the full summaries in Appendix B.

KDOT's Role with AMBER Alerts

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) has been clearly identified as the lead agency responsible for overseeing AMBER Alerts in Kansas. It is generally true that law enforcement is the lead agency in most state AMBER programs. KBI is the only agency authorized to declare an AMBER Alert in Kansas. Local law enforcement must notify KBI of a child abduction. KBI will then evaluate each potential abduction report to ensure minimum criteria are met before issuing an official AMBER Alert. KDOT's role is to support the AMBER Alert Program. As part of this project, KDOT's ITS Unit was interested in soliciting the views of District personnel as to the extent of KDOT's contribution to the Kansas AMBER Alert Program so that if there were ways to expand KDOT's involvement this could be explored.

Under the Kansas AMBER Alert Program, KBI notifies KDOT of an AMBER Alert. Once an AMBER Alert has been received, KDOT is then responsible for managing two communication streams, one internal and the other external. These communication streams are designed to quickly and efficiently notify both KDOT personnel and the traveling public using KDOT resources. Information dissemination through these two streams of communication will be accomplished simultaneously. KDOT has a number of communication assets at its disposal to accomplish this task, but as described in the next sections, internal and external communications are not always uniform across the six districts. For the purpose of this document, internal communications are all communications between KDOT personnel and external communications include the dissemination of information to the public, including both physical and virtual communications.

During each workshop, KDOT personnel were asked about providing department assets and staff during AMBER Alerts. Generally, employees supported the idea of utilizing KDOT assets such as permanent and portable Changeable Message Signs (CMS), Highway Advisory Radio (HAR), Close Circuit Television (CCTV), and field personnel to assist in AMBER Alerts. Although personnel in each district agreed KDOT should assist whenever possible during an AMBER Alert, there was disagreement as to the degree of support the department should provide. Support ranged from providing only non-dedicated assets at the time of an AMBER Alert, i.e. CMS not in use, to posting the AMBER Alert message along with existing messages on CMS. The use of CMSs were not the only difference. One district suggested field personnel should participate at a minor level during AMBER Alerts while another district suggested field personnel,

especially flaggers, should be asked to monitor traffic for the suspect vehicle while working. It was also suggested language be included in future KDOT contracts requiring that contractors (i.e. flaggers) monitor traffic for passing vehicles matching the suspect's description during AMBER Alerts.

Internal Communications

The Workshops revealed internal communication modes within each district (i.e. dispatch to field) vary depending on the type and amount of equipment available, cellular coverage, topography, and a general level of the preferred methods of internal communication. Districts in the eastern part of the state typically had more comprehensive cellular networks available than those in the western portions of the state. Methods of communication discussed in the workshops are shown in the table below.

Communication Technology	Issued To (typically)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cellular Phone	Maintenance: Supervisors and above Construction: Most personnel and contractors	Portable Inexpensive	Reliability dependant on extent of cellular network and coverage
800 MHz Radio	Maintenance and Construction personnel as needed	Portable KDOT ownership and control Single message to multiple users Low operating cost	Limited Range Communications limited by topography
Telephone	All offices (including Sub-Area offices)	Reliability	Not mobile
Fax	All offices (including Sub-Area offices)	Mass Message	No remote access to information Information goes unnoticed when office is not manned
E-mail	Accounts issued to most KDOT personnel	Reliability	Some remote offices and most Sub-Area offices only have dial-up service
Text Messaging	Not currently offered by KDOT (Some KDOT cellular phones capable of receiving text messages but not provided by KDOT)	One message can be sent to a large group simultaneously	Not all KDOT issued phones have text messaging service. Districts would have to pay for this service.
Physical Delivery	Only in most remote areas of the state where lack of cellular coverage and topography prevent mobile communication		Not Feasible for AMBER Alerts

Table 2 KDOT Internal Communication Options

While most districts have the same communications modes available, differences in levels of usage in each district varied widely, as some districts used their radios as primary means of communicating with field personnel, others used more cellular technology. Each district had its own way of applying the technologies available. All districts have the ability to broadcast a message district wide, however, the message should be sent twice so that towers can be grouped to avoid intermodal interference.

KDOT issues cellular telephones to some personnel for Department use. Policies differ between Construction and Maintenance Divisions. Typically, the Maintenance Division issues cellular telephones to supervisor positions and above, while the Construction Division issues cellular telephones to most personnel. In construction this may be to facilitate communications with contractors who generally all have cellular phones. Work crews not issued a cellular telephone are typically provided with an 800 MHz radio for communications with their sub-area office.

It is important to note, although Sub-area offices are equipped with telephone, fax, and dial-up Internet service, these offices are not always staffed during regular business hours. This can potentially lead to breaks in the line of communication to field staff. In the case of an un-staffed sub-area office or an after hour situation, staff suggested area offices contact sub-area supervisors by cellular telephone. Several workshop comments suggested KDOT ensure after hour contact list are kept current.

Statistics show, in cases where an AMBER Alert has been issued, recovering the child quickly is crucial to insuring the child's safety. Once an AMBER Alert is issued, quick and efficient communications are imperative. The following is a description of how an AMBER Alert could be disseminated internally to KDOT personnel and is illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page.

When KBI issues an alert, KDOT would be notified via email with descriptions of the child, the suspect, and the vehicle along with a possible direction of travel. KBI policy, and by default KDOT current practice, is to issue all AMBER Alerts statewide, therefore, the information would be relayed via email to each KDOT District Head Office. District Head Offices would then notify their Area Offices of the AMBER Alert and pass on the information via email. Next the information would be passed on to each Sub-Area office. Communications with each of the Sub-Area offices could be made in one of five ways; telephone, cellular telephone, fax, 800 MHz Radio, or email. The method of communication would depend on whether or not staff is working in the Sub-Area office or on the roadways. Workshop participants generally agreed the telephone should be the first means of contact with the Sub-Area Office. If this is not successful, Area Offices should contact Sub-Area supervisors via cellular telephone (if available) or 800 MHz Radio. Participants noted that while fax and email are useful when transmitting details of an AMBER Alert, if the Sub-Area Office is unattended, it could be the following day before the Alert is received. One of KDOT's greatest challenges is the automation of this chain of communication. The communication path is clear and currently information is disseminated manually. Automation in the communication chain will speed message dissemination.

A common communication issue amongst law enforcement, fire and rescue, and DOT personnel is the ability to hear each other's radio communications but the inability to respond. Typically fire and rescue as well as DOT personnel are able to hear law enforcements radio communications, but are unable to communicate directly with law enforcement. This lack of direct communications can result in the loss of critical time as communications are passed between field staff, DOT and law enforcement dispatchers and officers. KDOT staff noted that in some of the more rural areas, KDOT supervisors, local police, and State Troopers tend to communicate directly via cellular telephone.

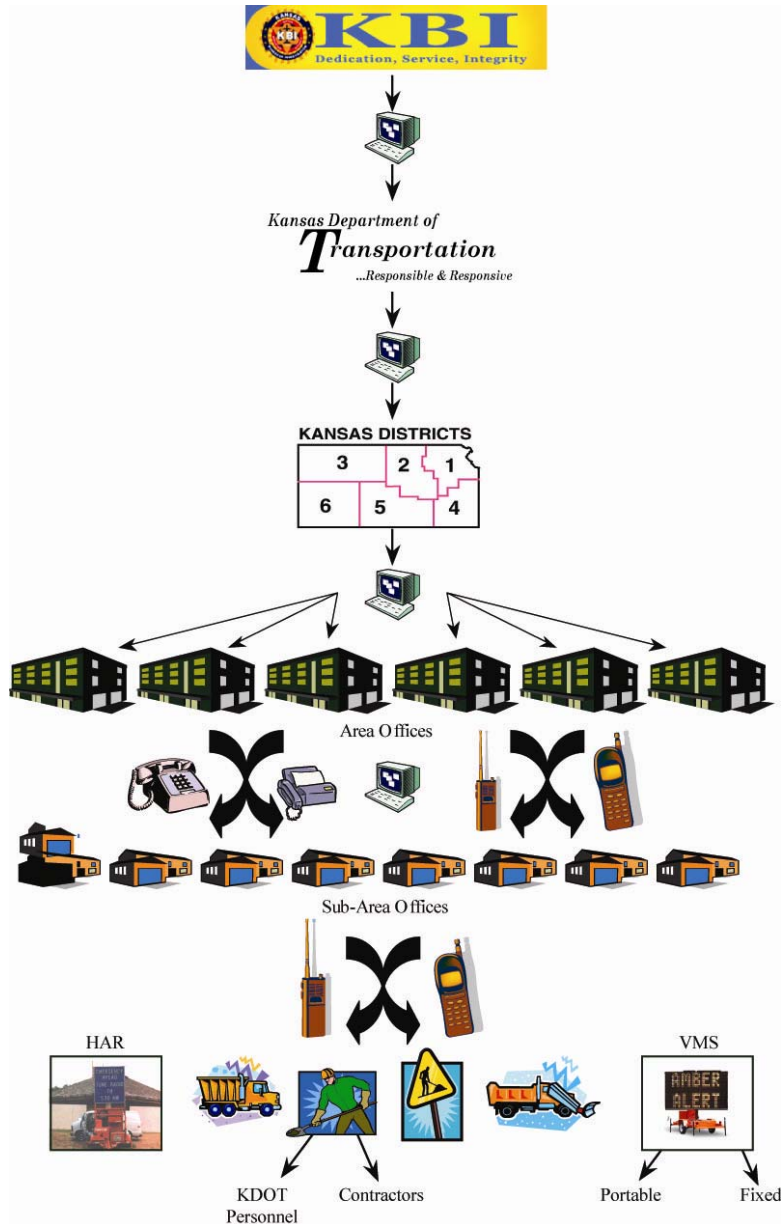


Figure 1 KDOT's AMBER Alert Internal Communication Plan

External Communications

The workshops revealed external communication modes and infrastructure resources within a district (i.e. Changeable Message Signs, Highway Advisory Radio) vary depending on the availability of equipment in each district. KDOT’s website and 511 services are available statewide at all times.

Changeable Message Signs

Each of the six districts have Changeable Message Signs (CMS), primarily portable and used most often to post construction or incident management messages. District 1 is the exception. As part of the Kansas City Scout Program (www.kcscout.net), the district has 10 permanent CMS on heavily traveled interstates. Due to the lack of deployed permanent CMS’s, the remainder of the CMS discussion focuses on issues related to portable changeable message signs. Table 3 lists the number of portable and permanent CMS available in each district.

District	Location	Portable CMS	Permanent CMS
1	Topeka	31	10
2	Salina	2	-
3	Norton	11	-
4	Chanute	5	-
5	Hutchinson	13	-
6	Garden City	6	-

Table 3 Number of Portable CMS by District

District personnel recognize the importance of using portable CMS to provide real-time messages to motorist. KDOT does have a message priority policy for CMSs. KDOT policy is to give message priority on CMS in the following order:

- 1st Priority – Construction Information
- 2nd Priority – Incident Management messages
- 3rd Priority – AMBER Alert postings

Most portable message signs are in continual use throughout the spring, summer, and fall for construction and incident management. Under KDOT’s CMS message priority policy, there is very limited availability during these months in the event of an AMBER Alert.

In the event a portable CMS is available during an AMBER Alert, the estimated time to deploy and post the message on most signs is likely to be greater than an ideal goal time of three hours. KDOT staff noted most of their signs do not allow remote programming presently, requiring manual programming at the sign. Other time consuming activities include:

- Driving to the sign, whether it is located along a roadway, or at an Area or Sub-Area yard
- Training on how to program the sign, as there are a number of different types of signs in KDOT’s inventory
- Transporting the sign to the recommended location
- Making sure the sign is adequately powered (solar units)

With these factors considered, KDOT staff estimates some sign deployments could take more than four hours, well beyond the critical window law enforcement agencies target for the safe return of an abducted child. The time required to deploy a remotely programmable CMS can be considerably less. This can range from only minutes if the sign location does not change, or up to the amount of time required to relocate the sign to a new location. It was generally agreed upon that if the sign was not currently stationed on the roadway, it would not be feasible to deploy an unused sign in a timely fashion for an AMBER Alert.

KDOT has worked towards developing policies associated with AMBER Alerts. KDOT does have an AMBER message policy for their CMS when available. In the event of an AMBER Alert, KDOT’s available CMSs will display the following message, “AMBER Alert – Child Abduction - Tune to Local Radio”.

Throughout the six workshops, a number of participants made valuable suggestions including:

- KDOT consider developing a formal policy or guideline to determine the most effective location for a portable CMS.
- KDOT consider providing AMBER Alert messages in both English and Spanish to increase the effectiveness of the alert.
- KDOT consider using static AMBER Alert signs with either a “flip-down” design or with flashers attached to alert motorist of an AMBER Alert. (Although this suggestion was made in more than one workshop, there was some concern as to the effectiveness of static AMBER Alert signs.)
- KDOT consider adding AMBER Alert messages to existing construction or incident management messages on portable CMS in work zones where traffic is frequently stopped or moving slowly.

Highway Advisory Radio Considerations

Districts did note their willingness to use KDOT Highway Advisory Radios (HAR) to broadcast AMBER Alert messages, specifically the portable HAR units. The main issues related to using HAR are the lack of availability within each of the districts, and the limited broadcast range each station has. If more HAR become available, the districts are in favor of deploying these during an AMBER Alert. One question related to the use of HAR was if the HAR message broadcast was restricted to the same message priority as CMS. Table 4 lists the number of portable and permanent HAR available in each district.

District	Location	Portable HAR	Permanent HAR
1	Topeka	-	-
2	Salina	-	-
3	Norton	-	-
4	Chanute	-	-
5	Hutchinson	1	-
6	Garden City	1	-

Table 4 Number of Portable and Permanent HAR by District

Other forms of external communications available to KDOT include 511 and the KDOT website.

Field Personnel Responsibilities

While all districts agreed KDOT employees working along Kansas roads could provide a valuable resource for locating an AMBER Alert suspect vehicle, there was some disagreement on how this could be accomplished. Some districts indicated KDOT personnel could watch for suspect vehicles while out on the roadways as part of their work assignments. Others commented that it would not be in KDOT's best interest to ask personnel to watch for a suspect vehicle if attention should be focused at the task at hand. They suggested for safety reasons, KDOT personnel should focus on the task at hand.

In other districts, personnel indicated the importance of an AMBER Alert was so high that all personnel should be asked to pay special attention for passing vehicle matching the suspect description. Flaggers were described as the best placed department resource to monitor traffic for the suspect's vehicle. One district suggested when contractors provide flaggers for roadwork projects, language should be included in the contract requiring flaggers to monitor traffic for the suspect's vehicle during AMBER Alerts.

KDOT staff noted they are willing to assist in any means possible during an AMBER Alert.

Statewide versus Regional AMBER Alerts

While AMBER Alerts are issued statewide per current KBI policy, KDOT personnel from all districts consistently suggested KDOT, and in effect, KBI reconsider their policy to allow for regional AMBER Alerts with the option to expand statewide as necessary. Even though workshop participants recognize the importance of quickly disseminating AMBER Alert messages to the public, each district felt the current policy of automatically issuing a statewide alert was excessive. The perceived importance of an AMBER Alert is critical to enlisting the public's support. KDOT personnel suggested AMBER Alerts initially be broadcast in the geographic regions surrounding the abduction location, with a gradual increase in the broadcast area as time passes. Participants suggested the department consider developing a policy along with specific criteria to assist in determining when to broadcast a regional versus statewide AMBER Alert message.

General Personnel Suggestions

Throughout each of the workshops, KDOT district employees provided both thoughtful and constructive comments aimed at producing practical and useful AMBER Alert policy for KDOT. Two additional comments worth noting from the workshops are:

- Creating an email alert, similar to the email alerts for severe weather
- Providing a single line CMS, mounted on top of all district Area and Sub-Area office signs where AMBER Alert messages can be displayed for motorists as they drive by.

Statewide Involvement

Statewide aspects of the AMBER Alert program are lead by the KDOT ITS Unit within the Bureau of Transportation Planning. Involvement by the ITS Unit includes coordination between bureaus, KDOT districts, 511, KBI, the Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA), municipalities and others. The ITS Unit has lead the AMBER Alert program to date by submitting grant applications to FHWA for AMBER Alert funding and being an active member of the KBI AMBER Alert Task Force. As the AMBER Alert program moves forward in the agency, the ITS Unit will lead outreach, procedure and policy issues related to AMBER alerts. They will also continue to solicit funding from various sources to support and promote the program statewide.

Municipalities and AMBER Alerts

KDOT provides funding to many municipal and local government agencies to assist with the implementation of ITS programs including the procurement of changeable message signs (CMS). KDOT encourages municipal and local governments to become engaged in the AMBER Alert program and coordinating with KBI to receive alerts when they are issued. The ITS infrastructure maintained at by local agencies throughout the state can increase the dissemination of messages, but each agency must receive notification from KBI independent of KDOT involvement. For this reason, KDOT will continue to encourage local municipalities to enroll and engage in the statewide AMBER Alert Program.

Kansas DOT 511 Traveler Information System

The KDOT 511 system is a valuable resource that can be used to communicate timely information to the traveling public. The program, which began in early 2004, has made great progress in providing real-time information to callers. This section outlines the KDOT 511 program and highlights AMBER Alert integration issues.

KDOT launched the new traveler information system in January 2004. It offers road conditions, construction detour and travel weather information for the Kansas State Highway System and the Kansas Turnpike that can be accessed by calling 5-1-1 from anywhere within Kansas, or 1-866-511-KDOT (5368) from anywhere in the U.S. Similar information is also available on the Web at <http://511.ksdot.org>. The 511 system checks for updates to weather and road condition information every five minutes. Road condition information is entered by KDOT crews across the state.

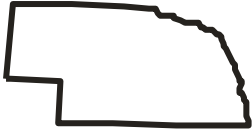
There are three types of alerts that may appear on 511: AMBER Alerts, transportation emergencies, and homeland security messages. The KDOT system will only accept one AMBER Alert at a time. At the present time, AMBER Alerts are recorded manually to 511; however, plans to automate the Alerts process are underway. Currently, KDOT receives an email from the KBI when an AMBER Alert is issued. The Advanced Traveler Information System (ATIS) coordinator then edits the message as necessary, and records the message that is placed on the 511 system. Editing may be necessary if too much information is contained in the KBI message, making it longer than the 511 system will allow.

The KBI also sends a pre-coded text message to the National Weather Service (NWS) and records an audio message on the WIBW (local radio station in Topeka) Emergency Alert System (EAS). The EAS then broadcasts the message to radio and television media, interrupting programming. The NWS converts the text message to an audio announcement. Automating the process used to put Amber Alerts on 511 may involve developing an interface that would send a copy of the EAS broadcast to the 511 system, or convert it to an MP3 (audio) file that would automatically be sent to the 511 system. Another alternative may be to use the pre-coded text message used by the NWS to generate a message on the 511 system.

One policy issue relating to the 511 system that should be addressed is guidance on the ideal length of time a message is on the 511 system, and how and when messages are removed from the system. Also, policy should be coordinated with the current CMS policy about tuning to local media.

Neighboring States

A limited amount of coordination should occur between KDOT and the neighboring departments of transportation. With law enforcement as the lead agency in most states there are constraints on KDOT's ability to influence another states program. This section investigates the AMBER Alert programs in the four neighboring states to Kansas as a way to coordinate and link planning effort. Below is an outline of information from each of the neighboring states.



State: Nebraska

Scope: Statewide

Administrating Agency: Nebraska Attorney General's Office

Participating Agencies: Nebraska Attorney General's Office, Nebraska AMBER Plan Committee¹, Department of Roads, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission, State Patrol, National Weather Service, Department of Economic Development's Division of Tourism, and the Nebraska Lottery.

Steps for Activation: After receiving a report of a child kidnapping, the local law enforcement agency determines if the child kidnapping meets the requirements of the AMBER Plan. If it does, the agency contacts the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) to request activation of the AMBER Plan. NSP verifies the information and activates a system through Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) and the information is broadcast over the State Emergency Alert System (EAS). This broadcast will immediately be delivered to all radio and television stations in Nebraska. Although the AMBER Alert goes out only once via the EAS system, participating stations then re-broadcast the information at regular intervals.

Nebraska has announced they will soon have the capability to stream real-video to rest areas along Nebraska's 459-mile interstate 80 corridor. The program plans to upgrade 20 Nebraska rest area travel information center kiosks with the technology required to receive the real-video. This will supplement AMBER Alert broadcast along the I-80 corridor which currently use the 18 existing overhead electronic message boards, the 511 Traveler Information Service, and the Nebraska Educational Television (NETV) Emergency Broadcast System.

Criteria for Activation: The Nebraska AMBER Plan requires law enforcement to meet the following criteria when evaluating a child abduction. Authorities must have all parts of the scenario present before activation can occur. The guidelines are as follows:

- a. The child is the age of 17 or younger.
- b. Police have reason to believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

¹ This committee is made up of the Nebraska Attorney General, Local Law Enforcement, Broadcast Representatives, Delegates from the Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Educational Television, Nebraska Lottery, and the National Weather Service

- c. There is sufficient information available concerning the suspected abductor that the public can respond.
- d. The notifying law enforcement agency has participated in AMBER training for purposes of issuing AMBER Alerts.
- e. The plan is not intended for use in runaway or child custody situations.

Information Released: (1) The name of the town/city and region of the state the child was abducted from; (2) Law enforcement agency looking for the child; (3) Name and description of the child; (4) Name and description of suspected abductor; (4) Description of suspect vehicle; and (5) Contact numbers to report information related to the AMBER Alert.

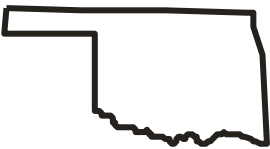
Utilizes EAS: AMBER Alert resources include: radio & TV broadcast, Nebraska Department of Roads' Advance Traveler Information System (electronic signs, and 511), Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission, Nebraska Lottery Machines, and the National Weather Service.

Reporting Phone Number: Lead law enforcement agency or 911.

Role of the Department of Roads: The Nebraska Department of Roads is responsible to place AMBER Alert information on interstate overhead sign boards.

Sources:

1. http://www.ago.state.ne.us/content/amber_alert.html
2. <http://www.swnebr.net/newspaper/cgi-bin/articles/articlearchiver.pl?156644>
3. Jim McGee, Nebraska Department of Roads (402-479-3878)



State: Oklahoma

Scope: Statewide/Regional

Administrating Agency: Oklahoma Department of Public Safety

Participating Agencies & Organizations: Office of the Governor, Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management, Oklahoma Association Of Chiefs of Police, Oklahoma St. Department of Investigation, Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters, Oklahoma Sheriffs Association, Cox Communications, Clear Channel Radio, Local Law Enforcement.

Steps for Activation: Once an abduction has been determined, local law enforcement will notify and provide basic facts to the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS) communications department. DPS will confirm the accuracy of the information and issue an AMBER Alert via the State Emergency Alert System (EAS). DPS will then distribute pictures and all other relevant information soon as they become available for the media via the EAS. Media outlets are requested to broadcast AMBER Alert bulletins every 30 minutes for the first two hours and then once an hour for the next three hours.

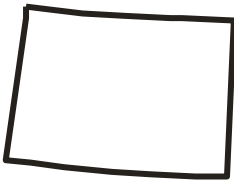
Criteria for Activation: The AMBER Plan requires law enforcement to verify two criteria when evaluating child abduction. Police departments must have information supporting the two criteria before activation can occur. The guidelines are as follows: The AMBER Plan should be activated when a child 15 years of age or younger, or an individual under proven mental or physical disability is abducted and there is reason to believe the victim is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death. There should also be information available to disseminate to the general public which could assist in the safe recovery of the victim and/or the apprehension of a suspect.

Reporting Phone Number: 911.

Role of Department of Transportation: Oklahoma DOT supports Department of Public Safety as needed.

Sources:

1. <http://www.klaaskids.org/amst-oak.htm>
2. Alan Stevenson, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (405-521-6460)



State: Colorado

Scope: Statewide

Administrating Agency: Colorado Bureau of Investigation

Participating Agencies: Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Steps for Activation: Colorado's AMBER Alert program (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response), began as the result of a child abduction in August of 2002. That month, a seven year old California child who disappeared was recovered after officials posted an AMBER alert message and a vehicle description on the states Dynamic Message Signs (DMS). Upon this recovery, Colorado recognized the value of using a similar system to alert the traveling public when officials are looking for a missing child.

The original document was conceived and written as a collaborative effort between the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Written in less than an hour, the agreement was "run up the ladder" and signed into action by the Executive Director of CDOT and head of CBI that day where it eventually reached the office of Colorado Governor Bill Owens for a stamp of approval. Further refinements to the process, addition of the media and standardization of message content has made the implementation seamless.

The current process is handled at the local level when a missing child is reported. Local law enforcement investigates the event to determine if, in fact, the abduction meets the strict criteria for the AMBER Alert system to go into effect. The CBI then informs CDOT that an alert message should be placed on the appropriate DMS boards in the state. If available, the message will contain the age

and sex of the child, and the vehicle the suspected abductor was last seen in. If detailed information is not available, signs will ask drivers to tune to local radio for updated information.

Information is also sent via e-mail and telephone to Denver's main media outlet, 850 KOA-AM and to the CDOT traffic operations center. KOA's responsibility is to disperse the information to media outlets statewide. The AMBER alert is then broadcast on both radio and television according to the policies of each station.

Information Released: The alert information may contain but is not limited to: (1) Victim's name and identification information to include last known location. (2) Suspect's name and identification information. (3) Information involving the suspect's mode of transportation to include last known location. (4) Brief description of events leading to the abduction of the child or children. (5) Information directly related to the safety and health of the child. (6) Information relating to the safety and welfare of the public.

Reporting Phone Number: Varies by situation.

Role of Department of Transportation:

Upon receiving the AMBER Alert information, CDOT initiates its system. Dynamic Message Signs are activated starting with the signs closest to the suspected abduction site and continuing until all message boards controlled by the CDOT's Colorado Traffic Management Center (CTMC) are in use. Simultaneously, contact is made with the City of Colorado Springs, E-470 toll road and Hanging Lakes tunnel and each entity in turn activates the signs they control.

AMBER information is included on CDOT's road and weather information phone lines, Highway Advisory radio network and on the [COTRIP.org](http://www.cotrip.org) website.

Sources:

1. http://cbi.state.co.us/mp/amber/amber_alert.htm
2. Rod Mead, CTMC Operations Manager, CDOT (Rod.Mead@dot.state.co.us)
3. Kristina Koellner (Kristina.Koellner@cdps.state.co.us)
4. <http://www.cotrip.org>



State: Missouri

Scope: Statewide

Administrating Agency: Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Participating Agencies: Dept. of Public Safety, Highway Patrol, Local Law Enforcement, DOT, Dept. of Health and Senior Services, and MO Lottery, MO Police Chief's Assn., MO Sheriff's Assn, MO Broadcaster's Assn.

Steps for Activation: Local law enforcement agency verifies abduction has occurred and that it meets established criteria. Law enforcement fills out the Missouri AMBER Alert Abduction Form (can be found on DPS website) and faxes it to the MO Highway Patrol Troop F (AMBER Alert Division). The

Highway patrol will then contact local law enforcement to verify the alert and confirms the criteria is met. Troop F puts the information into an electronic form, which is then sent out via email or fax to: Local Primary (LP) media stations² and volunteer agencies (phone companies, utility companies, Lottery, DOT, etc) who then distribute throughout their networks. Highway Patrol is the originating point for an Emergency Alert System (EAS) alert, which is sent out to the media. Additionally, the Media is notified twice.

Criteria for Activation: A person under 17 years of age, whose whereabouts are unknown and believed to be the victim of kidnapping as determined by local law enforcement, and there are sufficient details available concerning the abduction.

Information Released: (1) a description of the victim; (2) the time, location, and a description of the abduction; (3) if known, a description of the suspect, including vehicle and direction of travel, and (4) a contact phone number for public response. An alert may include relevant photographs, maps, or other useful attachments; anything that is public record. By reporting the abduction, parents authorize police to release personal information.

Utilizes EAS: Missouri uses many resources, including: radio and TV broadcasts, electronic signs, the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES), and communication capabilities of private entities that interact with the general public.

Reporting Phone Number:

- Originating Lead Enforcement Agency
- Missouri Highway Patrol Troop F (AMBER Alert Division).
(573-751-1000)

Role of Department of Transportation: MoDOT currently supports the Highway Patrol as needed.

Sources:

1. Christina Kuhlman, Mixon/Hill, Inc.
2. <http://www.klaaskids.org/amst-misor.htm>
3. <http://www.dps.mo.gov/home/AmberAlertForm.pdf>
4. <http://www.dps.state.mo.us/home/AmberAlertInstructions.pdf>
5. <http://www.dps.state.mo.us/home/AbductionForm.htm>
6. Jim Bigerstaff, Mo Highway Patrol

² Page: 21

The primary difference between an LP station and other local broadcasters are who they monitor. The LP's primary responsibility is to act as a source of EANs (national level EAS messages) for the local area, so the other electronic media outlets receive required messages. LP's should not be relay devices for State or Local governments, or the National Weather Service (NWS). This is a role for Relay Networks.

Recommendations

This section provides a set of recommendations for the Kansas Department of Transportation in relation to AMBER Alert deployment, procedures, and policy. The recommendations are based on information and suggestions obtained during the District AMBER Workshops, discussions with the KDOT 511 representative, ITS Unit, and KBI representatives.

Rec. No.	Application	Recommendation	Action Item	Priority/Timeline
1	Statewide	The ITS Unit should work with KDOT management to adopt an AMBER Alert Policy statement	Present the draft policy to KDOT management	High/ Fourth Quarter of 2005
2	District	<p>The ITS Unit should work with each district to develop a communications plan for that district detailing action items and communication paths used during an AMBER Alert situation. The ideas that were brought up during the district workshops will provide a basis for development of the communication plans. Several areas to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ An outreach program for the district detailing the KDOT AMBER Alert program and the need for statewide alerts. ◆ Enabling text messaging functions for KDOT cell phone users at the district level so that AMBER Alerts can be broadcast as text messages to district staff. ◆ Adding a portable CMS in front of KDOT district offices during AMBER Alert situations. These signs would broadcast AMBER Alerts to target district personnel and the public traveling near the district office. ◆ Developing pre-programmed AMBER Alert messages for CMS signs to minimize time to deploy messages. ◆ Procedures to notify work zone flaggers of an AMBER Alert to include the detailed description of individuals and vehicles involved. These procedures should address reporting procedures if a flagger should need to report information to authorities 	Develop District AMBER Alert Communication Plans	High/ First Quarter of 2006

Rec. No.	Application	Recommendation	Action Item	Priority/Timeline
3	Statewide	The ITS Unit should remain an active participant of the Kansas AMBER Alert Task Force	KDOT should continue on-going involvement as a task force member.	On-going
4	Statewide	The ITS Unit should communicate with KTA, as a fellow transportation stakeholder, to coordinate resources and traveler information on the statewide AMBER Alert program and task force	KDOT should continue on-going coordination with KTA	On-going
5	Statewide	The ITS Unit should communicate with municipal and county transportation stakeholders to coordinate resources and encourage local municipalities to participate with KBI in the statewide AMBER Alert Program.	KDOT will continue outreach activities.	On-going
6	Statewide	Develop an internal KDOT email alert procedure to disseminate AMBER Alert messages to all KDOT staff via email during normal KDOT business hours.	Develop an email dissemination procedure	High/ First Quarter of 2006
7	Statewide	Install kiosks to display AMBER Alerts. Purchase and install additional kiosks in key locations to provide better coverage. Once the kiosks are installed, develop an interface for AMBER Alert notifications to be displayed automatically on the kiosk screen	Apply for funding to move this project forward	High/ Second Quarter of 2006
8	Statewide	Install CMS throughout the state to specifically assist with the dissemination of AMBER Alert messages. CMSs would be located at key locations, allowing for AMBER Alerts to reach the maximum amount of travelers and provide statewide coverage. A consultant would be hired to perform preliminary design, site selection, final design and construction management	Apply for funding and hire project manager	High/ Throughout 2006 and 2007

Rec. No.	Application	Recommendation	Action Item	Priority/Timeline
9	Statewide	Work with KBI and the AMBER Alert Task Force to automate the sending of messages to the 511 system. Currently KDOT receives an email from the KBI when an AMBER Alert occurs. Upon receipt of the message, the ATIS coordinator manually records the AMBER Alert message on the 511 IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system. There is no after-hours coverage and AMBER Alerts are either not put on 511, or may be delayed in being recorded to 511 if they occur after normal working hours.	Assess equipment needs, costs and deployment plan. To automate putting this message on 511, an Emergency Alert System (EAS) system would need to be purchased and located at the KBI headquarters. An interface would then need to be developed which would allow the audio file created by the KBI to be automatically transferred to KDOT's 511 system during the initial radio and TV broadcast.	On-going
10	District 1	Purchase an EAS system for the KC Scout Traffic Operations Center. Currently, Scout receives both a fax and email notification when an Amber Alert is issued. An EAS system will allow for timely posting of Amber Alert Messages on CMS	Secure funding for purchase of EAS equipment for Scout.	High/ Fourth Quarter of 2005
11	Statewide	Upgrade the interactive traveler information website that provides notification during an active Amber Alert. KDOT has Intranet and Internet websites that employees and travelers can access to find the latest weather, road conditions, and construction updates. A link to the Kansas Attorney General's Amber Alert web site, which displays all pertinent information during an Amber Alert, is on each site. However, the link does not indicate if there is an active Amber Alert. The plan is to upgrade this link so that a notification would appear during an active Amber Alert when the page refreshes. This notification would not be present when there was no active Amber Alert	Secure funding to begin this project	High/ First Quarter of 2006

Appendix A
AMBER Alert Presentation



Amber Alert Deployment Plan

July 2004
District Workshops



District Workshops

- Garden City, July 13
- Norton, July 14
- Salina, July 15
- Topeka, July 19
- Hutchinson, July 20
- Chanute, July 21



Objective

- Receive input from KDOT Districts
 - How Amber Alerts fit into your current and/or revised operations.
 - Traveler information
 - KDOT as the eyes and ears
- We would like to hear from you...

3



Agenda

- National Amber Alert Status
- KDOT's role
 - Traveler information
 - Weather systems/ alerts
- District Input
 - Communications
 - In office/ in field
 - Level of interest
 - Concerns
 - Process
 - District contact

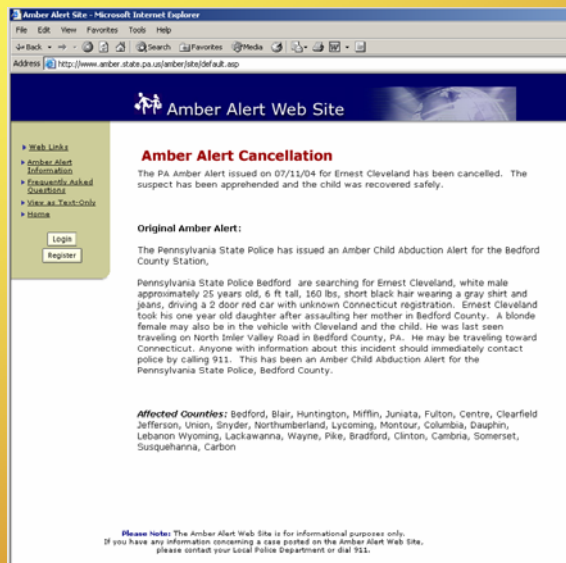
4



June 25, 2004
 Pennsylvania
 3 hours to be spotted and
 apprehended on I-80



July 11th in Pennsylvania





National Status

- America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER)
 - 2,000 children reported missing every day
 - 74% children abducted and murdered by strangers were killed within three hours of being taken
 - Time is of the essence

7



National Status

- Purpose: for law enforcement agencies to collaborate with local broadcasters in serious child abduction investigations for the safe and swift return of missing children.
- Lead agency: usually law enforcement
 - DOT in support role
- 21 states have published policies
 - FHWA guidance on messages for changeable message signs

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www.ksamber.org

Established
in
September
2002 by the
Kansas
Attorney
General's
Office



Participating Agencies



Kansas Attorney General



Kansas Bureau of Investigation



Kansas Highway Patrol



Kansas AMBER Plan - My Child is Missing - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://www.ksamber.org/amber/missing.htm

KANSAS AMBER PLAN

MY CHILD IS MISSING

A Child Abduction Recovery Program

HOME JOIN SITE MAP

- CURRENT ALERTS
- PAST ALERTS
- MY CHILD IS MISSING
- I'VE SEEN A MISSING CHILD
- AMBER PLAN REQUIREMENTS
- OPERATING PROCEDURES
- MEDIA PARTICIPATION
- PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

The goal of the AMBER Plan is the safe recovery of missing children that a law enforcement agency believes has been abducted and is in danger of serious harm or death. Missing adults, runaways, or children taken in child custody disputes usually do NOT qualify for AMBER Plan activation. Contact local law enforcement immediately if your child is missing, for they are the only ones who can activate the AMBER Alert.

Just because your child may not qualify for the AMBER Alert, do not think that help is not available. Contact your local law enforcement agency with the following information:

- Name of the child missing and general information, example height, weight, age, date of birth, eye and hair color, right or left handed, distinguishing marks or scars etc.
- When and where did the abduction take place?
- All available suspect information; name, height, weight, build, eye and hair color, distinguishing marks or scars.
- Any suspect information on the means of travel, or direction of travel. Including vehicle descriptions.
- Photos of the missing child and of the abductor if possible.

Please Note: The KS/amber web site is for informational purposes only. If you have any information concerning a case posted on the KS/amber site, please contact your local law enforcement or dial 1-800-KS-CRIME.



Kansas AMBER Plan - I've Seen a Missing Child - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://www.ksamber.org/amber/seen.htm

KANSAS AMBER PLAN

I'VE SEEN A MISSING CHILD

A Child Abduction Recovery Program

HOME JOIN SITE MAP

- CURRENT ALERTS
- PAST ALERTS
- MY CHILD IS MISSING
- I'VE SEEN A MISSING CHILD
- AMBER PLAN REQUIREMENTS
- OPERATING PROCEDURES
- MEDIA PARTICIPATION
- PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

If you have seen a missing child contact local law enforcement in the jurisdiction you saw them immediately, or call 1-800-KS CRIME.

To the best of your ability provide the law enforcement officials with the following information:

- How do you know the child is missing?
- Who is the missing child?
- When and where did you see the child?
- Was the child with anyone, if so, what did they look like?
- What was the child wearing, and if accompanied what were they wearing?
- What kind of vehicle were they in, and what direction was it traveling

Please Note: The KS/amber web site is for informational purposes only. If you have any information concerning a case posted on the KS/amber site, please contact your local law enforcement or dial 1-800-KS-CRIME.



Amber Alert Requirements

It is very important that the AMBER Plan not be overused, too many notifications take the urgency out of an alert. Therefore strict guidelines have been set-up to ensure the importance of the AMBER Alert remains intact.

ONLY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES MAY ACTIVATE THE AMBER PLAN.

- The child should be 17 years-of-age or younger or have a proven mental or physical disability.
- Law enforcement must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- There is information to disseminate to the general public which could assist the recovery of the victim or apprehension of the suspect.

Does my child qualify for an AMBER Alert?

In order to issue an AMBER Alert there must be enough information to report on the victim or suspect, their descriptions, direction of travel, or other substantial facts that the public can look out for.

- The child must be 17 years or younger, or possess a physical or mental handicap.
- The evidence must show the child is in immediate threat of great bodily harm or death.
- The evidence must also show the victim is likely to be in the broadcast area.
- In order for an AMBER Alert to be issued, information is required in at least one of the following ways:
 - The victims or suspects information or descriptions
 - The direction of travel
 - Or, other substantial facts the public can look out for

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Lead Agency - KBI

- Potential alerts
 - Obtain, verify, approve, issue alert
- Information is transmitted from KBI to the NWS via an existing KHP link.
- Message goes to statewide NWS NOAA Weather Radio Network (same system as severe weather alerts)
- Local Broadcasters and owners of weather radios receive Amber Alerts
- KBI sends KDOT alert and it is disseminated to 511 and website

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City	Radio Stations	Television Stations
Chanute	KKOY - AM 1460 KKOY - FM 105.5 KINZ - FM 95.3	
Garden City	KBUF - AM 1030 KKJQ - FM 97.3 KYBD - FM 98.1 KSKL - FM 94.5 KSKZ - FM 99.9 KSSA - FM 105.9 KIUL - AM 1240 KANZ - FM 91.1	KUPK - 13
Hutchinson	KCVW - FM 94.3 KDGB - FM 93.1 KHCC - FM 90.1 KSKU - FM 97.1 KGGG - FM 94.7 KXKU - FM 106.1 KHUT - FM 102.9 KHMY - FM 93.1	
Norton	KQNK - AM 1530 KQNK - FM 106.7	
Salina	KAKA - FM 88.5 KILS - FM 92.7 KQNS - FM 95.5 KSAL - AM 1150 KYEZ - FM 93.7 KZBZ - FM 104.9 KINA - AM 910 KSKG - FM 99.9	
Topeka	KBUZ - FM 90.3 KCVT - FM 92.5 KTPK - FM 106.9 WIBW - AM 580 WIBW - FM 94.5	KSNT - 27 KTKA - 49 KTMJ - 43 KTMU - 11 WIBW - 13



KDOT's Role Statewide

- Stakeholder Coordination
 - ITS Unit leading
- KDOT resources
 - Weather Procedures
 - Traveler Information and 511
 - Intra and Internet
 - KDOT Message signs
 - District Network
 - Existing communication systems
 - Area Offices
 - Field Personnel



- Traveler Information
 - www.ksamber.org and www.kanroad.org
 - 511
 - Messages on portable message signs
 - Highway Advisory Radio



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HAR Trailers



Portable VMS Trailers



18



District Communications

- Alerts to KDOT field personnel
 - Radio
 - Email
 - Pagers
 - Faxes

**In-vehicle
systems (XM Radio)**



**Cellular &
PCS
phones**



**One and
two-way
pagers**



PDA's



19



Integration Issues

- **Content** →
 - Kansas Bureau of Investigation
- **Technology** →
 - Manual or automated?
- **User Acceptance** →
 -

20



District Level of Interest

21



Concerns

- Concerns
 - Communication with central dispatch...
 - Radios and pagers work, cell coverage is not good
 - Does every area office have a fax machine?
 - Border state issues

22



District Process

23



Contact Information

- Rex Fleming
KDOT ITS Unit
fleming@ksdot.org
(785) 296-6356
- Erin Flanigan
TransCore
erin.flanigan@transcore.com
(816) 333-3324

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Appendix B
AMBER Alert Workshop Minutes

KDOT AMBER Alert Workshops

District 6 – July 13, 2004 – Garden City, KS

Attendees:

Name	Responsibility	Email	Phone
Bob Alva	FHWA	robert.alva@fhwa.dot.gov	785-267-7286
Gary Bennett	Staff Engineer	geraldb@ksdot.org	620-276-3241
David Fischer	Bureau of Cons./Maint. (Radio)	dfischer@ksdot.org	620-276-3241
Ron Hall	District 6 – Maint.	Ron.hall@ksdot.org	620-276-3241
Marc Mayfield	Bureau of Cons./Maint. (Radio)	marcm@ksdot.org	620-276-3241
Mike Pittman	District 6	mpittman@ksdot.org	620-276-3241
Larry Thompson	GC – D6	mpittman@ksdot.org	620-276-3241

TransCore and the ITS Unit (KDOT) presented the PowerPoint presentation on national AMBER Alert Programs and statewide activities in Kansas. The following highlights discussion with district personnel regarding input, questions of how AMBER Alerts might be implemented in the district.

Weather Alerts to Area Offices

- Information is often sent up to district, not down to area offices.
- Some area offices have KHP radios (in limited numbers, mobile radios)
- All area offices have high speed internet and fax machines. Fax machines are not viable to send an urgent message because they are not always manned.

District Sending Out Messages

- A message can be sent out district-wide via KDOT's radio (800 MgHz). One trigger will send a message out through all KDOT towers.
- District Maintenance generally communicates via radio.
- District Construction generally communicates via cell phone.

800 MgHz Radio

Radio has the ability to program a tone alarm. This may be an option for AMBER Alerts.

KHP on District 6

- KHP and District 6 share a link on the Garden City Tower, key into one another's communication.

Border States

- Ron Hall has contacts in Oklahoma and Colorado for incident management. We should contact these two people to find out what their states are doing with AMBER Alerts.

Regionalism

- It was stated that D-6 had great interest in AMBER Alerts but would prefer alerts be regional instead of statewide. Concern over getting too many alerts in areas not even close to District 6. Special attention should be paid to policies of AMBER Alerts in rural areas, the likelihood of influence within the district.

Portable Changeable Message Signs (P-CMS)

- District 6 has six signs of various makes and models. It would take at least one hour to get a sign from the shop and activate a message in the field.
- No ability to program signs remotely (not cellular capable).

P-CMS

- An issue with signs is the number of makes and models and training/programming of each is different. With greater usage programming time would be reduced, but for now, it takes quite a while.

Language Barrier

- District 6 has a large Hispanic population and there may be a need to investigate bi-lingual signage.

Personnel

- It was estimated that at any one time KDOT District 6 has over 200 personnel in the field.
- Cell phones are being used more and more in place of pagers. There are some difficulties with cell phone coverage areas. One option to disseminate messages is to send text message over cell phones. To do this, KDOT would need a statewide policy to allow text messaging on cell phones.

Level of Interest

- Up to this point there has been minimal interest/discussion on AMBER Alerts in District 6. General awareness, heard broadcasts of Colorado AMBER ALERT messages.
- There is an interest in District 6 to have a process on AMBER ALERT, but must be relevant to the District 6 area.
- A radio broadcast of an alert would reach approximately 80 KDOT personnel. (Would want to set up a “group” for easier dissemination.)
- To reach the construction crews the best way would be with text messages – this feature may not be available or cost effective in some cases.
- Radio would involve no additional equipment, voice-up a message and broadcast it out.

KDOT AMBER Alert Workshops

District 3 – July 14, 2004 – Norton, KS

Attendees:

Name	Responsibility	Email	Phone
Gerald Casper	Area III Supt.	gcasper@ksdot.org	785-877-3315
Kelly Gaer	Safety & Health Insp.	kellyg@ksdot.org	785-877-3315
John Kaus	Dist. III Eg. Shop Supt.	jkaus@ksdot.org	785-877-3315
Jerry Moritz	Staff Engineer	jerrym@ksdot.org	785-877-3315
Eric Oelschlegr	Area II Engineer	erico@ksdot.org	785-626-3258
Bob Virgil	1 st -II, Radio Shop	bobv@kdot.org	785-877-3315
Gregg Wicker	District Superintendent	gwicker@kdot.org	785-877-3315
Kevin Zimmer	Area III Engineer	kevinz@ksdot.org	785-625-9718

District 3 has four area offices and seven portable changeable message boards. An estimate is that there are approximately 200 D-3 personnel.

Communications are sent from KBI for AMBER Alerts and personnel go out to activate the CMS.

Time: 30 minutes
Number of Steps: Wes – Contact area –
Improvements: Communication to signs.

Mobile HARs are hot ticket.

Summer: P-CMS are in shop getting cleaned or on construction sites.

Winter: all signs are westbound.

Message boards seem extraneous since there are so many radio stations.

Fixed signs better – permanent signs.

Wes is district maintenance engineer and would get the message and do something with it.

Jerry would like better communication to speed things up (light the fiber).

Would not be surprised if the local Colorado guys call an alert.

Notify KDOT forces by wide area broadcast over 800 Mghz. District 3 would need to look into the ability to send a wide area broadcast and an alarm.

A few construction vehicles have cell phones – four per office (40 people don't have radios).

No pagers are available in this district.

After hours list would need to be the same as snow storm list.

Weak point: communications availability.

Comments by Jerry Moritz

- Nextel walkie-talkie and cell phone combined.
- Ideal 800 MgHz hooked into the fiber.
- Yes interest is there.

KHP central dispatch is more difficult now – employee turn-over.

Sub areas have internet and fax machines.

Jerry would like a process in place and a back-up plan in place. Right now they only have one person that knows how to get messages out to the signs.

Comments by Bob Alva

FHWA gets notified by pager, from someone at KDOT, whenever there is a closure of the interstate over three hours.

KDOT AMBER Alert Workshops

District 2 – July 15, 2004 – Salina, KS

Attendees:

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
David Greiser	KDOT	dgreiser@ksdot.org	785-823-3754 ext. 115

Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) for Salina County.

ACU1000 – radio repeater (\$100k)

Portable – enables communications interoperability.

D-2: 2 P-CMS

Programmed in by phone

Three choice of menu picks

Public Information (PIO) Liaison

M HAR – districts really like (tune 1610 AM)

- Would like \$7K CB (Channel 19 and 9) transmitter over AM. Only 1.5 mile range would reach truckers only.

Today it would take approximately 30 minutes to get a message on mobile HAR.

CMS – training on whom to program. They have six people that can do this.

District 2 – most all comm. To field personnel is over 800 MgHz

AMBER Alert → Area Office → Broadcast

Maintenance personnel all have radios. Construction personnel all have cell phones.

Ron Anderson is District 2 radio person.

Rex:

AMBER Alert messages are lower priority than construction messages.

Dual messages do not work well

Who in District 2 would do the alert

- 1 – PAM
- 2 – Don Drickey
- 3 – Office Admin (Radio)

We should also contact District Maintenance Supervisor:

- trained on Message Boards
- trained on 800 MgHz
- availability 24 hours day/7 days week

KDOT AMBER Alert Workshops

District 1 – July 19, 2004 – Topeka, KS

Attendees

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Terri Comfort	KDOT – Topeka	comfort@ksdot.org	785-2963881
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Karen Gilbertson	KDOT – ITS	kareng@ksdot.org	785-2963387
Clay Adams	KDOT – Dist. 1	clay@ksdot.org	785-296-3881
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Roy Rissky	KDOT – Dist. 1	royr@ksdot.org	785-296-3881
Don Koehler	KDOT – Dist. 1	koehler@ksdot.org	785-456-2353
Kevin Schoozman	KDOT – Dist. 1	kevins@ksdot.org	785-456-2353
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Ken Massingill	KDOT – Dist. 1, Area 1	kennethm@ksdot.org	785-486-2142
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Leo Perry	KDOT – Dist. 1, Area 4	leop@ksdot.org	785-296-2291
Troy Whitworth	KDOT – Dist. 1, Area 6	troy@ksdot.org	913-764-0987
Jerrie Loader	KDOT – Dist. Office	jerrie@ksdot.org	785-296-3881
Oscar Hamilton	KDOT – Bonner Spring	oscar@ksdot.org	913-721-2960

The following is a synopsis or the comments made during the discussion

Comments:

KDOT's Role

- The Kansas Bureau of Investigation has been defined as the clear leader for AMBER Alert in the State of Kansas.
- **KDOT IS IN A SUPPORT ROLE ON AMBER ALERTS** –they are not the lead agency.
- Is it a good idea for KDOT to get involved in AMBER Alerts?
 - Yes, KDOT should be a participant in AMBER Alerts.
 - Field personnel should keep an eye out for vehicles matching the description broadcast in the AMBER Alert during travel to and from the work site.

Communications

- Within the district: Sub-area offices are only manned from 7 AM to 5 PM, therefore sending messages by fax during non-business hours is an unreliable method of communications.

- District KDOT staff can only listen to Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) radio traffic, they have no two-way communications.
- In District 1, KDOT currently provides three different cellular telephone models to their employees for work purposes. None of the cellular telephones supplied by KDOT provide text messaging capabilities. Some of the cellular telephones have the text messaging capability but KDOT does not pay for the service.
- Not all KDOT employees have cellular phones, the best way to communicate with everyone is to fax or email area and sub-area offices and then have these offices broadcast the message to field employees using the 800 MHz radios.
- On the Maintenance side of KDOT, supervisors are given cellular phones.
- On the Construction side of KDOT, most employees have cellular phones.
- In the event a KDOT employee believes they have spotted a vehicle meeting the description broadcast in the alert how should they report the sighting?
 - KDOT employees should report their sighting to a 911 operator in the same manor a motorist would do.

Changeable Message Sign Issues

- Kansas DOT has no permanent CMS available within the district for use in the event of an AMBER Alert, but the district does have portable CMS, typically used for constructions/work zone or incident management.
- Participants were asked how long they estimated it would take to set up a portable message sign in the event of an AMBER Alert. If a portable sign was available, setting it up in a reasonably accessible location should take more than an hour.
- Portable CMS can be remotely programmed with new messages.
- Kansas DOT order of importance for message sign display:
 - Construction
 - Incident Management
 - AMBER Alert
- Kansas DOT will not replace existing construction or incident management messages with AMBER Alerts.
- Message boards are typically used for construction related activities.
- In the event a CMS is available for an AMBER Alert deployment, what would be the criteria for determining which roadway the sign should be placed on?
 - It was suggested the sign be placed in the suspected direction of travel along the most heavily traveled roadway within the region.
- Due to funding restraints, a suggestion was made to consider deploying static flip AMBER Alert message signs. The sign could include flashers to be activated in the event of an alert. The signs would instruct motorist to tune their radios to their local radio station for detailed AMBER Alert information.
 - By the end of the meeting, the group concluded AMBER Alert was too important to use flip static signs.

Field Employee Responsibilities

- Concern was raised for employees working on the roads, noting they have enough to do without watching for every vehicle driving by. The group agreed informing the employees of an AMBER Alert with the available details of the alert would be

an acceptable practice, with the understanding employees working in the field are not to interrupt their work for the AMBER Alert. Employees should keep their eyes open for vehicles fitting the description reported in the AMBER Alert while traveling to and from the work site.

Radio Stations

- During the first AMBER Alert broadcast, some local radio stations did not broadcast information related to the AMBER Alert.
- Kansas Broadcasters Association now actively supporting the broadcasting for AMBER Alerts by its members.

AMBER Alert – Statewide or Regional

- Should AMBER Alert be a regional or statewide in scope?
 - To date, each of the districts have reported they believe AMBER Alert should be regional in scope, not statewide.
 - Common sense should be used, for instance, if an alert is broadcast for the Kansas City area, the alert likely is not realistically necessary in Garden City.
 - Develop criteria for regional verses statewide broadcast for AMBER Alert.

KDOT AMBER Alert Workshops

District 5 – July 20, 2004 – Hutchinson, KS

Attendees

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Bob Cook	KDOT – Dist. 1	robertc@ksdot.org	620-663-3361
Scott Koopmann	KDOT – Hutchinson	scott@ksdot.org	620-663-3361
Allen L. Grunder	KDOT – Wirfield	allen@ksdot.org	620-221-3370
Martin Miller	KDOT – Dist. 5	martinm@ksdot.org	620-663-3361
Karen Gilbertson	KDOT – ITS Unit	kareng@ksdot.org	785-296-3387
Dennis Hermanson	KDOT – Hutchinson	donnish@ksdot.org	620-663-3361
Robert Penrod	KDOT – Wichita Hillside	rpenrod@ksdot.org	316-744-1271
Chester Willson	KDOT – Wichita West	chester@ksdot.org	316-943-4942
Eric Schmidt	KDOT – Wichita East	eschmidt@ksdot.org	316-685-4825
Sammi Ford	KDOT – Wichita	sammif@ksdot.org	316-744-1271
Brent Terstriep	KDOT – Wichita	terstriep@ksdot.org	316-744-1271
Benny Tarverdi	KDOT – Wichita	benny@ksdot.org	316-744-1271

The following is a synopsis or the comments made during the discussion

Comments

- District 4 estimates they have 350 employees working in the field at any given time during their construction season.
- The District has one dedicated portable HAR for use around the District. Primarily this HAR has been used for construction or incident management in the past.
- Suggestion was made to use the portable HAR in the event an AMBER Alert has been broadcast. Portable CMS could be used to direct motorist to tune to either the HAR or the local radio station for detailed information

Communications

- Employees in the Construction Division are typically issued cellular telephones as a means of communications. Currently KDOT has issued three different models of cellular telephone. It was unclear if these phones are capable of sending and receiving text messages but to the best of the participant's knowledge, KDOT has not activated the text-messaging feature of the phone.
- Employees and work crews of the Maintenance Division typically are issued 800 MHz radios as their means of communication with their sub-area office.
- Most area and sub-area offices are equipped with both fax and email capabilities. Unfortunately, not all of these offices are staffed throughout the day. As a result, AMBER Alerts emailed or faxed to these locations may not be distributed in a timely manner.
- What is the current method or procedure for communicating with adjacent state DOT officials?

- Currently they simply look up the phone number and make a telephone call.
- Given the communication limitation in the district, what would be the most efficient means of reaching the greatest number of employees?
 - Contact Area Supervisors who in turn contact Sub-Area supervisors,
 - Supervisors could call, radio and if necessary drive to a remote location to notify KDOT employees of the AMBER Alert.
 - Participants expect complete distribution of the alert notice typically in no more than 30 minutes from the initial receipt of the AMBER Alert.
- The district seems very supportive of assisting in AMBER Alerts (as long as the alert program is not over used or abused).
- Participants understand the urgency of reporting a potential sighting of the wanted vehicle to their 911 operators.

Changeable Message Sign Issues

- In the event of a local child abduction, the use of CMS will depend on:
 - Availability of a local CMS
 - Estimated time it will take to drive to the sign, relocate it to an appropriate location if necessary, and enter the message.
 - Participants estimated it would take at a minimum 1-hour during regular working hours, and up to 2 hours for alerts broadcast during not working hours.
- Participants echoed the same priorities for CMS usage as District 1:
 - Construction
 - Incident Management
 - AMBER Alert
- Typically there are more CMS available during the winter or non-construction months that could be used for an AMBER Alert.
- Participants suggested unless specific information is available suggesting the wanted vehicle is likely to avoid major highways or interstates, CMS displaying AMBER Alert messages should be placed on the roadway with the greatest traffic volume in order to reach the greatest number of motorists.
- Suggest a policy be established or criteria be developed to outline where a CMS should be deployed in the event of an AMBER Alert. Perhaps use statistics such as population and traffic volume to aid in the decision

Radio Stations

- Local media has been very supportive of KDOT in broadcasting congestion and incident management information when necessary.

AMBER Alert – Statewide or Regional

- Will the Alerts be statewide?
 - Initially the alerts will be broadcast on a statewide level. A possibility exist alerts could be broadcast on a regional level as the alert system matures.

KDOT AMBER Alert Workshops

District 4 – July 21, 2004 – Chanute, KS

Attendees

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Mike Bright	KDOT – Chanute	bright@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Joe Shipley	KDOT – Chanute	jshipley@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Larry Umbarser	KDOT – Chanute	larryu@ksdot.org	620-839-5314
Mike Naff	KDOT – Chanute	mnaff@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Bill Ellis	KDOT – Chanute	williame@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
John Hrenax	KDOT – Chanute	johnh@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Wayne Gudmonson	KDOT – Independence	wayne@ksdot.org	620-331-3760
Douglas Vogel	KDOT – Chanute	dvogel@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Dennis Kuykendall	KDOT – Iola	dennisk@ksdot.org	620-365-2161
Michael Jacobs	KDOT – Iola	jacobs@ksdot.org	620-365-2161
Debbie Bailey	KDOT – Chanute	debra@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Alice Myers	KDOT – Chanute	alice@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Cindy Tichenor	KDOT – Chanute	cindy@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Charlotte Rommel	KDOT – Chanute	Rommel@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
Karen Gilbertson	KDOT – ITS Unit	kareng@ksdot.org	785-296-3387
Gary Plumb	KDOT – Chanute	garyp@ksdot.org	620-431-1000
George Docker	KDOT – Pittsburg	georged@ksdot.org	620-231-7560

The following is a synopsis or the comments made during the discussion

Comments

- District 4 estimates they have 200 to 250 employees working in the field at any given time during their construction season.
- Staff noted, when an AMBER Alert is canceled, an organized procedure should be in place to notify the public, and government workers the alert has been canceled. As part of this notification, status of the child should be given as well.
- Staff asked if the Federal Government would be providing funding for AMBER Alert support efforts?
 - KDOT is currently in the process of preparing an application for a \$400,000 Federal Grant for additional CMS resources. These resources could be used to assist in future AMBER Alerts.
- Staff suggested an automatic email alert be added to the AMBER Alert website, similar to the one used to notify the public of weather alerts.

Communications

- In the Maintenance Department, typically from Superintendent up, either radios or cellular telephones are issued.
- In the Construction Department, some area and sub-area supervisors are issued cellular telephones.

- In District 4, KDOT has issued only one model of cellular telephone. While these phones are capable of receiving and sending text messages, KDOT has not activated this service.
- Area and sub-area offices are all equipped with both fax and dial-up Internet access.
- District 4 has the capabilities to issue a district wide broadcast using their 800 MHz radio system.
- Staff reports there are both cellular telephone and 800 MHz radio dead zones around the district.
- Typical radios used by flagmen have a “talk around” feature limiting their communication range to approximately 10-miles. The participants were reminded these radios typically have the ability to scan and receive messages from almost anywhere in the district.

Changeable Message Sign Issues

- District 4 has approximately 8 portable CMSs located within the District.
- Typically Department owned CMS are not used for KDOT construction projects unless provided by contractor.
- CMS are used in the event of an emergency anticipated to last longer than 2 hours
- Current procedure for requesting and deploying a CMS in District 4.
 - An area or sub-area supervisor makes a request, to the District Head Office for the use of a portable CMS.
 - Requesting party must arrange for the pickup of the portable CMS.
 - Before leaving, the KDOT employee is trained on proper setup and operation of the portable CMS.
 - Portable CMS is transported to the location setup of operation.
- Typically this process takes approximately 1 day. Staff feels mobilizing and making operational a CMS within the critical 3 hour AMBER Alert window would be very difficult under most circumstances.
- Typically CMS deployed in District 4 are not left on site overnight. Vandalism is the primary reason for this practice.
- District 4 CMS messages cannot be remotely activated or edited.
- Staff asked what AMBER Alert message would be displayed on a portable CMS?
 - Per KDOT policy, the AMBER Alert message would be, “AMBER Alert, please tune to local radio”.
- Staff suggested a flip type AMBER Alert sign similar to the existing “Adopt a Highway” signs could be used to notify motorist of an AMBER Alert. They also suggested static flip signs would be less expensive.
- It was suggested CMS was not necessary, as most motorist already drive with their radios on and would be able to hear the AMBER Alert if it were broadcast by the local radio stations.
 - Participants generally disagreed with this assumption, concluding the use of CMS would be the most efficient means of notifying motorist to tune to local radio broadcast in the event of an AMBER Alert.

- Staff suggested consideration should be given to providing messages on CMS and HAR in both English and Spanish.
- It was suggested during AMBER Alerts, KDOT use their electronic message signs located outside most area offices to post the standard AMBER message.
- Since most work zones in the District use pilot cars, motorists are often stopped for longer periods of time, allowing them the ability to read longer messages on a CMS. It was suggested in these situations; AMBER Alert messages could be incorporated along with construction or incident management messages.

Radio Stations

- Participants asked if certain radio stations have been identified as being more likely to broadcast an AMBER Alert?
 - At this point, all radio stations should be notified of an existing AMBER Alert and are asked to pass the information on to the public, repeating the announcement every 15 minutes. Some stations comply, not all do, but at this point the broadcasting of AMBER Alerts on public radio stations is voluntary, not mandatory.
- District 4 has one HAR. This is a fixed system, not mobile, and is currently not operational.
- The District would like a mobile HAR but at this point when one is required for a construction project, the contractor typically provides the HAR.

Field Employee Responsibilities

- Staff suggested in the event of an AMBER Alert, flaggers would be best positioned to observe vehicles and the occupants.
- KDOT staff in transit would also be a valuable resource to watch for the vehicles matching the AMBER Alert description.
- KDOT staff suggested contractor staff should also be instructed to watch for vehicles matching the AMBER Alert description. Some staff members suggested contract language could be added making it the contractor's responsibility to watch for vehicles matching the AMBER Alert description for a minimum of 3-hours.
- Staff agreed they are willing to assist in any means possible during an AMBER Alert as long as alerts are not a common occurrence.

AMBER Alert – Statewide or Regional

- Participants commented on the need for issuing a statewide AMBER Alerts when abductions occur many hours away.
 - Current AMBER Alert policy requires a statewide notification. Possibilities exist for a more regional notification procedure in the future.
- What are the current communication procedures or practices with border states?
 - Currently, District 4 has no set procedures or practices for communication with border states.
- KDOT District can evaluate when an AMBER Alert is relevant to their district. An AMBER Alert remains active until KBI decides to change the status of the alert. Only KBI has this authority.