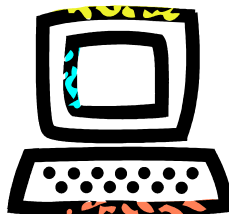


STATE OF WISCONSIN  
AMBER ALERT PROGRAM  
BROADCASTER/CABLE OPERATOR  
GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

SEPTEMBER, 2017



Wisconsin Amber Alert Website:  
[www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org](http://www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org)

## PREFACE

### ATTENTION BROADCASTERS:

In order to participate in Wisconsin's Amber Alert System, you must program your EAS Unit. See Section IV. for details.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wisconsin Amber Alert Committee wishes to thank the following organizations:

Wisconsin Educational Communications Board for the donation of time and materials in planning and implementing the distribution of Amber Alerts in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Public Radio for relinquishing airtime for the broadcast distribution of Amber Alerts in Wisconsin.

#### Participation Disclaimer

Notwithstanding any good-faith intentions to originate, distribute, or broadcast Wisconsin Amber Alerts, due to the voluntary nature of the Wisconsin Amber Alert System, no owner, management or individual personnel at any Wisconsin broadcast station, cable system, state broadcast network, or government agency may be held liable by any person or entity for the failure to transmit any particular Amber Alert, whether that failure is intentional or unintentional, and regardless of the effect that failure has on any person or entity.

Broadcast stations and cable systems which agree to re-transmit Amber Alerts, are merely demonstrating their intentions to perform such actions, not guaranteeing their performance.

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I. Intent and Purpose of this Guidance Document

This Guidance Document puts into writing all pertinent details of the Wisconsin Amber Alert System required by broadcasters and cable operators to facilitate their participation in the Wisconsin Amber Alert program.

Further information regarding the Wisconsin Amber Alert program can be found on the Internet, at the website shown on the cover of this Guidance Document.

II. Definition of Terms used in this Guidance Document

Term	Definition	Explanation
CAE	Child Abduction Emergency	The EAS Code used for Amber Alerts in Wisconsin.
DOJ	Wisconsin Department of Justice	State agency that administrates the law enforcement component of the Wisconsin Amber Alert Program.
EAS	Emergency Alert System	The FCC-mandated emergency alert system used by broadcasters and cable systems.
ECB	Wisconsin Educational Communications Board	State agency that maintains the network and technical facilities which distribute Wisconsin Amber Alerts.
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency	Any police or sheriff dept. in Wisconsin.
TFT	A TFT, Inc. brand EAS Unit	This unit requires special EAS Code programming. See Section IV.
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure	Used by LEA's in issuing Amber Alerts.
WBA	Wisconsin Broadcasters Association	Trade Association with membership of most Wisconsin radio and TV stations.
WisDOT	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Displays Amber Alert information on highway Variable Message Signs.
WPR	Wisconsin Public Radio	State agency that programs the stations which are the primary Amber Alert distribution method.

III. Overview of the Wisconsin Amber Alert System

A.) Criteria: See website: [www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org](http://www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org)

B.) Activation Procedures: See website: [www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org](http://www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org)

III. Overview of the Wisconsin Amber Alert System (continued)

C.) Broadcast Distribution: Broadcasters will receive Amber Alerts from the WPR EAS State Relay (SR) station that is already monitored for EAS, so no additional monitoring will be needed. Stations can set their EAS Decoders to Automatic Mode, which would then enable the re-broadcast of any received Amber Alert without any human intervention. This allows the growing number of “unattended” broadcast stations to participate in Wisconsin Amber Alerts, as well as Cable TV systems, which are generally running unstaffed at all times. Staffed stations that wish to preview alerts before forwarding them can set their EAS Decoders to Manual Mode. There will be a total of eight EAS alerts for each Amber Alert activation, unless the alert is cancelled early. See Section IV. of this document for details.

D.) FAX, E-mail, and Cellphone Text Distribution: Following the initial EAS Amber Alert, details of the alert will be faxed, e-mailed and sent via cellphone text message to the media. Organizations wishing to receive these faxes, emails, and texts should register at this DOJ website: [www.wisconsincrimealert.gov](http://www.wisconsincrimealert.gov)

E.) Distribution via Amber Alert Website: As soon as possible after the initial EAS Amber Alert, the text of the Amber Alert will be posted on the Wisconsin Amber Alert website, [www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org](http://www.AmberAlertWisconsin.org). In addition, pictures of the child, suspect(s), and/or suspect vehicle(s) will be posted, if available. Updates, as well as the cancellation of the Amber Alert, will also be posted here.

F.) Distribution via Highway Signs: WisDOT will display Amber Alert information on electronic permanently-installed, overhead Wisconsin Highway Variable Message Signs.

G.) Post-Activation Review Committee: All Amber Alert activations will be reviewed by the Wisconsin Amber Alert Review Committee for appropriateness, smooth operation of the Amber Alert System, and any other criteria the Committee deems necessary.

The Wisconsin Amber Alert Review Committee is made up of members from the following organizations:

- Wisconsin Department of Justice                      Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Broadcasters Association              Wisconsin Educational Communications Board
- Wisconsin Public Radio                                      Dane County Public Safety Communications Center
- Wisconsin State Emergency Communications Committee (EAS Committee)

H.) Wisconsin Amber Alert System Participants:

Law Enforcement Agencies: After receiving training from DOJ, all Wisconsin LEA’s are encouraged to make use of the Wisconsin Amber Alert System.

Broadcasters and Cable Systems: All Wisconsin broadcasters and cable operators are encouraged to participate in the Wisconsin Amber Alert System.

National Weather Service: At the time this document was updated, NWS and its Weather Radio service, were not yet ready to participate in Amber Alerts. This topic will be revisited as conditions change at NWS.

#### IV. Guidance for Broadcasters and Cable Operators

##### Amber is Voluntary:

Participating in the Amber Alert System is voluntary, as is participation in all other Local and State EAS alerts. Every Wisconsin broadcaster and cable operator is encouraged to participate in the Amber Alert System. All Amber Alerts are sent as full EAS messages, thus allowing unattended broadcast and cable operations to forward the alerts with no human intervention required.

##### A Reliable System:

The Wisconsin Amber Alert Committee, with full sensitivity to the impact of broadcast emergency messages, is making every effort to ensure that the Amber Alert System in Wisconsin does not get over-used or misused for improper activations.

- All state Law Enforcement Agencies will receive the Law Enforcement Amber Alert Training Video and SOP from Wisconsin DOJ on requesting an Amber Alert activation.
- There is one central point of contact in Madison that will issue all Amber Alerts for Wisconsin. They will ensure that any alert issued meets the strict criteria adopted by the state Amber Alert Committee.
- All Amber Alert activations will be reviewed for appropriateness and smooth operation of the system by a broadcaster/law enforcement Amber Alert Review Committee.

With these precautions, the Wisconsin Amber Alert Committee feels our system will be sound.

##### Preparing to participate in Amber:

- 1.) Your EAS Unit must be upgraded to include the EAS Event Code “CAE”, Child Abduction Emergency.
- 2.) You will receive Amber Alerts from the EAS State Relay (SR) station that you are already monitoring for EAS, so no additional monitoring will be needed. See map in Appendix A for reference to these relay stations. You will notice on this map that the nine “Amber Alert Areas” match exactly the nine existing EAS Local Areas.
- 3.) You must program your EAS Unit to re-broadcast Amber Alerts, as follows:
  - a.) Originator Code: CIV, Civil Authorities
  - b.) Event Code: CAE, Child Abduction Emergency
  - c.) Location Code: 055000, Entire State of Wisconsin [EXCEPT TFT USERS, *SEE NOTE BELOW*] Although Wisconsin Amber Alerts will be issued using a State Code Sub-Division, most EAS Units recognize that this sub-division is a part of the entire state, and will thus react to all sub-division codes when programmed for the entire state. [*TFT USERS: You MUST program in the specific Sub-Division Code for your Amber/EAS Local Area. See map in Appendix A of this document for those codes.*] All users note that the SR stations will only broadcast Amber Alerts for the Amber/EAS Local Area in which they are located. Thus, you will not receive alerts from out of your area, because those alerts will be filtered out by the SR station.
  - d.) Mode: Use Automatic Mode if you are unattended, or want immediate forwarding. Use Manual Mode if you want to preview alerts before forwarding them.
- 4.) Join fax/email/text list. Register at this DOJ website: [www.wisconsincrimealert.gov](http://www.wisconsincrimealert.gov)
- 5.) Contact WBA if you haven't gotten Amber Alert informational material for your staff.

(Broadcaster/Cable Guidance... continued on next page)

IV. Guidance for Broadcasters and Cable Operators (continued)

A.) EAS Code Protocol

For all Amber Alerts issued in Wisconsin, the following protocol will be followed:

Originator Code: Civil Authority (CIV)

Event Code: Child Abduction Emergency (CAE)

Location Codes: Wisconsin will use State Code Sub-Divisions in issuing Amber Alerts.

The counties located in each Sub-Division are shown on the map in Appendix A.

EAS Duration for the initial broadcast, and the first 3 re-broadcasts: 30 Minutes

EAS Duration for the next 4 re-broadcasts: 60 Minutes

(See next two paragraphs for details of the re-broadcast schedule.)

B.) EAS Amber Alert Procedures

Wisconsin Amber EAS Alerts will be sent every 30 minutes for the first two hours, then once an hour for the next three hours (see example below). All eight of these alerts will be full EAS Alerts, in order to enable automated stations and Cable TV to participate. After the initial Amber Alert, staffed stations that prefer to read the subsequent alerts live may abort received Amber Alert re-broadcasts. However, stations selecting this option should check the Amber Alert website after each re-broadcast to be certain new details have not been added to the alert, prior to resuming their own live Amber Alerts. An EAS alert will not be used to announce the cancellation of the Amber Alert. Instead, it will be announced via the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network email/fax/cell-text system, and the Amber Alert website.

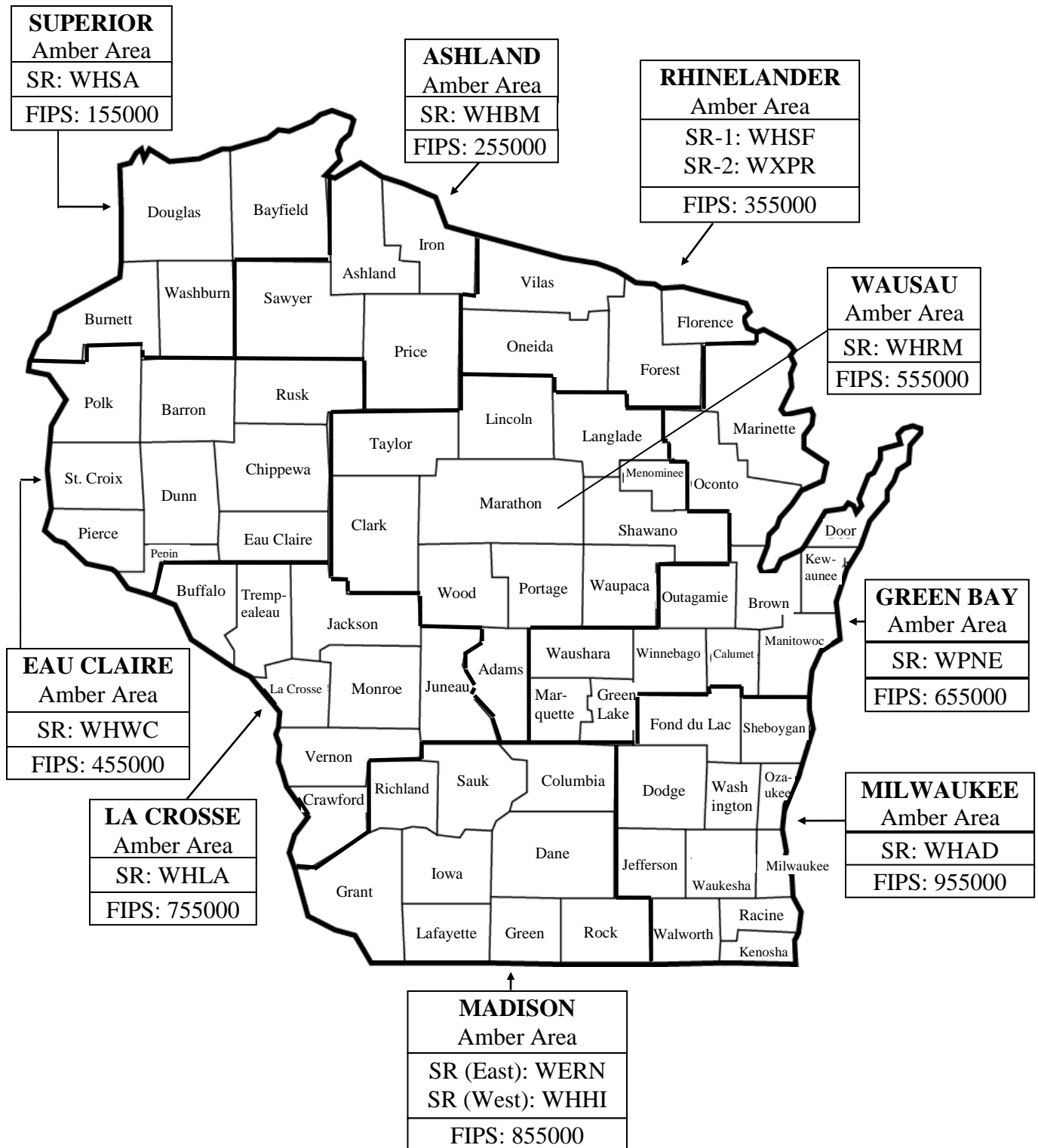
C.) Example of EAS Amber Alert Activation Re-Broadcast Timetable

Sequence of Alerts	Sample Time	Valid period of EAS Alert issued	Description of the alert in Amber Alert Procedure
1 <sup>st</sup> Alert	1:00 PM	30 minute EAS Alert Duration	Initial alert
2 <sup>nd</sup> Alert	1:30 PM	30 minute EAS Alert Duration	1 <sup>st</sup> 2-hour follow-up
3 <sup>rd</sup> Alert	2:00 PM	30 minute EAS Alert Duration	2 <sup>nd</sup> 2-hour follow-up
4 <sup>th</sup> Alert	2:30 PM	30 minute EAS Alert Duration	3 <sup>rd</sup> 2-hour follow-up
5 <sup>th</sup> Alert	3:00 PM	60 minute EAS Alert Duration	Last 2-hour follow-up
6 <sup>th</sup> Alert	4:00 PM	60 minute EAS Alert Duration	1 <sup>st</sup> next-3-hour follow-up
7 <sup>th</sup> Alert	5:00 PM	60 minute EAS Alert Duration	2 <sup>nd</sup> next-3-hour follow-up
8 <sup>th</sup> Alert	6:00 PM	60 minute EAS Alert Duration	3 <sup>rd</sup> next-3-hour follow-up

D.) Staying up-to-date:

A current copy of this Wisconsin Amber Alert Guidance Document will be maintained on the Wisconsin EAS Plan website, [www.sbe24.org/eas/](http://www.sbe24.org/eas/) Further, any routine updates regarding the operation of the Wisconsin Amber Alert program will be distributed through the Amber Alert E-Mail List that is used in issuing Amber Alerts. To sign up for this list, register at this DOJ website: [www.wisconsincrimealert.gov](http://www.wisconsincrimealert.gov)

APPENDIX A: MAP OF WISCONSIN AMBER ALERT EAS AREAS



**LEGEND**

- = Amber Alert Broadcast Area Boundaries
- SR = State Relay station that will originate Amber Alerts for this area.
- FIPS = EAS State Sub-Division Location Code to be entered into some EAS Units