

AMBER ALERT

1. GENERAL

- A. The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and guidance on the activation, organization and execution of the HRP Amber Alert Plan
- B. This policy outlines the prerequisites for activating an Amber Alert, notifying the public, the process required when an alert is active, and the steps required for its cancellation.
- C. This policy applies to all sworn and civilian members of HRP.

2. POLICY

- A. To activate an Amber Alert, the following criteria shall be met:
 - i. HRP must reasonably believe that a child or vulnerable person has been abducted.
 - ii. HRP must reasonably believe that the child or vulnerable person is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
 - iii. HRP must reasonably believe that an immediate broadcast intrusive alert through ALERT READY will assist in the safe recovery of the child or vulnerable person; and,
 - iv. There is sufficient descriptive information about one or more of the following:
 - 1. The child or vulnerable person;
 - 2. The abductor(s); and/or
 - 3. Any vehicle(s) involved.
- B. An Amber Alert shall not be initiated if:
 - i. A child or vulnerable person is missing, and foul play is not suspected;
 - ii. A child has run away from a residence, and/or
 - iii. It is a suspected parental abduction, and the child is not believed to be in danger.
- C. Approval to activate an Amber Alert is required from the Chief or Deputy Chief Operations or their designated representative. In the event that the Chief, Deputy Chief or their designated representative is not available, the Duty Officer may activate an Amber Alert.
- D. Upon the approval and activation of an Amber Alert, the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) shall assume the primary lead on the investigation.
- E. The lead CID investigator shall determine the best location from which to initiate their investigation. The IES Training Room at 21 Mt Hope Avenue is configured with a telephone Hunt Group to accept incoming Amber Alert Tips from the public.
- F. HRP shall establish an investigation team in accordance with major case management protocol to manage the Amber Alert and subsequent investigation. The investigation team shall be comprised of a Team Commander, Primary Investigator, and File Coordinator and they shall report to the project room at HRP HQ upon activation.

- G. An Amber Alert shall be cancelled when the child or vulnerable person is located or twenty-four(24) hours has elapsed since the initial alert was issued.
- H. Following the deactivation of an alert
 - i. A detailed report summarizing the activation is to be submitted by the CID Team Lead to the Amber Alert Review Committee (c/o Dept. Of Justice, Policing Services, Po Box 7, Halifax NS, B3J 2L6) within seven days. A copy of the report shall be placed in the investigative file folder; and,
 - ii. An internal debriefing and after-action report shall be completed by the Amber Alert Administrator that, where appropriate, identifies problematic issues, needs for improvement, and proposes measures for counteracting problematic elements. This report shall be submitted to the Superintendent Support.
- I. Tests of the HRP Amber Alert System shall be conducted on an annual basis using the following method:
 - i. A Provincial test of the Amber Alert system shall be coordinated by the Provincial Coordinators and Provincial Amber Alert Committee;
 - ii. An HRP exercise shall consist of a tabletop exercise (TTX), including liaising with all partners. The test will not include initiation of an ALERT READY notification; and,
 - iii. The results of the test are to be reported to the Amber Alert Review Committee as per the reporting process in section H.

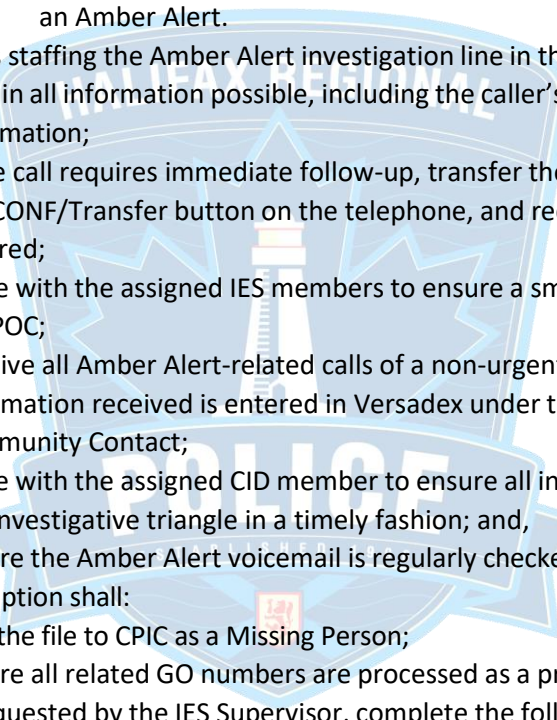
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

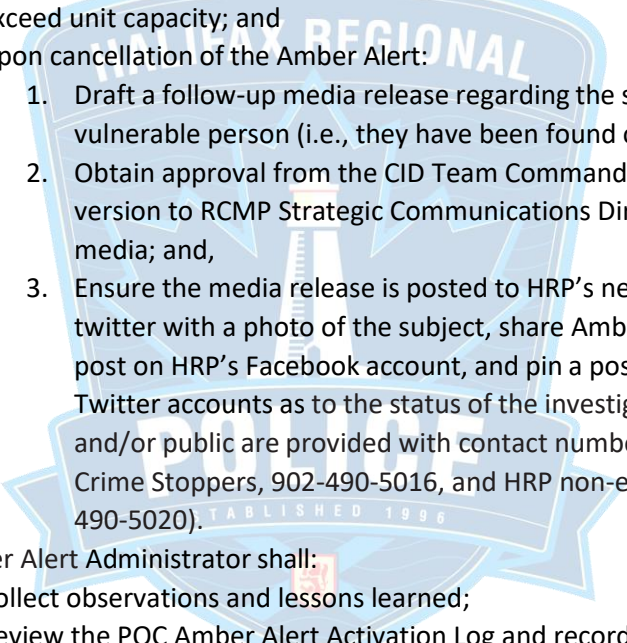
- J. The initial officer on scene shall:
 - i. When dispatched to a reported abduction:
 - 1. Perform a full preliminary investigation;
 - 2. When an abduction is reasonably suspected, contact the NCO i/c and the Watch Commander (WCOM) to advise on the call;
 - 3. Continue the investigation to determine if an Amber Alert activation is warranted, given the criteria outlined in section A and B; and,
 - ii. If an Amber Alert is supported:
 - 1. Immediately advise the WCOM; and
 - 2. Fill out the Amber Alert Form. Upon completion provide the form to the WCOM.
- K. Patrol members dispatched to an Amber Alert related call shall:
 - i. Conduct a full investigation, closing the file Report to Follow (FTF) rather than closed notebook (NBK);
 - ii. Link the generated GO# to the original abduction file using event-to-event linking; and
 - iii. Contact the File Coordinator and advise of the outcome of the investigation.
- L. The Watch Commander shall:
 - i. Upon being advised of a possible Amber Alert, contact the parties below by phone and advise of the possible activation:
 - 1. SIS Staff Sergeant (S/Sgt) or on-call CID S/Sgt; and,
 - 2. Senior Officer / Duty Officer;

- ii. Upon being advised that an Amber Alert will be activated, contact by phone and advise the following people:
 - 1. The IES Supervisor to request that a dedicated call taker be assigned to the call;
 - 2. An HRP ALERT READY Authorizer;
 - 3. The Amber Alert Coordinator; and,
 - 4. Public Relations and Communications.
 - iii. Ensure the IES supervisor or Emergency Planning Administrator has contacted the Provincial 911 PSAP's and notified them that an ALERT READY notification is being initiated by HRP.
 - iv. Ensure the IES supervisor or Emergency Planning Administrator has contacted the RCMP Operational Communications Center (OCC) and advised that HRP is preparing to issue an Amber Alert;
 - v. Provide a photo of the subject, suspect and suspect vehicle if available, to the Manager of Public Relations and Communications or their designate;
 - vi. Send a hfxALERT notification to all HRP Sworn and Civilian members advising them of the Amber Alert and providing a description of the subject, suspect, and suspect vehicle along with the last known sighting;
 - vii. Ensure CPIC transcription has added the subject to CPIC as missing; and,
 - viii. Ensure proper resources are allocated to all areas participating in the Amber Alert.
- M. The Senior Officer / Duty Officer shall:
- i. When advised that an existing situation meets the Amber Alert criteria outlined in section A-B:
 - 1. Assess the situation and, if in agreement direct an Amber Alert activation by way of an ALERT READY authorizer as soon as possible, approving the Amber Alert Form and its submission; and,
 - 2. Advise the Senior Leadership Team of the incident by way of an email to the "Senior Leadership Team" distribution list;
 - ii. Liaise with the in-call CID S/Sgt, or in their absence the on-call CID NCO to ensure adequate resources are available;
 - iii. Ensure the Police Operations Center (POC) is stood up in support of the Amber Alert;
 - iv. Attend the POC and review the investigation and resources with both the on-call CID S/Sgt. and the on-duty WCOM; and
 - v. Update the Executive Management Team via the "Executive Management Team" distribution list of any significant developments during the activation period.
- N. The CID Team Commander shall:
- i. In accordance with major case management protocol, manage the concurrent and subsequent investigation;
 - ii. Report to the designated location of the POC;
 - iii. Assign a member to coordinate information received by the IES members stationed at the Amber Alert lines located in the training room of IES;

- iv. Make a determination as the investigation progresses as to the appropriate staffing of the Amber Alert Investigation telephones;
- v. Upon locating the child and/or the expiry of 24 hours, make the determination to cancel the Amber Alert and manage the termination of the Amber Alert process as per section D – F of this policy;
- vi. Oversee the transition from the Amber Alert process into the investigative process;
- vii. Manage the cancellation of the Amber Alert and inform all parties including:
 - 1. The RCMP OCC and EMO Duty Officer informing them that the alert has been cancelled and calls are no longer to be forwarded to the HRP Investigation Line;
 - 2. CPIC Transcription to have the subject removed, if appropriate; and,
 - 3. HRP Public Relations Manager and/or their designate, who will write the media release regarding the Amber Alert cancellation and/or the continued investigation.
- viii. At the end of the Amber Alert period:
 - 1. If the child has not been found, determine the appropriate status of the Amber Alert Investigation Line(s), transitioning them to a public tip line should be deemed valuable;
 - 2. Ensure a list of the supplies/resources used is generated and the responsibility to replenish them is assigned to personnel;
 - 3. Contact the PR unit, ensuring that they provide contact numbers to the media and/or public for the ongoing investigation if the child or vulnerable person is still missing after the expiry of 24 hours (e.g., Crime Stoppers, 902-490-5016, 902-490-5020, Amber Alert Tip-Line, Amber Alert email address, etc.); and
 - 4. Ensure a detailed report summarizing the activation is submitted to the Amber Alert Review Committee (c/o Dept. of Justice, Policing Services, Po Box 7, Halifax NS, B3J 2L6) within seven days. A copy of the report shall be placed in the investigative file folder.
- O. The Primary Investigator shall:
 - i. Review all information that is received and together with the File Coordinator identify tasks for assignment and brief personnel on their responsibilities; and
 - ii. Review the completed Amber Alert form for accuracy and determine if updated information is available, including photos, locations last seen, vehicle description, possible suspects, last known direction of travel, etc. Update the form as necessary throughout the course of the investigation.
- P. The File Coordinator shall:
 - i. Document all information/inquiries received from IES call takers, the Amber Alert Investigation Line(s), the Amber Alert Tip-line, and comments received via social media; and,
 - ii. Complete all duties associated with the Investigative Triangle and Major Case Management protocols.

- Q. The call takers assigned to the Amber Alert Investigation Line shall review the incoming information and ensure all relevant information is given to the File Coordinator.
- R. IES Supervisor shall:
- i. Upon being notified by the WCOM of a possible Amber Alert, assign a dedicated dispatcher to the incident;
 - ii. Upon being notified by the WCOM of an active Amber Alert, call out additional IES personnel to report to the IES Training Room to staff the Amber Alert Investigation line(s);
 - iii. Assign the following tasks to the CPIC operator or dispatcher:
 1. Contact the NS Provincial 911 PSAPs and NS EMO Duty Officer to advise that an ALERT READY notification is being issued.
 2. Contact the RCMP OCC at 902-893-1323 and advise that HRP is issuing an Amber Alert;
 3. Contact New Brunswick and PEI PSAPs to advise an Amber Alert activation is being initiated;
 4. Send an ALERT READY Amber Alert Message to all of Nova Scotia and
 5. Once an Amber Alert is issued, ensure that all buildings are paged advising personnel of the Amber Alert. The paging numbers are as follows:
 - a. Central Division: 902-490-5064
 - b. East Division: 902-490-4772
 - c. West Division: 902-490-5185; and,
 - d. CID: 902-490-2397
- S. IES Dedicated Amber Alert Call Evaluator stationed in IES shall:
- i. Receive all Amber Alert-related calls of a non-urgent nature and ensure all information is entered into Versadex under the assigned general occurrence number (GO#) using the Community Contact; and,
 - ii. Liaise with the Amber Alert IES call evaluators assigned to the POC to ensure a smooth transition from IES to the POC.
- T. IES Call Taker shall:
- i. Upon receiving a call that an abduction has occurred, enter the call for service and ensure that the appropriate dispatcher is aware so that the call can be immediately dispatched;
 - ii. When receiving a 911 call from a member of the public with information related to the alert review the information and determine if:
 1. The information is urgent and actionable. If so, enter a call for service. The call shall be linked to the original abduction GO#; and,
 2. If the information is of a non-emergency or suggestive nature, transfer the call to the Amber Alert Investigation Line(s) (902-490-6262).
- U. IES Dispatchers shall:
- i. Upon receipt of a call for service related to an Amber Alert, contact the File Coordinator to advise of the call and the related information;

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- ii. If an Amber Alert is issued, facilitate an all-call broadcast and Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) message to all units containing all pertinent details. Repeat the broadcast/MDT message to the oncoming shift if the call is still active;
 - iii. When an Amber Alert is issued by any police agency in Nova Scotia, immediately broadcast the information to all police units both verbally and electronically;
 - iv. If responding to information related to an alert from outside HRP (e.g., if subjects of a CBRP Amber Alert have been seen in HRP jurisdiction), dispatch a unit to investigate;
 - v. Do not close the call until confirmation has been received that the results of the investigation have been communicated to the agency that issued the alert; and,
 - vi. If requested by the IES Supervisor, complete the following tasks:
 - 1. Contact EMO-NS at 902-424-5620 and advise of the Amber Alert; and,
 - 2. Contact the RCMP OCC at 902-893-1323 and advise that HRP is issuing an Amber Alert.
- V. IES members staffing the Amber Alert investigation line in the IES Training Room shall:
- i. Obtain all information possible, including the caller's identification and contact information;
 - ii. If the call requires immediate follow-up, transfer the call to 902-490-5020 via the CONF/Transfer button on the telephone, and request a call for service to be entered;
 - iii. Liaise with the assigned IES members to ensure a smooth transition from IES to the POC;
 - iv. Receive all Amber Alert-related calls of a non-urgent nature and ensure all information received is entered in Versadex under the assigned GO# using the Community Contact;
 - v. Liaise with the assigned CID member to ensure all information is transferred to the investigative triangle in a timely fashion; and,
 - vi. Ensure the Amber Alert voicemail is regularly checked.
- W. CPIC Transcription shall:
- i. Add the file to CPIC as a Missing Person;
 - ii. Ensure all related GO numbers are processed as a priority; and
 - iii. If requested by the IES Supervisor, complete the following tasks:
 - 1. Contact EMO-NS at 902-424-5620 and advise of the Amber Alert; and,
 - 2. Contact the RCMP OCC at 902-893-1323 and advise that HRP is issuing an Amber Alert.
- X. HRP Public Relations Unit shall:
- i. Assist with and coordinate the communication strategy for the incident by working in concert with the WCOM and the CID Team Commander;
 - ii. Upon receipt of media inquiries regarding an abduction of a child/vulnerable person, confirm, if accurate, that HRP has received a report of a missing child/vulnerable person and the investigation is in the early stages. PR personnel shall refer to the Amber Alert holding lines template for further direction;

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- iii. Follow up with RCMP Strategic Communications by phone at 902-720-5654 or 902-209-1804 to ensure that the RCMP have all required information to post to their social media accounts;
 - iv. Post a media release to HRP's news application and Twitter Account with a photo of the subject; share Amber Alert in NS' Facebook post on HRP's Facebook account; pin a post on HRP's Facebook and Twitter accounts; and bring any potential tips to the attention of the File Coordinator;
 - v. Conduct media interviews (e.g. TV, radio, print), and respond to media calls in a timely manner;
 - vi. Monitor social media and respond to any tips posted to HRP social media accounts with the following reply: "To ensure the most effective investigation, please call 9-1-1 with tips rather than posting on social media";
 - vii. Manage media at the scene, if applicable;
 - viii. Contact the CID S/Sgt for additional resources should the volume of media tips exceed unit capacity; and
 - ix. Upon cancellation of the Amber Alert:
 - 1. Draft a follow-up media release regarding the status of the child or vulnerable person (i.e., they have been found or are still missing);
 - 2. Obtain approval from the CID Team Commander and send the approved version to RCMP Strategic Communications Director for distribution to media; and,
 - 3. Ensure the media release is posted to HRP's news application and twitter with a photo of the subject, share Amber Alert in NS' Facebook post on HRP's Facebook account, and pin a post on HRP's Facebook and Twitter accounts as to the status of the investigation. Ensure the media and/or public are provided with contact numbers if necessary (e.g., Crime Stoppers, 902-490-5016, and HRP non-emergency dispatch, 902-490-5020).
- Y. The Amber Alert Administrator shall:
- i. Collect observations and lessons learned;
 - ii. Review the POC Amber Alert Activation Log and records;
 - iii. Compile a list of supplies and resources that have been expended in support of an Amber Alert; and,
 - iv. Submit a report summarizing the activation to the Amber Alert Review Committee within 7 days of Amber Alert Cancellation.

3. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Abduction means:** an incident involving a child or a vulnerable person who is removed from his/her environment without permission of the legal guardian or representative.
- B. **Alert Ready means:** a national alerting system that allows government officials at federal, provincial, and municipal levels, including HRP, to issue public safety messages, including Amber Alerts.
- C. **Amber Alert means:** a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, media outlets, and the public that establishes a protocol to activate an urgent public appeal for

information in the most serious of child abduction cases. The Amber Alert system gives the public up-to-date information about a child abduction by using widespread media broadcasts and soliciting the public's help in having the child returned home safely.

- D. **Child means:** a person under 18 years of age.
- E. **HRP Amber Alert Administrator means:** the Emergency Planning Administrator. The Emergency Planning Administrator is tasked with ensuring that effective policies and processes are in place to prepare for an Amber Alert. The Administrator also liaises with other Provincial Amber Alert Coordinators and represents HRP on relevant committees.
- F. **Police Operations Center (POC) means:** the location where the HRP investigative team will be located and the Amber Alert tip line will be monitored.
- G. **Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) means:** a call center responsible for answering calls to an emergency telephone number for police, firefighting, and ambulance services. There are four PSAPs in Nova Scotia: Integrated Emergency Services (IES), RCMP H Division Operational Communications Centre (OCC), Cape Breton Regional Police (CBRP) and Valley Communications.
- H. **Senior Officer means:** an officer holding the rank of Inspector or above.
- I. **Amber Alert Tips Line means:** a non-emergency telephone line whose phone number is transmitted to the public for them to provide tips and information.
- J. **Amber Alert Email Address means:** an HRP email address where members of the public can submit emails with tips and information.
- K. **Vulnerable Person means:** an individual with a cognitive or physical disability.

4. REFERENCES

- A. Nova Scotia Department of Justice Policing Standards (2024).
- B. RCMP H Division Amber Alert Plan (2024)
- C. HRP Amber Alert Plan (2025)
- D. HRP Operations Policy Manual Chapter 13 ALERT READY (2021)

Effective Date of Last Revision	September 15, 2025
Policy Owner	Superintendent Greg Robertson

By Order Of:



Chief Don MacLean
Chief of Police