

# **Montana AMBER Alert Supplement for MDT Participation**

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## **FORWARD**

The Montana AMBER Alert program was started in July 2002 when a special session of the Montana Legislature directed the Montana Department of Justice to create an AMBER program such as the one started in the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas area in 1996 in memory of Amber Hagerman. The Montana AMBER Alert document was completed February 18, 2003 by the Division of Criminal Investigation, Montana Broadcasters Association, and local law enforcement agencies.

This document shall describe the Montana Department of Transportation's (MDT) policies and procedures as they relate to a Montana AMBER Alert and shall serve as an addendum to the current Montana AMBER Alert Policies and procedures as written by the Division of Criminal Investigation. A Memorandum of Understanding between MDT and DOJ was signed on January 11, 2005.

## PARTICIPATING MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

**Montana Department of Transportation:** Participating membership by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) will be coordinated through the MDT Maintenance Division's Traveler Information Coordinator.

MDT tools to help disseminate traveler information include seven permanent dynamic message signs (DMS) (four in Bozeman and three in Missoula), sixteen portable dynamic message signs spread across the state, the statewide 511 travel information number, twelve highway advisory radio (HAR) announcements (two in Bozeman, two in Livingston, one in Butte, one in Whitehall, two in St. Regis, four in Great Falls) that can be heard on 530 AM, and AMBER Alert information on <http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/> and <http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/travinfo/>. Participating agencies agree to the following:

- Step 1. AMBER Alert is initiated through a text message, email message, and fax to the Traveler Information Coordinator from the Montana AMBER Alert web portal. No other authority can implement an AMBER Alert. The web portal also automatically updates the AMBER Alert logo to flashing identifying that an AMBER Alert is in effect on the MDT home page and MDT Traveler Information webpage.
- Step 2. The Traveler Information Coordinator shall activate the alert message on 511 as shown below.

### 511 Alert Message

This is an activation of the Montana Statewide AMBER Alert Plan in response to the abduction of a child. *[Read the 'recommended voice message' from the AMBER Alert web portal notification]*

- Step 3. The Traveler Information Coordinator shall call each Maintenance Chief (or their designee if they are out of the office who is usually the District Office Supervisor) to alert them of the AMBER alert and their need for participation. The Maintenance Chief and District Office Supervisors shall also select to receive the alert message from the AMBER web portal via email so they have the AMBER Alert description information; however, they shall not act on the alert until contacted by the Traveler Information Coordinator. The Maintenance Chiefs (or their designee) will then be responsible for either completing the following steps of notifying one of their staff members and provide them with the AMBER Alert information so they can complete the process. This is to ensure that there is one point on contact for activations (especially after hours) and that 511 has been activated first. Although the alert coverage shall be statewide, the Traveler Information Coordinator will contact the divisions starting with the last known location of the child. The current contact information is as follows:

<b>Division</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Work Phone Number</b>	<b>Cell Phone Number</b>	<b>Home Phone Number</b>
<b>Billings</b>	Jim Stevenson	Maintenance Chief			
	Kelly Handley	District Office Supervisor			
<b>Lewistown</b>	Doug Lutke	Maintenance Chief			
<b>Butte</b>	Kevin Brewer	Maintenance Chief			
	Pat Kenney	District Office Supervisor			
<b>Bozeman</b>	Ross Gammon	Maintenance Chief			
<b>Great Falls</b>	Dave Kelly	Maintenance Chief			
	Kent Schaefer	District Office Supervisor			
<b>Havre</b>	Dave Hand	Maintenance Chief			
<b>Glendive</b>	Tammy Erickson	District Office Supervisor			
<b>Miles City</b>	Jack Peaslee	Maintenance Chief			
<b>Wolf Point</b>	Bill Juve	Maintenance Chief			
<b>Missoula</b>	Doug Moeller	Maintenance Chief			
	Vicki Beaulieu	District Office Supervisor			
<b>Kalispell</b>	Stephen Herzog	Maintenance Chief			

Step 4. The Maintenance Chief (or their designee) shall then activate all available dynamic message signs in the region of the AMBER Alert. An available DMS is defined as one that is currently on the roadside<sup>1</sup> and one that does not have a higher priority message on it currently (i.e. a transportation safety message such as chain requirements, detours, and road closures)<sup>2</sup>.

Transportation safety messages are highest priorities and shall not be overridden by an AMBER alert message; however, it should be noted that these messages are limited to the immediate vicinity of the incident and therefore not all Montana DMS will necessarily be used at the same time for transportation safety messages and an AMBER Alert message can be posted after the incident message is no longer needed.

If a DMS is needed for a transportation safety message while an AMBER Alert message is being displayed, then the AMBER Alert message should be terminated, until the DMS is no longer needed for the incident message. Also, if the sign is causing adverse traffic impacts, such as congestion or a decrease in

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<sup>1</sup> Note that only portable DMS on the roadside facing the roadway will be used for an AMBER Alert. MDT will not put portable DMS on the roadside specifically for an AMBER Alert as this process may take hours.

<sup>2</sup> The message priorities are dictated by national guidance from FHWA. See FHWA technical memorandum from Jeffrey Paniati August 16, 2002 with subject: Information : AMBER Alert Use of Changeable Message Signs (CMS)

speed, the AMBER Alert message should be discontinued. The message to be displayed on the DMS is:

Phase 1	Phase 2
ABDUCTED	FOR INFO
CHILD	CALL 511

- Step 5. The Maintenance Chief (or their designee) shall then announce the AMBER Alert over the MDT radio system so that maintenance, construction, and motor carrier service crews on the roads will be aware of the alert and can watch for the vehicle involved. Field personnel spotting the vehicle shall immediately relay this information to the designee who will call the AMBER Alert hotline (877-AMBERMT [262-3768] or 911) and report the information and also alert the Traveler Information Coordinator. This message shall be announced 3 times in a 24 hour period (the initial announcement and two more at eight hour intervals to accommodate for shift changes).

#### **MDT Radio Alert Message**

This is the MDT employee notification of an activation of the Montana Statewide AMBER Alert Plan in response to the abduction of a child. Please inform all employees in the field, especially construction crew flaggers. *[Read the ‘recommended voice message’ from the AMBER Alert web portal notification]*

- Step 6. The Maintenance Chief (or their designee) shall then email the Traveler Information Coordinator to identify which DMS are and are not displaying the AMBER message.
- Step 7. The Traveler Information Coordinator shall then record the AMBER Alert message on the Highway Advisory Radios. If other traffic advisories or important transportation safety messages are being broadcast, these should continue and the AMBER Alert should be added to the broadcast. HAR messages will be broadcast with the flashing beacons on.

#### **HAR Alert Message**

Welcome to the Montana Department of Transportation Radio Information Channel broadcasting at 530 Kilohertz. This is an activation of the Montana Statewide AMBER Alert Plan in response to the abduction of a child. *[Read the ‘recommended voice message’ from the AMBER Alert web portal notification]*

- Step 8. The Traveler Information Coordinator shall then notify North Dakota and South Dakota DOTs to request that they activate Montana's AMBER Alert on their 511 systems.

<b>DOT</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
North Dakota	Ed Ryen	
South Dakota	Jon Becker	
Wyoming		
Idaho		

- Step 9. The Traveler Information Coordinator shall notify the MDT Public Information Officer (PIO) of the AMBER Alert notification at 444-7205 (work) or 431-6885 (cell).
- Step 10. The DMS, 511, and HAR shall remain active for the entire time that the alert is active.
- Step 11. When the alert has been terminated, the Traveler Information Coordinator will again notify the Maintenance Chief (or their designee by phone). The information will then be taken off the DMS and a deactivation alert will be announced over the staff radio system.
- Step 12. The Maintenance Chief (or their designee) will then email the Traveler Information Coordinator to identify that the alert has been taken off the DMS.
- Step 13. Notify ND and SD of AMBER Alert deactivation.
- Step 14. When the Traveler Information Coordinator receives the last email notification, the alert will be discontinued on the HAR and then on 511.
- Step 15. Notify MDT PIO of deactivation.
- Step 16. MDT shall participate in structured tests of the Montana Amber Alert Broadcast System (no more than twice per year) to ensure the system is operating as approved by the Montana Amber Alert Coordinating Committee. Although MDT will participate, they will not activate the DMS, HAR, or 511 they will assume that if the proper contacts were notified, the test was successful and messages would have been displayed.
- Step 17. MDT shall participate in DOJ debriefings that occur at close of an AMBER Alert.

**APPENDIX A: AMBER ALERT CHECKLIST FOR TRAVELER INFORMATION COORDINATOR**

- 1. Receive AMBER Alert notification from web portal \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Activate AMBER Alert message on 511 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Call each Maintenance Chief to notify of activation \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Receive notifications from Maintenance Chiefs on devices activated \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Activate HAR \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Notify ND and SD of request for 511 activation in their states \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Notify the MDT PIO \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Receive notification of AMBER Alert deactivation from the web portal \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Call each Maintenance Chief to notify of deactivation \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Receive emails from each Maintenance Chief of device deactivation \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Notify ND and SD of deactivation \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Deactivate alert on HAR and Montana 511 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Notify PIO of deactivation \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Participate in DOJ debriefing \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX B: AMBER ALERT DIVISION CONTACT INFORMATION  
FOR TRAVELER INFORMATION COORDINATOR**

	Date	Time	Reason
<b>AMBER Alert Activation</b>			NA
<b>AMBER Alert Deactivation</b>			

Division	Time Contacted (activation)	Device Locations Activated/Not Activated	Why Device not Activated	Time Contacted (deactivation)	Time Contacted (device deactivation)
<b>Billings</b>					
<b>Lewistown</b>					
<b>Butte</b>					
<b>Bozeman</b>					
<b>Great Falls</b>					
<b>Havre</b>					
<b>Glendive</b>					
<b>Miles City</b>					
<b>Wolf Point</b>					
<b>Missoula</b>					
<b>Kalispell</b>					

Device	Location	Activated (yes/no)	Time Activated	Time Deactivated
<b>511</b>	<b>Montana</b>			
<b>511</b>	<b>North Dakota</b>			
<b>511</b>	<b>South Dakota</b>			

**APPENDIX C: AMBER ALERT CHECKLIST FOR DIVISIONS**

- 1. Receive AMBER Alert activation notification from web portal \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Receive AMBER Alert activation notification from Traveler Information Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Activate available DMS \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Notify field crews of AMBER Alert via staff radio \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Email Traveler Information Coordinator devices that are and are not activated \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Receive AMBER Alert deactivation notification from web portal \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Receive AMBER Alert deactivation notification from Traveler Information Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Deactivate DMS \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Announce deactivation over staff radio \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Email Traveler Information Coordinator after devices have been deactivated \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D: AMBER ALERT DIVISIONS/DISTRICTS DEVICE LOCATIONS**

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Device</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activated (yes/no)</b>	<b>Time Activated</b>	<b>Time Deactivated</b>	<b>Why Device not Activated</b>

## **APPENDIX E: 511 ALERT SYSTEM DIRECTIONS**

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## **APPENDIX F: LOOKOUT PASS HAR DIRECTIONS**

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## **APPENDIX G: BUTTE HAR DIRECTIONS**

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## **APPENDIX H: BOZEMAN HAR DIRECTIONS**

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