

# 2024 AMBER Alert Report

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®

Analysis of AMBER Alert Activations in 2024



Copyright © 2025 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.

This project was supported by Grant No. 15PJDP-24-GK-02959-MECP awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® is a registered trademark of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AMBER Alert Program Information</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2024 AMBER Alert Overview</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Number and Locations of AMBER Alert Activations</i>	8
Summary of AMBER Alert Activations and Children Involved	8
AMBER Alerts by State/Territory	8
Multi-plan AMBER Alerts	9
Range of AMBER Alerts	9
<i>NCMEC Operational Support for AMBER Alerts</i>	10
Secondary Distribution of AMBER Alerts	10
Wireless Emergency Alerts	10
Team Adam Consultant Deployment	11
<b>Primary Case Analysis</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>AMBER Alert Cases and Children</i>	12
AMBER Alert by Case Type at Intake	12
Demographics of Children Reported Missing	12
<i>Abductors in AMBER Alert Cases</i>	14
Abductor Demographics	14
Abductor Relationship to Child	14
Presumed or Likely Motivation for Abduction	14
<i>AMBER Alert Incident Duration</i>	16
Time Between Reported Missing and Activation	16
Time Between Reported Missing and Recovery	16
Time Between Activation and Recovery	17
Recovery Within Three Days of Activation	17
<i>Case Geography</i>	18
Missing Location	18
Travel Distances	18
International Abductions	19
Recoveries Outside of State/Territory Where AMBER Alert First Activated	19
Recovery Location	20
<i>Vehicle Information in AMBER Alert Broadcast</i>	21
<i>Success Stories</i>	22
Count of Success Stories	22
Reason for Success Stories	22
Time Between Activation and Recovery for Success Stories	23
<i>Children Located Deceased</i>	23
<b>Hoax and Unfounded AMBER Alerts</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Hoax AMBER Alerts</i>	25
Cases and Children in Hoax AMBER Alerts	25

Hoax Source or Reporting Party	26
Reported Hoax Locations	26
<i>Unfounded AMBER Alerts</i>	26
<b>Five-Year Comparison of AMBER Alerts Issued</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>Five-Year Overview</i>	28
Yearly Totals of AMBER Alerts and Children Involved	28
Monthly AMBER Alert Totals	28
<i>Children in AMBER Alerts from 2020 to 2024</i>	29
Reported Race of Children	29
Deceased Children	29
<i>Hoaxes and Unfounded AMBER Alerts</i>	30
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2024 Map</b>	<b>37</b>

# Introduction

---

The afternoon of Jan. 13, 1996, Amber Hagerman, a 9-year-old girl who lived in Arlington, Texas, was last seen riding her bike in a parking lot. A witness saw a man with a black flat-bed truck snatch Amber from her bicycle. Four days later, Amber's body was found in a creek 3.2 miles from her grandparents' home. Her murder remains unsolved. Residents were outraged and began reaching out to broadcasters and law enforcement. One person, Diane Simone, suggested a program be implemented allowing use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to notify the public when a child has been abducted. If the community was aware, then residents could also assist in the search. Simone followed up with a letter, and her only request was the program be dedicated to the memory of Amber Hagerman. That letter was used by broadcasters who met with local law enforcement and created Amber's Plan in Amber Hagerman's memory.

As the initiative grew, it became known as America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Plan, which provides a framework for law enforcement to rapidly broadcast information about child abductions to the public so the community can assist in the search for and safe recovery of the child. What began as a local effort in the Dallas-Fort Worth area has grown into a seamless nationwide initiative, with many other countries following suit. AMBER Alerts in the United States have continued to make use of every available technology. From the initial program launch in October 1996 through December 2024, at least 1,268 children have been confirmed as safely recovered due to an AMBER Alert being issued. At least 226 of those children were recovered due to the use of a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) message during the AMBER Alert activation.

AMBER Alerts rely on a voluntary partnership among law enforcement, broadcasters, private companies, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and technology partners to notify the public of an abduction. AMBER Alert plans initiate the alert by activating their state and local network, including resources such as the Emergency Alert System. Since 2005, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) has provided access to AMBER Alert Secondary Distribution (AASD), a resource composed of private corporations across many industries, social media, websites, digital signage, federal agencies, and others. Each of these partners brings unique technology to the program to enable the amplification of an alert to the public, staff, or customers. NCMEC provides geographically targeted information via the NCMEC Call Center to these partners as approved by each AMBER Alert coordinator. Finally, since 2012, both AMBER Alert plans and NCMEC can use WEA to provide geographically targeted cellular broadcasts to the public when a child is abducted.

On April 30, 2003, the *Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today (PROTECT) Act of 2003* (Pub. L. No. 108-21) was signed into law. Building on the steps already taken by the federal government to support AMBER Alerts, this act established the national coordination of state and local programs, including the development of guidance for issuance and dissemination of AMBER Alerts and the appointment of a national AMBER Alert coordinator within the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. The national AMBER Alert coordinator, in collaboration with a national advisory group, developed a strategy for supporting states and communities to strengthen the AMBER Alert system nationwide and increase the likelihood abducted children will be recovered swiftly and safely.<sup>1</sup> And, in

<sup>1</sup>*National Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, [Guidelines for Issuing AMBER Alerts | AMBER Alert \(ojp.gov\)](#), accessed March 31, 2025.

2018, the *Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act* (Pub. L. No. 115-166) expanded resources and focused on integrating tribal AMBER Alert systems with state and regional systems.

## AMBER Alert Program Information

---

The AMBER Alert program consists of independent AMBER Alert plans in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Navajo Nation, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As of 2024, and including local and regional AMBER Alert plans, there are 81 plans in the United States. Each of these plans coordinates with resources and law enforcement in their jurisdiction and uses specific criteria to determine if an abducted child case qualifies for an AMBER Alert.

While there may be slight variations, each plan generally follows the AMBER Alert criteria recommendations published by the U.S. Department of Justice. These criteria are:

- There is reasonable belief by law enforcement an abduction has occurred.
- The abduction is of a child age 17 or younger.
- The law enforcement agency believes the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death.
- There is enough descriptive information about the victim and abduction for law enforcement to issue an AMBER Alert to assist in the recovery of the child.
- The child's name and other critical data elements, including the Child Abduction flag, have been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.

AMBER Alerts may be activated by multiple plans for a single case and the AMBER Alert plans will coordinate with each other. Although an AMBER Alert can be issued in multiple states or territories, it is never issued on a nationwide basis. AMBER Alerts are geographically targeted based on law enforcement's investigation.

In order to augment the efforts of each of these plans, NCMEC provides operational support during AMBER Alerts via AMBER Alert Secondary Distribution; WEA activation, when requested; case management services and resources from NCMEC; and program analysis via this report.

The AMBER Alert program is also supported by many other partners representing federal agencies, law enforcement, broadcasters, private corporations, nonprofit organizations, and others with the goal of providing amplification of AMBER Alerts; training support; and other resources on the state, local, and national levels.

# 2024 AMBER Alert Overview

## Number and Locations of AMBER Alert Activations

### Summary of AMBER Alert Activations and Children Involved

From Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, 189 AMBER Alerts were issued in the U.S. involving 236 children.

Of the 189 AMBER Alerts issued in this time frame, 188 cases resulted in a recovery, 47 of which were successfully recovered as a direct result of an AMBER Alert being issued. As of March 18, 2025, when statistics for this report were finalized for the AMBER Alerts issued in 2024, one child remained actively missing and nine children were located deceased.

Five cases were later determined to be hoaxes, and 27 cases were later determined to be unfounded.

For cases not determined to be hoaxes or unfounded, there were 96 family abductions (FA); 46 nonfamily abductions (NFA); 10 lost, injured, or otherwise missing (LIM); four endangered runaways (ERU); and one missing young adult at the time of initial intake by NCMEC.

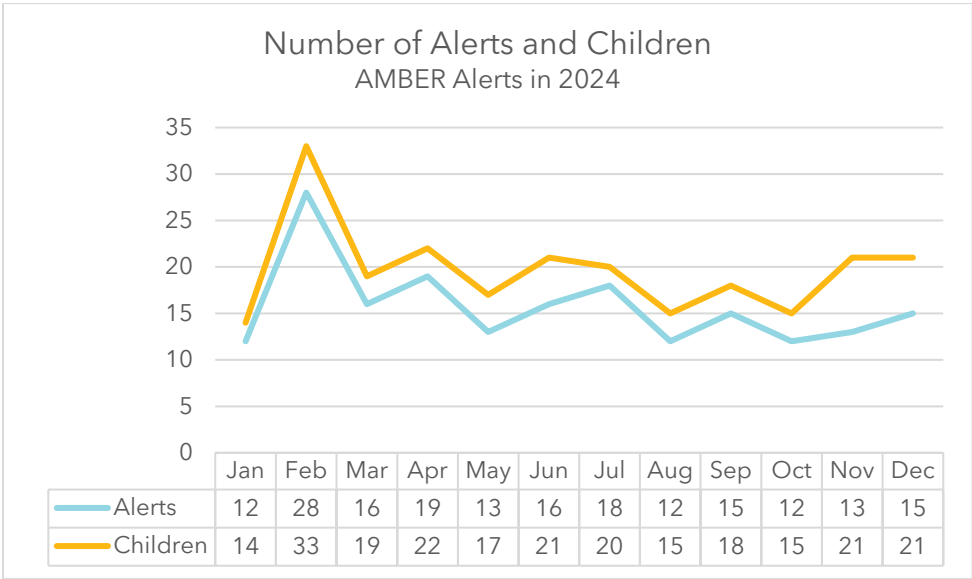


Figure 1: Number of AMBER Alert Activations and Children by Month

### AMBER Alerts by State/Territory

From January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, 189 AMBER Alerts originated in 33 states. Two AMBER Alerts originated in the District of Columbia, and one originated in Puerto Rico. Texas issued the most AMBER Alerts with 29 percent (n=54) followed by California with eight percent (n=16).

Table 1: Number of Originating AMBER Alert Activations by State/Territory



State/Territory	Number of alerts
Texas	54
California	16
Ohio	15
North Carolina	12
Florida and Missouri	9 each
Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee	6 each
Virginia	5
Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, and Wisconsin	4 each
New Mexico and Washington	3 each
District of Columbia, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and New York	2 each
Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Utah, and West Virginia	1 each
Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Navajo Nation, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virgin Islands, and Wyoming	0 each
<b>Total</b>	<b>189</b>

### Multi-plan AMBER Alerts

In the United States, there are currently 81 AMBER Alert plans with state, local, regional, or Tribal jurisdiction. When an AMBER Alert is issued, an abductor may take the child outside the jurisdiction of the first AMBER plan to activate an alert to the public. In these cases, the originating AMBER Alert Plan or law enforcement may request that the AMBER Alert be extended by another AMBER Alert Plan. Often, these plans are in another state but in some instances a regional or local plan may request the activation at the state level. In 2024, six AMBER Alerts were extended beyond the limits of the AMBER Alert plan where the AMBER Alert first originated.

Table 2: List of Multi-plan AMBER Alerts

Originating	Extending
Arkansas	Oklahoma
Missouri	Kansas
Texas	Missouri and Texas*
Texas	Texas*
Texas	Texas*
Washington	Oregon

\*In these instances, a local or regional AMBER plan activated, and the state plan then expanded the alert area.

### Range of AMBER Alerts

AMBER Alerts may be targeted to large or small areas as determined by law enforcement. Local alerts indicate a target area of one county; regional alerts indicate a target area of multiple counties, which may cross state lines and include regional AMBER Alert plan activations; statewide indicates the activation of an entire state; and multistate indicates more than one plan in different states activated for the same incident.

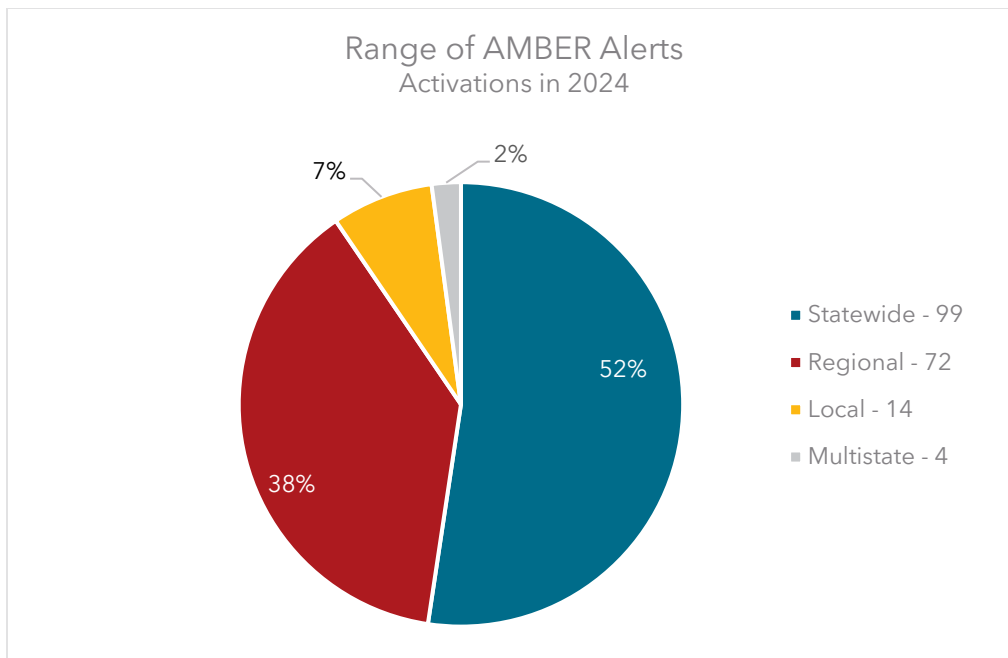


Figure 2: Range of AMBER Alerts

## NCMEC Operational Support for AMBER Alerts

NCMEC is tasked with providing support to AMBER Alert plans by the U.S. Department of Justice. This includes amplification of AMBER Alerts when they are activated, pre-planning with AMBER Alert plans, and post-alert data collection and reporting. NCMEC does not determine if an AMBER Alert should be activated, and all actions taken by NCMEC are with the permission of law enforcement.

### *Secondary Distribution of AMBER Alerts*

When an AMBER Alert is activated, NCMEC will deploy information to the AMBER Alert Secondary Distribution (AASD) network with the permission of the AMBER Alert coordinator. The AASD network amplifies the AMBER Alert using ever-evolving technology. The NCMEC Call Center works closely with each AMBER Alert coordinator to activate this system. As part of this procedure, NCMEC also posts the active alert on the national social media accounts for AMBER Alerts and on <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/amber> so the public can easily access the full alert.

AMBER Alert secondary distribution was completed for 178 AMBER Alerts involving 216 children. In some instances, the alert may be canceled before secondary dissemination of the AMBER Alert is completed.

### *Wireless Emergency Alerts*

WEA can be activated by agencies connected to or designated by an AMBER Alert plan, which could include emergency management agencies, law enforcement, or directly by the AMBER Alert coordinator. NCMEC has the ability to activate WEA messages at the request of an AMBER Alert coordinator for any geographic area within the United States and can also provide a backup in instances of system failures. NCMEC works with each plan to determine the appropriate level of support, and the NCMEC Call Center activates WEA when requested during an AMBER Alert activation.

WEA messages are used for many types of emergency notifications. Cellphone users will see either a 90- or 360-character message displayed on their phone with an alert tone. WEA messages may not be issued for

every case. The use of this tool is determined by law enforcement and the AMBER Alert coordinator, who must consider the available information to share with the public, investigative needs, timing, and geography. In some instances, the child is recovered quickly before the WEA message can be sent. In other instances, multiple WEA messages may be activated for a single AMBER Alert case, due to the geography or updated details of an AMBER Alert.

From Dec. 2012 through Dec. 2024, 2,059 WEA messages have been issued for AMBER Alerts. NCMEC activated 1,457 of those and 602 were activated by other agencies. In 2024, WEA was activated 196 times for AMBER Alerts with 105 sent by NCMEC and 91 sent by other agencies. Forty-six children in 29 AMBER Alerts were recovered due to the use of a WEA message in 2024.

### *Team Adam Consultant Deployment*

Team Adam is a NCMEC program providing a rapid on-site response and technical assistance support system to local law enforcement and support for families of missing and sexually exploited children. Team Adam was named in memory of 6-year-old Adam Walsh, the abducted and murdered son of NCMEC co-founders John and Revé Walsh.

In 2024, Team Adam consultants were deployed to assist with five AMBER Alert cases involving 6 children. Two AMBER Alerts were later determined to be unfounded. Four children actually determined to be missing were recovered.

## Primary Case Analysis

The following analysis provides details about AMBER Alerts and the abduction events which led to the activation of an alert. In some cases, it is determined upon resolution that the case did not meet AMBER Alert criteria due to inaccurate or intentionally false information provided to law enforcement. Cases falling under this designation are not included in this section and are analyzed separately in the *Hoax and Unfounded AMBER Alerts* section.

This section discusses 157 AMBER Alerts involving 202 children.

### AMBER Alert Cases and Children

#### *AMBER Alert by Case Type at Intake*

A case type is assigned by NCMEC when an AMBER Alert is received, and an intake is completed by the NCMEC Call Center. As the investigation progresses, or recovery information is received, it may be determined the original case type must be changed. This section reflects case information available at the time of the initial AMBER Alert activation.

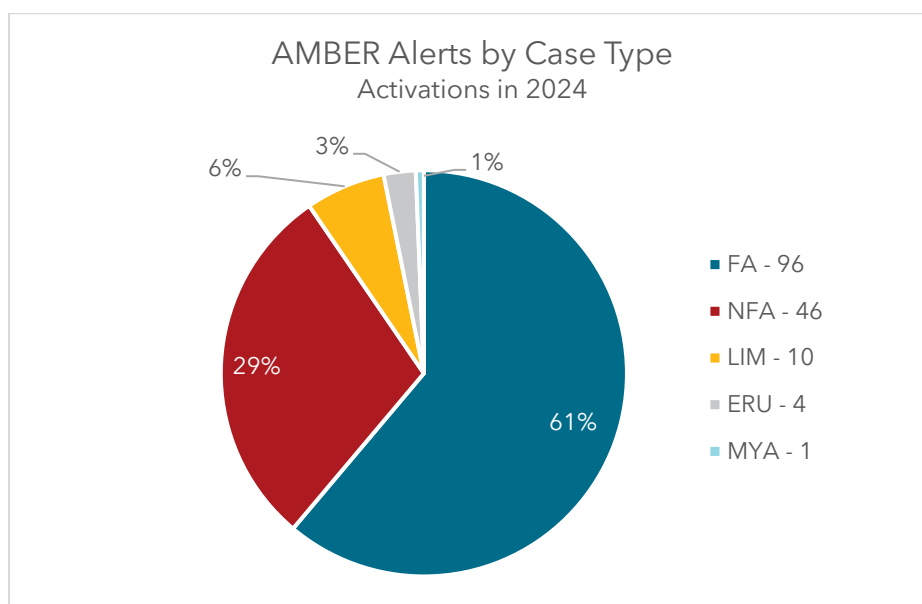
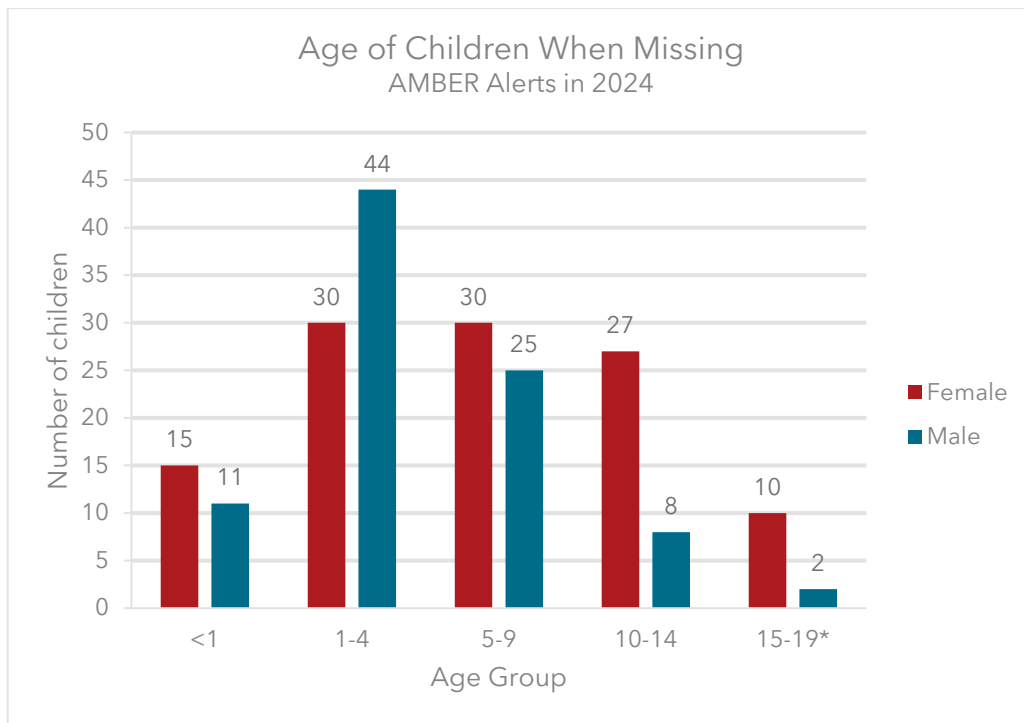


Figure 3: AMBER Alerts by Case Type at Intake

#### *Demographics of Children Reported Missing*

Females (n=112) were involved in AMBER Alert activations more often at 55 percent, compared to males who represented 45 percent (n=90). Children younger than five represented 50 percent (n=100) of the children who were reported missing with known ages.



\*The AMBER Alert criteria for the State of California includes an exception to the age limit when the abducted person has mental or physical disabilities.

Figure 4: Age of Children When Missing

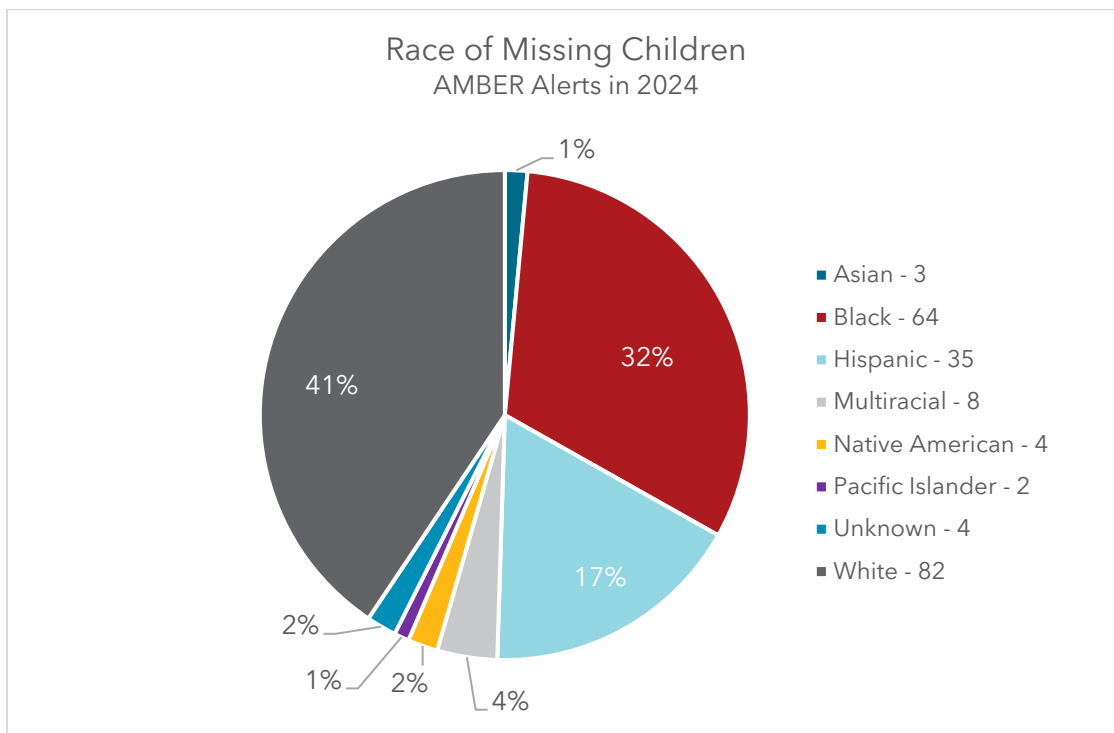


Figure 5: Race of Missing Children in AMBER Alerts

## Abductors in AMBER Alert Cases

### Abductor Demographics

In 2024, 170 abductors were identified as being involved in 163 AMBER Alert cases.

The majority of abductors were male at 62 percent (n=106), and 33 percent (n=56) of abductors were female. The sex for five percent (n=8) of abductors was unknown.

Thirty-nine percent (n=67) of abductors were White, 30 percent (n=51) of abductors were Black, 14 percent (n=23) of abductors were Hispanic, three percent (n=5) of abductors were Multiracial, two percent (n=3) of abductors were Asian, one percent (n=2) of abductors were Native American, and one percent (n=1) of abductors were Pacific Islander. The race for 11 percent (n=18) of abductors was unknown.

### Abductor Relationship to Child

An AMBER Alert case may involve multiple abductors; therefore, the number of abductors may exceed the number of cases for any case type. Multiple abductors involved in an AMBER Alert case may have different relationships to the abducted child. For example, a mother who abducts her child may use her boyfriend as an accomplice. Therefore, he may also be listed as an abductor.

Table 3: Abductor Relationship to Child by Case Type at Intake

Abductor relationship to child	FA	NFA	LIM	ERU	MYA	Total
Friend of family	1	4	0	0	0	5
Child's romantic partner	0	6	0	2	1	9
Father	52	3	0	0	0	55
Foster parent	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grandfather	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grandmother	2	1	0	0	0	3
Known to child or family	0	1	1	0	0	2
Mother	43	2	0	0	0	45
No known relation or stranger	0	9	0	0	0	9
Online or app contact of child	0	4	1	0	0	5
Parent or guardian's ex-romantic partner	2	2	0	0	0	4
Parent or guardian's romantic partner	0	8	1	0	0	9
Sibling	1	1	0	0	0	2
Stepfather	2	0	0	0	0	2
Undisclosed	0	3	2	1	0	6
Unknown	1	7	3	1	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>170</b>

### Presumed or Likely Motivation for Abduction

In some AMBER Alert cases, a motivation may be confirmed or considered likely based on the circumstances of the case. When this is possible, the abductor's motive is determined by the primary

abductor in the case rather than each abductor in the case. This is not a legal determination of intent, nor does it necessarily reflect the legal resolution of a case. It is intended to identify possible trends in abductions which trigger the activation of AMBER Alerts.

Table 4: Abductor's Motive for Abduction by Case

<b>Motivation for abduction</b>	<b>Number of alerts</b>
Criminal Activity	15
Domestic (Custodial)	49
Domestic (Other)	40
Enticement (Online)	8
Mental health crisis	6
Other	8
Sexual (No enticement)	3
Undisclosed	2
Unknown	21
Vehicle theft	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>

Table 5: Abductor's Motive for Abduction by Abductor Relationship to Child

<b>Motivation for abduction</b>	<b>Parent/guardian</b>	<b>Other relative</b>	<b>Acquaintance/friend</b>	<b>No relationship/stranger</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
Criminal activity	8	0	4	3	1	16
Domestic (Custodial)	52	3	0	0	0	55
Domestic (Other)	24	4	11	0	2	41
Enticement (Online)	0	0	7	0	3	10
Mental health crisis	7	0	0	0	0	7
Other	1	0	5	1	0	7
Sexual (No enticement)	2	0	1	0	1	4
Undisclosed	1	0	0	0	1	2
Unknown	6	1	6	1	9	23
Vehicle theft	0	0	0	4	1	5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>170</b>

## AMBER Alert Incident Duration

### *Time Between Reported Missing and Activation*

Information about the time between when the child was reported missing to law enforcement and the AMBER Alert's activation was available in 121 cases.

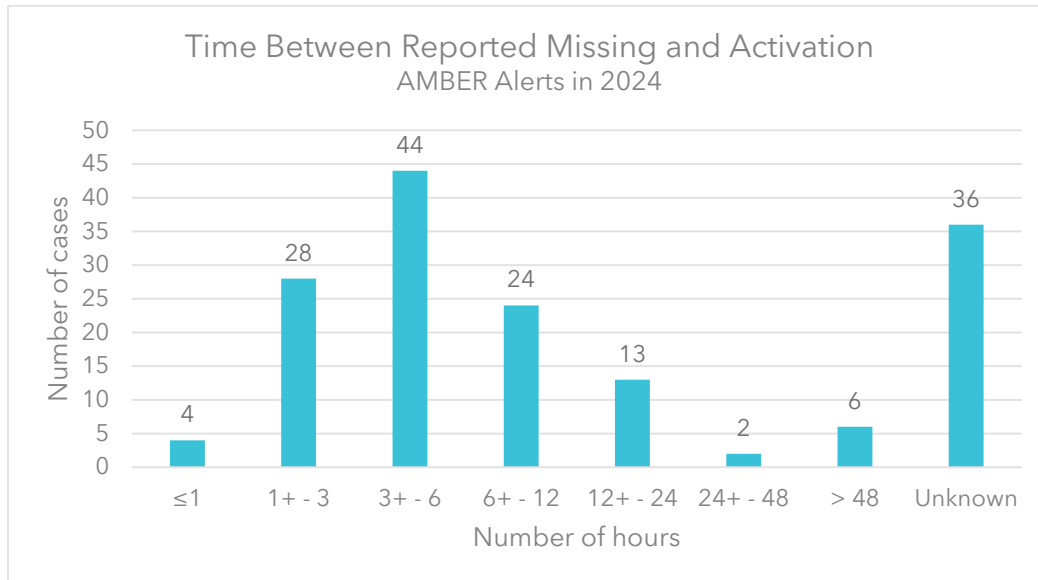


Figure 6: Time Between Reported Missing and Activation

### *Time Between Reported Missing and Recovery*

Information about the time between when the child was reported missing to law enforcement and the AMBER Alert recovery was available in 122 cases. One case remains active.

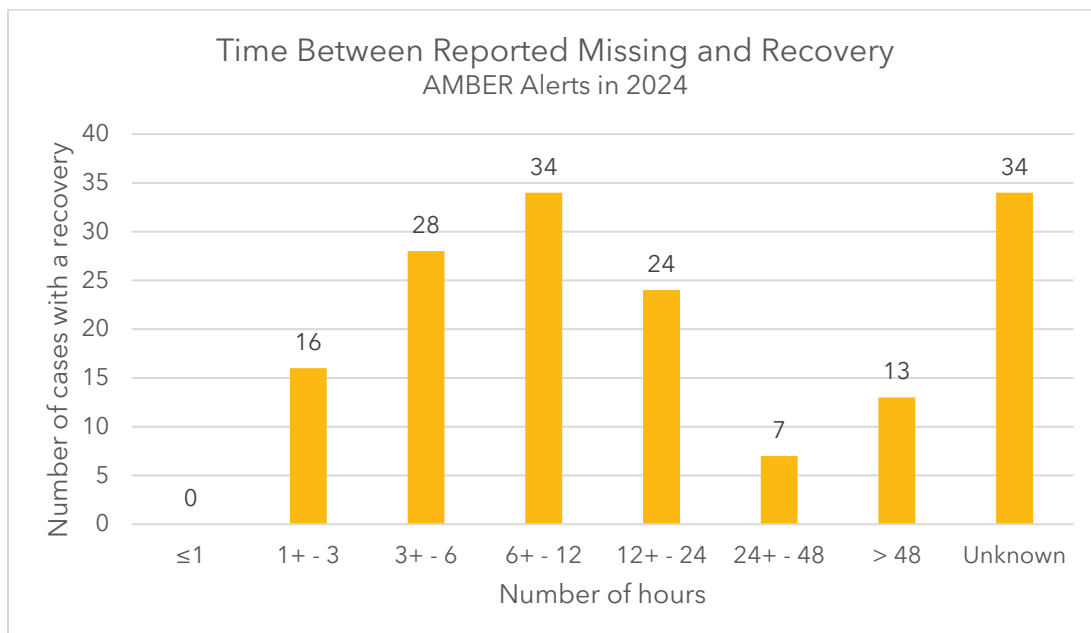
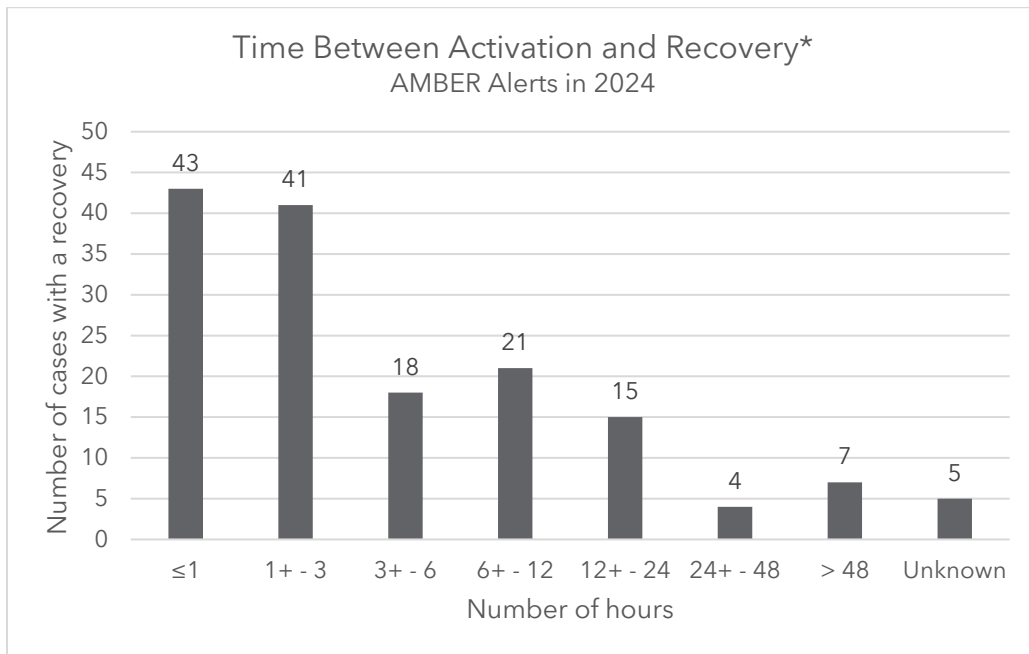


Figure 7: Time Between Reported Missing and Recovery



### Time Between Activation and Recovery

Information about the time between when the AMBER Alert was activated, and the AMBER Alert recovery was available in 149 cases. In two cases, the children were recovered before the AMBER Alert was activated. One case remains active.



\*Children in two AMBER Alerts were recovered before the AMBER Alert was activated.

Figure 8: Time Between Activation and Recovery

### Recovery Within Three Days of Activation

Information about the date between when the AMBER Alert was activated, and the AMBER Alert recovery was available in 188 cases. One case remains active. Table 6 includes data for hoax and unfounded AMBER Alerts.

Table 6: Recovery Within Three Days of Activation

Time between activation and recovery 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024	
Case intake	189
Cases reclassified as hoax or unfounded after intake	32
Children intake	236
Children whose cases were reclassified as hoax or unfounded after intake	34
Number of cases in which child recovered within 72 hours	152
Percent of cases in which child recovered within 72 hours	97 percent*
Number of children reported as being recovered within 72 hours	196
Percent of children reported as being recovered within 72 hours	97 percent**

\*Percentage excludes cases reclassified as hoaxes (n=5) and unfounded (n=27)

\*\*Percentage excludes children whose cases were reclassified as hoaxes (n=5) and unfounded (n=29)

## Case Geography

### Missing Location

In 2024, there were 154 cases with information about where the children involved were last known to be located.

Table 7: Missing Location

Missing location	Number of cases	Percent
Child's residence	86	55%
Automobile	23	15%
Other residence	12	8%
School	5	3%
Retail	5	3%
Social services	5	3%
Street	5	3%
Hotel/motel	3	2%
Medical facility	3	2%
Unknown	3	2%
Recreational	2	1%
Park	2	1%
Restaurant	1	1%
Daycare facility	1	1%
Office building	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>~100%</b>

### Travel Distances

In 2024, distances between where the child was reported missing and recovered were known for 142 AMBER Alert cases. One case remains active.

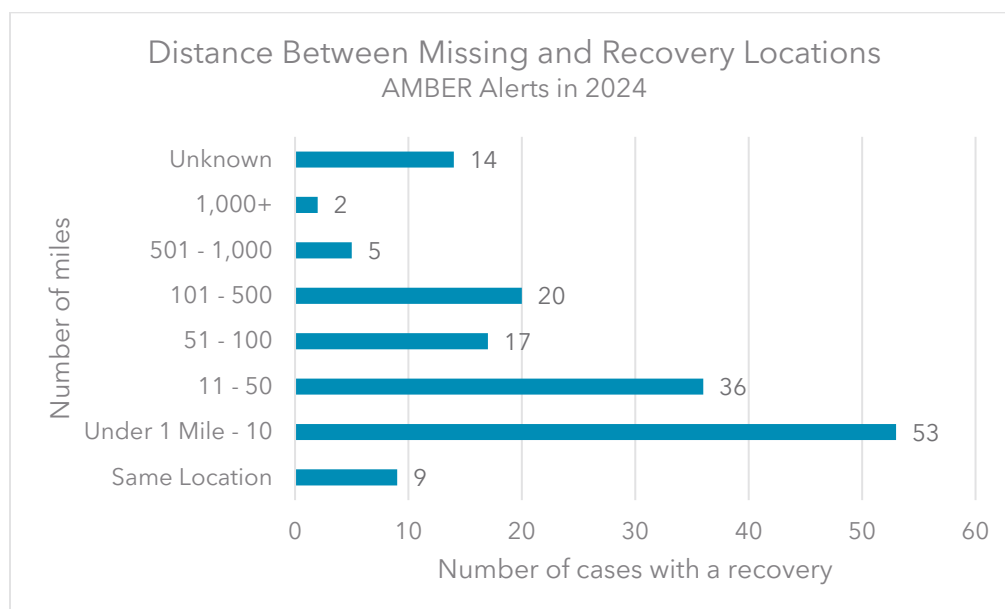


Figure 9: Distance Between Missing and Recovery Locations

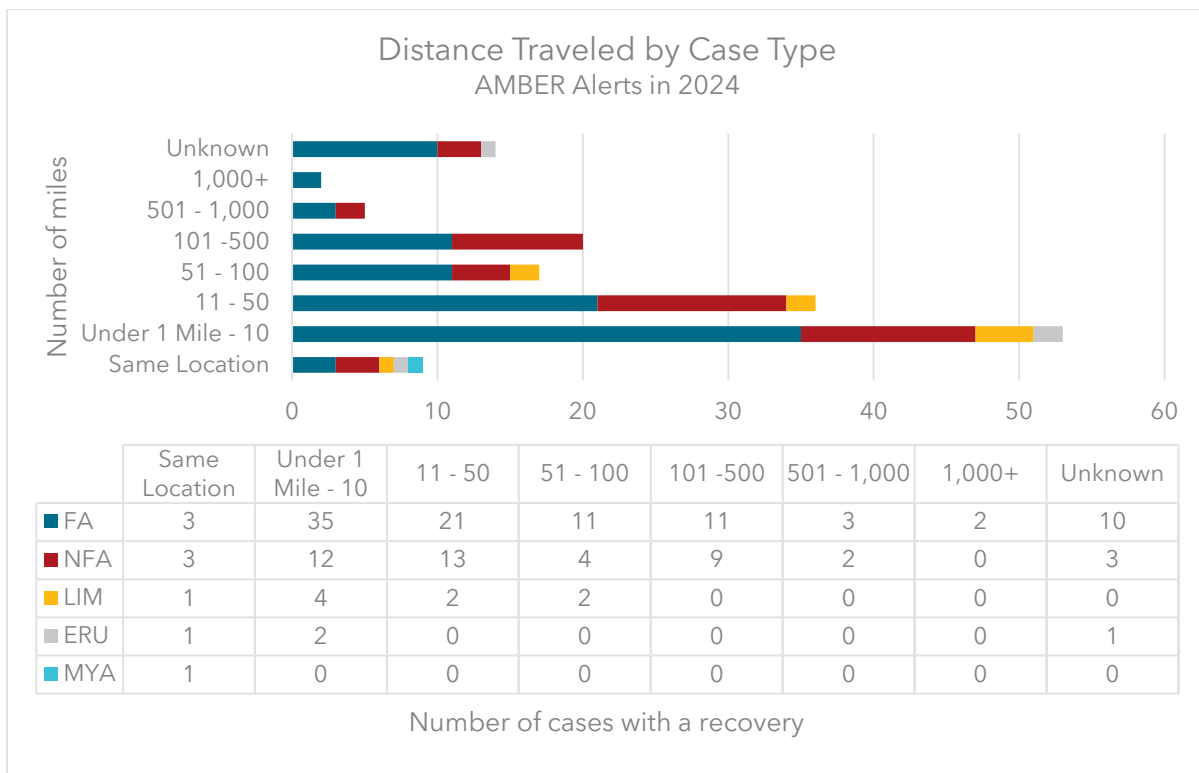


Figure 10: Distance Traveled by Case Type at Intake

### *International Abductions*

In 2024, there were no AMBER Alert activations as a result of an international abduction.

### *Recoveries Outside of State/Territory Where AMBER Alert First Activated*

There are instances when an abductor may travel with a child out of the state/territory where the AMBER Alert was first activated. After removing the data related to AMBER Alerts determined to be a hoax or unfounded, a total of 157 AMBER Alerts were issued in 2024 involving 202 children. One case involving one child remains active.

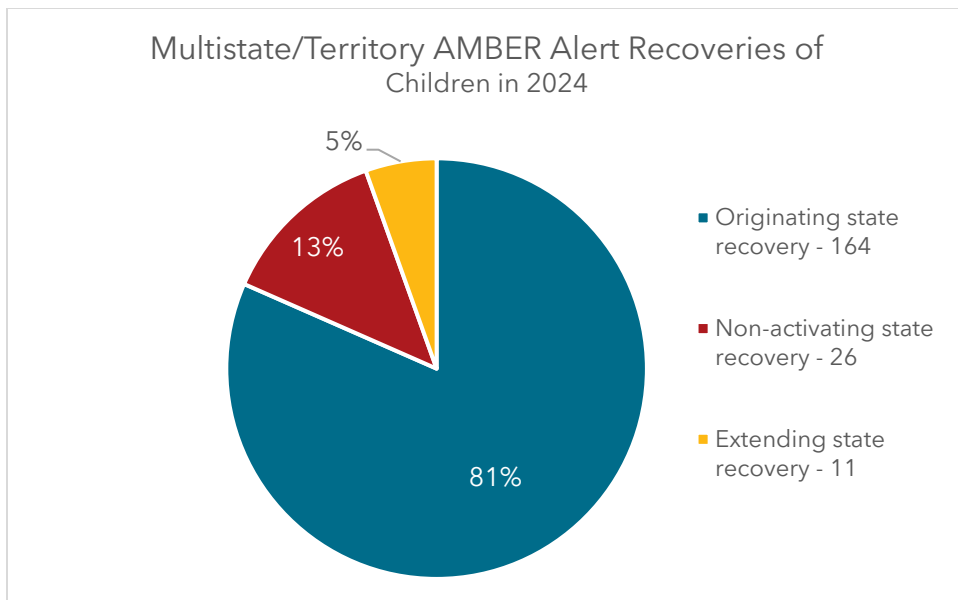


Figure 11: Multistate/Territory AMBER Alert Recoveries

### Recovery Location

There were 128 cases with information about where the child was recovered. One case remains active. In 2024, 25 percent (n=39) of AMBER Alert cases involved the children being recovered at another residence followed by recoveries in an automobile at 23 percent (n=36).

Table 8: Recovery Location

Recovery location	Number of cases	Percent
Other residence	39	25%
Automobile	36	23%
Unknown	28	18%
Hotel/motel	10	6%
Child's residence	9	6%
Outdoor/open area	6	4%
Law enforcement station	5	3%
Street	5	3%
Retail	5	3%
Medical facility	3	2%
Body of water	3	2%
Social services	2	1%
Restaurant	1	1%
Transportation facility	1	1%
Office building	1	1%
Park	1	1%
School	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>~100%</b>

## Vehicle Information in AMBER Alert Broadcast

AMBER Alert cases often involve a vehicle, though vehicle information is not required to issue an AMBER Alert. When appropriate, law enforcement will include this information in the notification sent to the public. In some instances, only vehicle descriptors, such as make, model, or color, are available. In others, complete or partial license plate information is available.

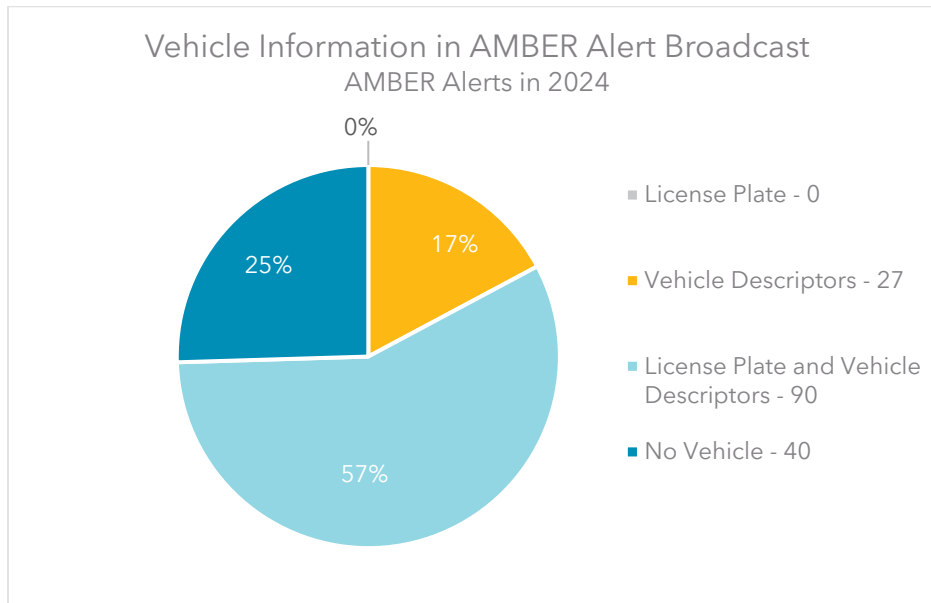


Figure 12: Vehicle Information Listed in AMBER Alert Broadcast

## Success Stories

A success story is a case in which a child is confirmed to have been safely recovered as a direct result of the AMBER Alert being issued. A case is not considered a successful recovery if the law enforcement investigation indicates the case is unfounded or a hoax.

### Count of Success Stories

Of the 189 AMBER Alert cases in 2024, 68 children involved in 47 AMBER Alert cases were successfully recovered as a direct result of those respective AMBER Alerts being issued. Of those, 46 children in 29 AMBER Alert cases were recovered due to the use of a WEA message.

Table 9: Success Stories by Case Type

Case type at intake	Number of successful recoveries by case	Number of successful recoveries by child
FA	32	50
NFA	14	17
ERU	1	1
LIM	0	0
MYA	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>68</b>

### Reason for Success Stories

The most common reason for an AMBER Alert success story is an individual or law enforcement recognizing the vehicle from the AMBER Alert at 26 percent (n=12).

Table 10: Reason for Success Stories

Summary of success stories	Number of cases	Number of children
Vehicle spotted by individual(s) who learned of the incident via the AMBER Alert	12	19
Individual(s) reported physical location of the child/abductor in response to AMBER Alert	11	15
Child/Abductor/Companion recognized by individual(s) who learned of the incident via the AMBER Alert	8	11
Abductor heard alert and released the child as confirmed by abductor, child, or witness	7	11
Abductor made contact with law enforcement or turned themselves in due to the AMBER Alert	4	7
Other	4	4
Tip(s) generated from AMBER Alert provided key investigative information	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>68</b>

Time Between Activation and Recovery for Success Stories

Of the success stories in 2024, 57 percent of the children (n=39) were successfully recovered within three hours of those AMBER Alerts being issued.

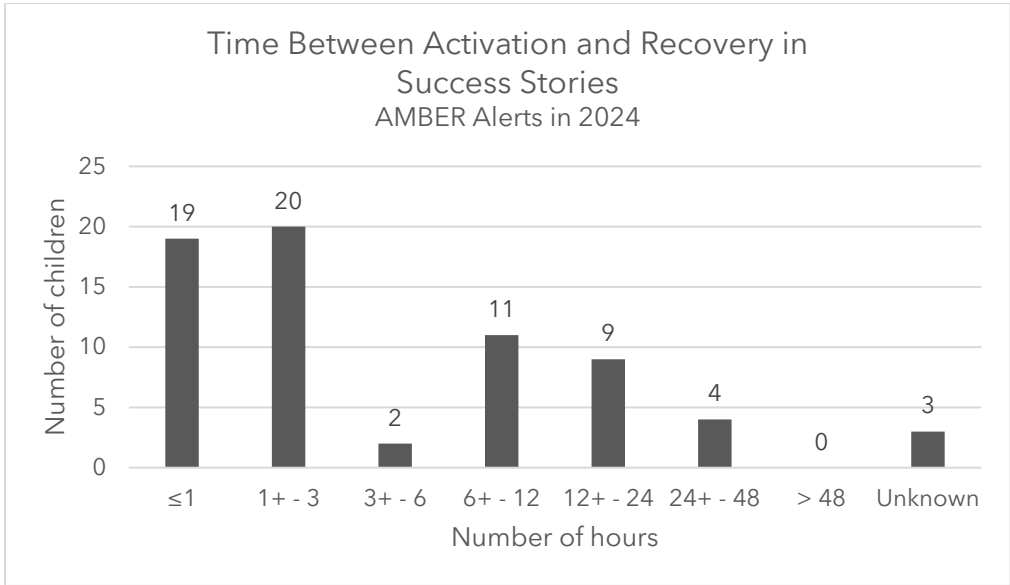


Figure 13: Time Between Activation and Recovery for Success Stories

Children Located Deceased

In 2024, nine children in nine separate AMBER Alert cases were located deceased. Children in hoax and unfounded AMBER Alerts have been included in this analysis.

Table 11: Children Located Deceased

Case Type	Abductor Motivation	Race/Sex of child	Age when missing	Time between activation and resolution	Distance between missing and recovery	Manner of death
NFA	Unknown	White female	11	>72 hours	11 - 50 miles	Homicide
LIM	Other	Hispanic male	3	>72 hours	Under 1 mile - 10 miles	Homicide
NFA	Other	Hispanic female	<1	<72 hours	Under 1 mile - 10 miles	Homicide
NFA	Domestic (Other)	White female	3	<72 hours	101 - 500 miles	Unknown
FA	Domestic (Other)	White male	3	<72 hours	Same location	Homicide
LIM	Other	White female	7	<72 hours	Under 1 mile - 10 miles	Accidental
FA	Domestic (Other)	Black female	1	<72 hours	101 - 500 miles	Accidental

Case Type	Abductor Motivation	Race/Sex of child	Age when missing	Time between activation and resolution	Distance between missing and recovery	Manner of death
FA	Mental health crisis	Black male	5	<72 hours*	Under 1 mile - 10 miles	Homicide
LIM	Other	Black male	8	<72 hours*	Unknown	Accidental

\*AMBER Alerts later determined to be unfounded



# Hoax and Unfounded AMBER Alerts

## Hoax AMBER Alerts

### Cases and Children in Hoax AMBER Alerts

In 2024, three percent (n=5) of AMBER Alerts issued involving five children were later determined to be hoaxes.

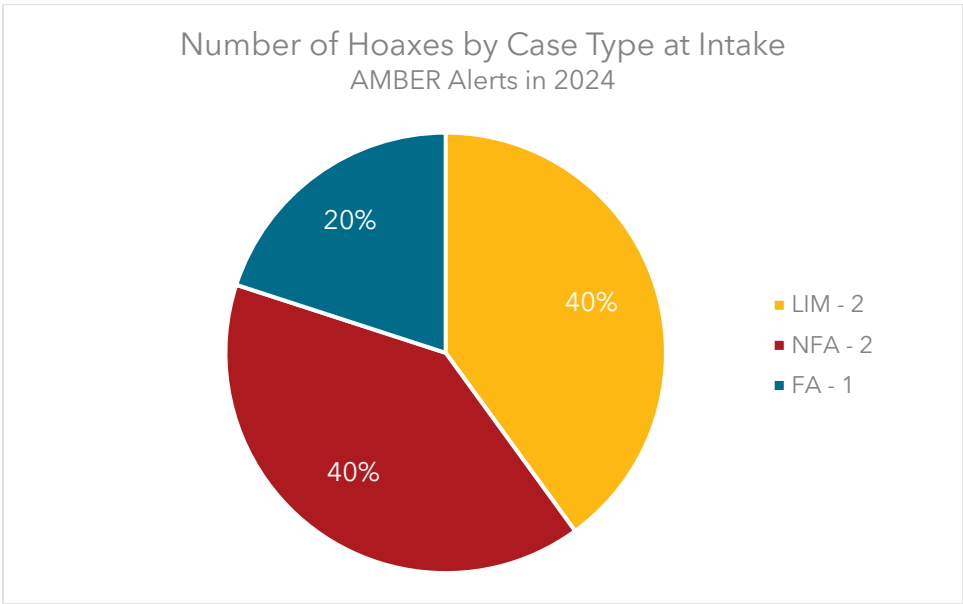


Figure 14: Number of Hoaxes by Case Type at Intake

Table 12: Age and Sex of Children in Hoaxes

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
<1	0	0	0
1-4	0	1	1
5-9	0	0	0
10-14	2	1	3
15-17	1	0	1
Total	3	2	5

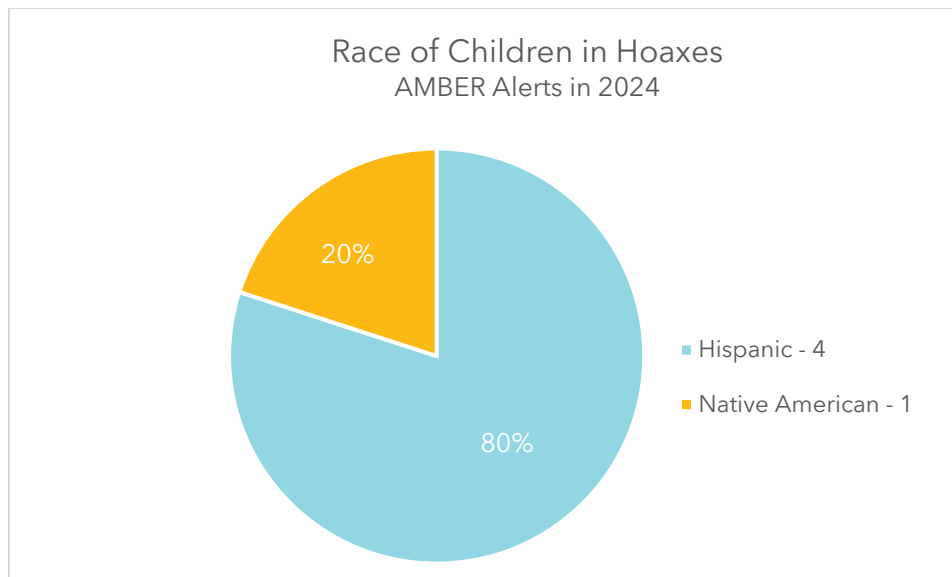


Figure 15: Race of Children in Hoaxes

### *Hoax Source or Reporting Party*

In 20 percent (n=1) of hoaxes, false information was provided by the child's parent. Additionally, 20 percent each (n=1 each) was provided by the child and their friend and by a friend of the child's family. For two cases, it was unknown who provided false information.

### *Reported Hoax Locations*

All five cases determined to be hoaxes had known locations from which the children involved were reported missing. Of those cases, 60 percent (n=3) were reported missing from the child's residence and 20 percent each (n=1 each) were reported missing from a hotel/motel and a recreational location.

## **Unfounded AMBER Alerts**

In 2024, 14 percent (n=27) of AMBER Alerts issued involving 29 children were later determined to be unfounded.

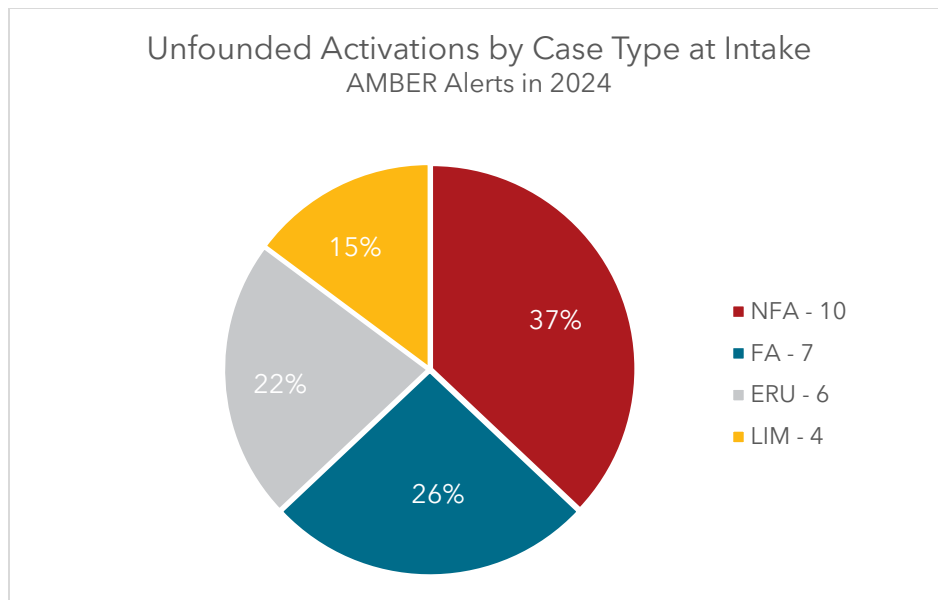


Figure 16: Unfounded Activations by Case Type at Intake

Table 13: Age and Sex of Children in Unfounded AMBER Alerts

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
<1	0	1	1
1-4	1	0	1
5-9	2	7	9
10-14	10	2	12
15-17	6	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>

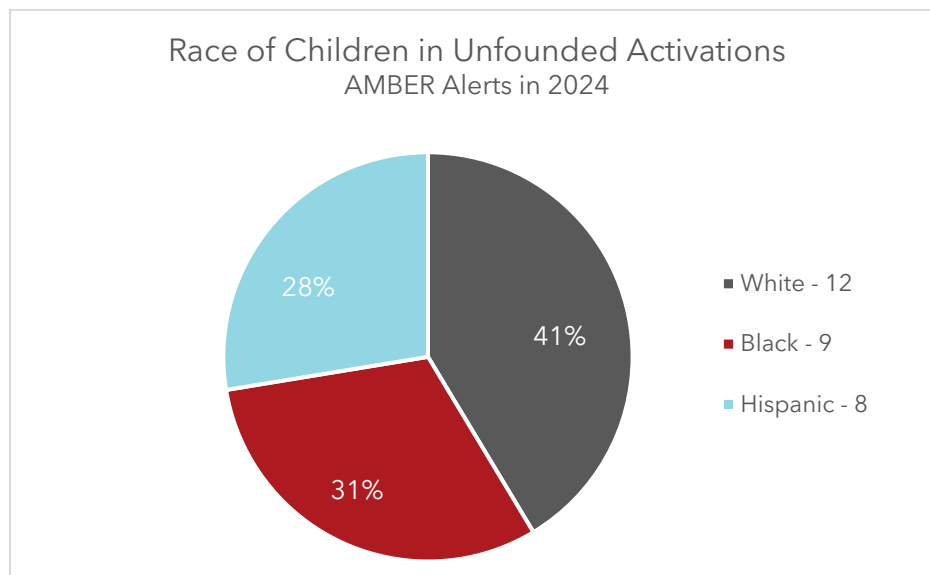


Figure 17: Race of Children in Unfounded AMBER Alerts

# Five-Year Comparison of AMBER Alerts Issued

This section includes all hoax and unfounded AMBER Alerts for the described parameters and time periods.

## Five-Year Overview

### Yearly Totals of AMBER Alerts and Children Involved

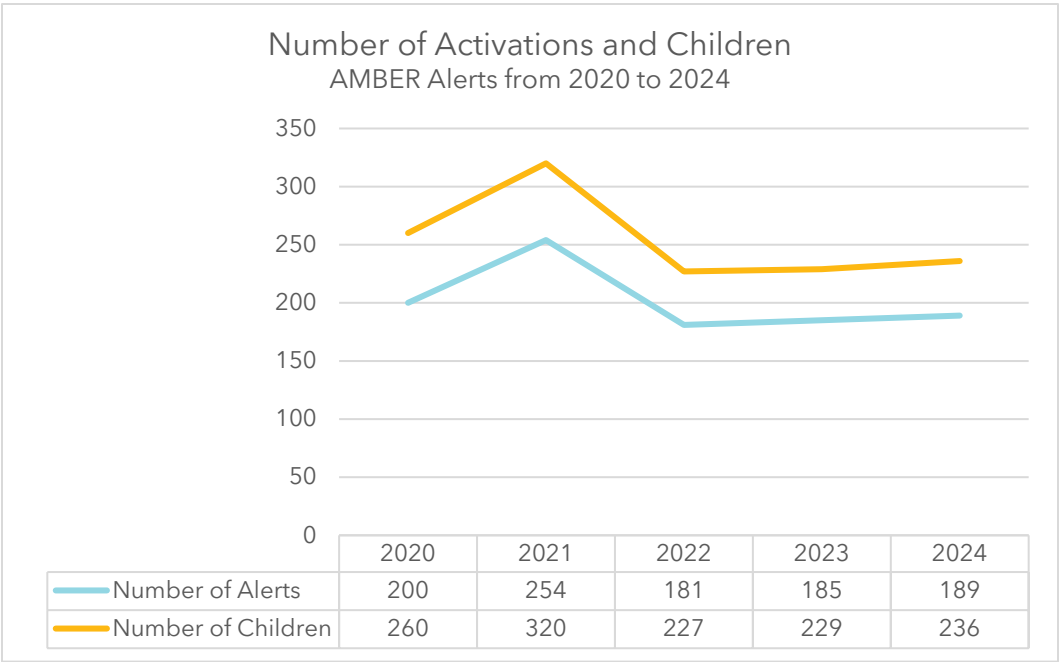


Figure 18: Number of AMBER Alerts and Children from 2020 to 2024

### Monthly AMBER Alert Totals

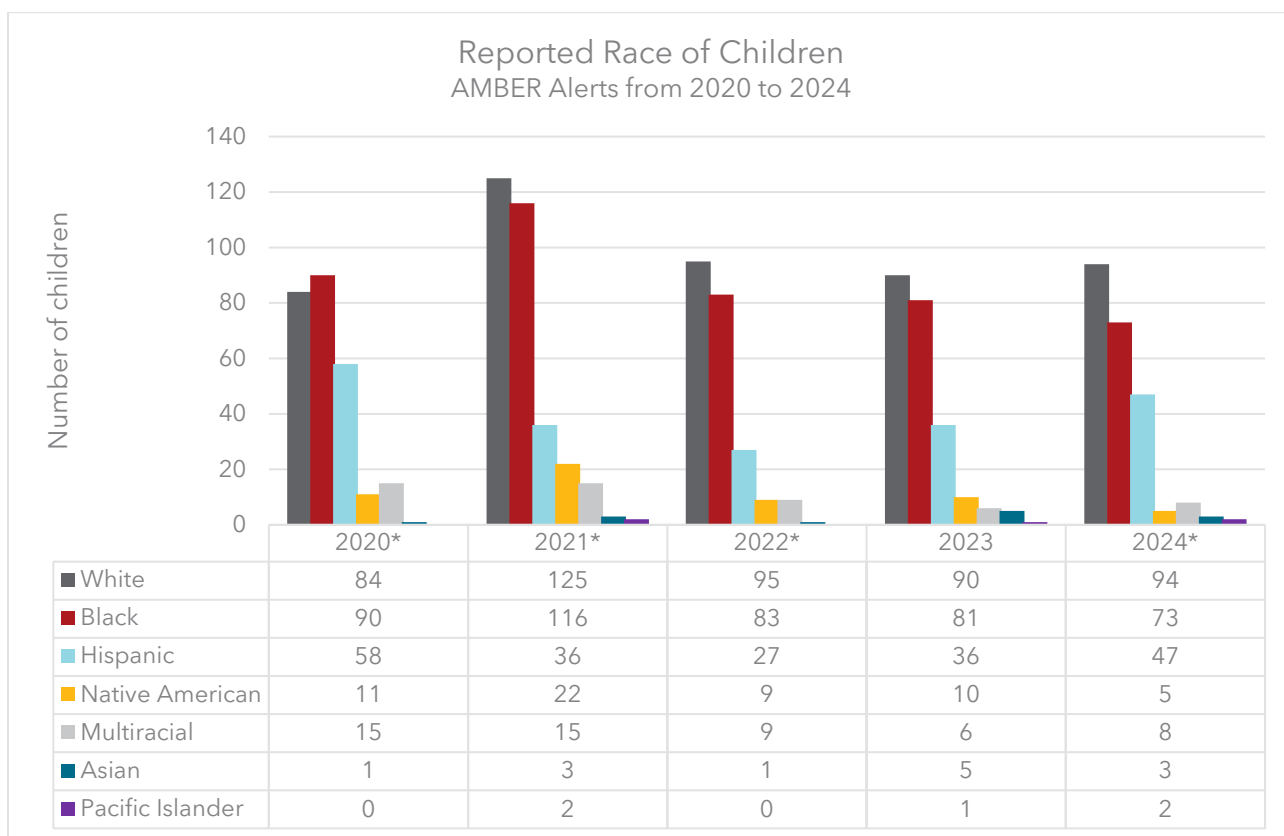
Table 14: Number of AMBER Alerts by Month from 2020 to 2024

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	13	15	13	19	18	24	16	13	16	22	18	13
2021	23	23	28	15	21	27	19	19	19	20	21	19
2022	9	15	12	21	17	18	17	18	14	16	13	11
2023	9	13	22	10	12	26	25	13	11	16	12	16
2024	12	28	16	19	13	16	18	12	15	12	13	15
Average Total	13	19	18	17	16	22	19	15	15	17	15	15

## Children in AMBER Alerts from 2020 to 2024

### Reported Race of Children

Figure 19 provides the total number of children by race as reported to law enforcement at the initiation of an AMBER Alert. It includes children shown in AMBER Alerts later determined to be hoaxes or unfounded. Earlier portions of this report provide more detailed break downs of race in hoax or unfounded alerts vs. non-hoax/non-unfounded alerts.



\*The race of some children was unknown

Figure 19: Reported Race of Children from 2020 to 2024

### Deceased Children

Table 15: Number of Children Located Deceased from 2020 to 2024

Case type at intake	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
LIM	7	0	1	1	3	12
FA	2	0	3	1	3	9
NFA	1	2	0	1	3	7
ERU	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>

## Hoaxes and Unfounded AMBER Alerts

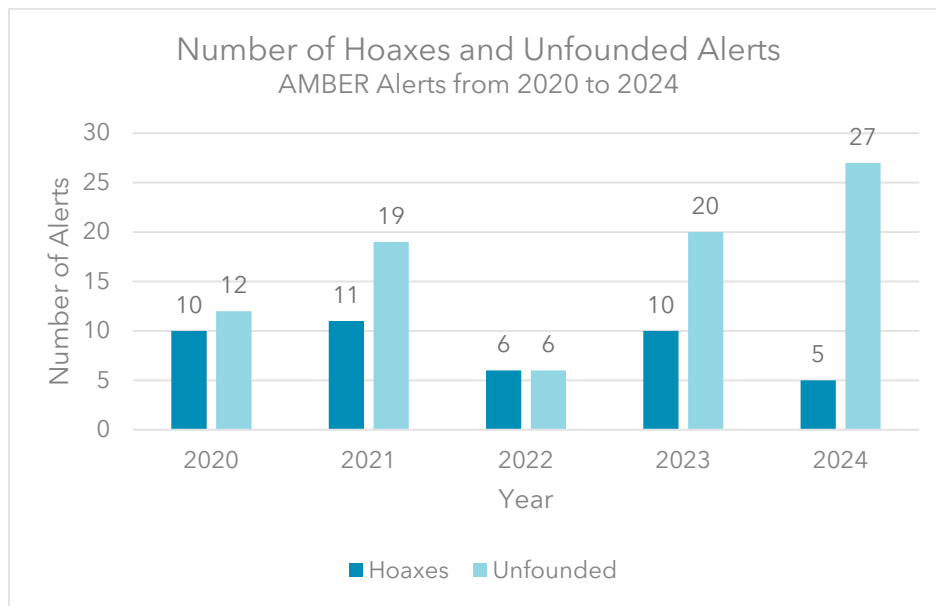


Figure 20: Number of Hoaxes and Unfounded Alerts from 2020 to 2024

# Glossary

---

**AMBER Alert:** An AMBER Alert is a rapid notification to the public using all available technology when a child is abducted or believed to have been abducted. AMBER Alerts are activated based on specific criteria and use common technologies across each AMBER Alert plan. For the purposes of analysis, the below terms can be used to reference different aspects of an AMBER Alert.

- *AMBER Alert Plan:* A defined jurisdiction for the activation of an AMBER Alert which may exist at the state, local, regional, tribal, or territorial levels. Plans are generally under the direction of an AMBER Alert coordinator.
- *AMBER Alert Case:* This represents an abduction event for which one or more AMBER Alerts have been activated.
- *AMBER Alert Activation:* One or more AMBER Alert plans may activate their resources for the same abduction event. Each plan that issues an AMBER Alert for a case is considered an activation.
- *Originating AMBER Alert Activation:* This refers to the FIRST plan to activate during an abduction event.
- *Extending AMBER Alert Activation:* Any plan that activates an AMBER Alert after or at the request of the originating AMBER Alert plan.

**AMBER Alert Range:** AMBER Alerts are activated geographically based on the needs of the investigation. A statewide plan may issue an alert for only a single county and some cases may result in activations by multiple AMBER Alert plans. The below terms are used to define the geography of all notifications for an AMBER Alert case.

- *Local:* The activation of the AMBER Alert was limited to a single county.
- *Regional:* The activation of the AMBER Alert was limited to a group of counties within one state or the jurisdiction of a regional plan which includes multiple counties in different states. An example of a regional plan with counties in multiple states would be the Navajo Nation AMBER Alert Plan.
- *Statewide:* An AMBER Alert was activated for the entirety of one state.
- *Multistate:* AMBER Alert plans in more than one state or territory activated for the same AMBER Alert case.

**AMBER Alert Secondary Distribution (AASD):** A network of private companies, social media, technology partners, federal agencies, and others which geographically amplify AMBER Alerts to the public, customers, or their employees. This network is maintained and activated by NCMEC.

**Case Type:** NCMEC categorizes missing child cases based on specific factors for the purposes of case management and data analysis. In this report, all case type analysis is based on the case type at the time of intake by NCMEC.

- *Family abduction (FA)* - A family abduction is defined as the taking, retention, or concealment of a child, younger than 18 years of age, by a parent, other person with a family relationship to the child, or his or her agent, in violation of the custody rights, including visitation rights of a parent or legal guardian.
- *Nonfamily abduction (NFA)* - A nonfamily abduction is defined as the unauthorized taking, retention, luring, confinement, or concealment of a child younger than the age of 18 by someone other than a family member.
- *Lost, injured, or otherwise missing (LIM)* - Lost, injured, or otherwise missing is defined as any missing child younger than the age of 18 when there are insufficient facts to determine the cause of

the child's disappearance or any child 10 years of age or younger who is missing on his or her own accord.

- *Endangered runaway (ERU)* - Any missing child between 11 and 17 years of age who is missing of their own accord and whose whereabouts are unknown to their parent(s) or legal guardian.
- *Missing Young Adult* - A missing person 18 years of age or older but younger than the age of 21. This category is derived from Suzanne's Law, a provision in the PROTECT Act of 2003 (codified at 34 U.S.C. § 41307), which extends to missing young adults the same reporting and law enforcement response requirements already provided for children younger than 18 years of age.

**Hoax and Unfounded AMBER Alerts:** Law enforcement activates AMBER Alerts based on information known at the time of a confirmed or suspected abduction, but in some instances when the case is resolved, the information which led to the activation of an AMBER Alert was determined to be false or inaccurate. If it is determined at the conclusion of the investigation that the AMBER Alert criteria would not have been met were all accurate facts available, the AMBER Alert is considered unfounded or a hoax. For example, in some instances a child may have been missing but it was later determined they were not in danger or were not abducted.

- A hoax AMBER Alert occurs when false information is relayed at any point during the investigation to create the impression of an abduction or endangerment which results in law enforcement activating an AMBER Alert.
- An unfounded AMBER Alert occurs when an AMBER Alert is activated based on information later determined to be inaccurate.

**International Case:** An AMBER Alert case is considered international if either of the following are true:

- At any point during the abduction incident it was confirmed the child was transported across an international border.
- Based on a significant belief the child had entered the country, an AMBER Alert was activated within the United States for a child missing from another country.

**Motivation:** Motivation analysis is provided based on the best available information regarding the presumed or likely motivation for the abduction of a child. These do not account for other endangerments or reasons why law enforcement believed the child was in imminent danger. AMBER Alerts determined to be a hoax or unfounded are not assigned a motivation. The following categories are used in this report:

- *Criminal Activity:* The child was abducted due to criminal activity not covered by other motivations, such as drug sales or fleeing a crime scene. The child may or may not have a direct involvement in the criminal activity.
- *Domestic (Custodial):* The primary motivation is the custody of the child.
- *Domestic (Other):* Another domestic incident or dispute led to the abduction of the child or the reason for the domestic incident is unknown. This includes incidents related to romantic relationships involving the child or guardian of the child.
- *Enticement (Online):* The child was initially/primarily groomed or enticed online or via an app. There may be prior in-person meetings, and there may or may not be a sexual component.
- *Enticement (Other):* The child was initially/primarily groomed or enticed in person. There may be secondary technology aspects, and there may or may not be a sexual component.
- *Human Smuggling:* The child was abducted while being transported to gain illegal entry into a foreign country.



- *Infant Abduction*: The taking of a child younger than 12 months of age for the purpose of raising the child as their own. This includes fetal abductions, where a child is forcefully and violently removed from the womb by an abductor for the same purpose.
- *Mental Health Crisis*: The abduction occurred due to a mental health crisis on the part of the abductor.
- *Other*: Any motivations not specified in the definitions of this report.
- *Ransom*: The child was abducted with the intent of collecting ransom.
- *Sexual (No enticement)*: The abduction occurred with intent to sexually assault or exploit the child.
- *Substance Use*: The use of drugs or alcohol by the abductor led to the abduction of the child.
- *Trafficking (CST)*: The child was abducted in an incident related to child sex trafficking. For example, a child was abducted by a trafficker.
- *Trafficking (Other)*: The child was abducted in relation to other forms of human trafficking, such as forced labor or adult commercial sex.
- *Undisclosed*: Law enforcement did not release motivation information to NCMEC.
- *Unknown*: Law enforcement is unable to identify a presumed or likely motivation for abduction.
- *Vehicle Theft*: The child was in a car which was stolen. The abduction is likely unintentional with the car being the primary target of the incident.

**Recovery:** A child is considered recovered when any of the criteria listed below are met. AMBER Alerts involving multiple children may result in recoveries which take place at different times during the investigation.

- Returns home to their parent or legal guardian.
- Remains in the custody of law enforcement.
- Is in contact with their parent or legal guardian but will not be returning home and the parents or legal guardian and law enforcement are satisfied with the situation.
- A child is only considered recovered/deceased by NCMEC if remains have been found and positively identified.

**Resolved:** An AMBER Alert is considered resolved when one of the following criteria are met:

- All children featured in the AMBER Alert have been recovered.
- Law enforcement determines no child was missing, which may happen for AMBER Alerts categorized as hoaxes or unfounded AMBER Alerts.

**Success Story:** A child's recovery is considered a success story when their safe recovery occurred as a direct result of the AMBER Alert being issued. For example, an individual may recognize the vehicle involved in the alert and report the sighting to law enforcement leading to the safe rescue of the child.

**Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):** Wireless Emergency Alerts are short emergency messages, from authorized federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial public alerting authorities, that can be broadcast from cell towers to any WEA-enabled mobile device in a locally targeted area. Wireless providers primarily use cell broadcast technology for WEA message delivery. WEA is a partnership among FEMA, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and wireless providers to enhance public safety.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> FEMA. n.d. *Wireless Emergency Alerts*. Accessed March 8, 2025. <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system/public/wireless-emergency-alerts>.



## List of Figures

---

Figure 1: Number of AMBER Alert Activations and Children by Month .....	8
Figure 2: Range of AMBER Alerts.....	10
Figure 3: AMBER Alerts by Case Type at Intake .....	12
Figure 4: Age of Children When Missing .....	13
Figure 5: Race of Missing Children in AMBER Alerts .....	13
Figure 6: Time Between Reported Missing and Activation .....	16
Figure 7: Time Between Reported Missing and Recovery .....	16
Figure 8: Time Between Activation and Recovery.....	17
Figure 9: Distance Between Missing and Recovery Locations.....	18
Figure 10: Distance Traveled by Case Type at Intake.....	19
Figure 11: Multistate/Territory AMBER Alert Recoveries.....	20
Figure 12: Vehicle Information Listed in AMBER Alert Broadcast .....	21
Figure 13: Time Between Activation and Recovery for Success Stories .....	23
Figure 14: Number of Hoaxes by Case Type at Intake .....	25
Figure 15: Race of Children in Hoaxes .....	26
Figure 16: Unfounded Activations by Case Type at Intake .....	27
Figure 17: Race of Children in Unfounded AMBER Alerts .....	27
Figure 18: Number of AMBER Alerts and Children from 2020 to 2024 .....	28
Figure 19: Reported Race of Children from 2020 to 2024.....	29
Figure 20: Number of Hoaxes and Unfounded Alerts from 2020 to 2024.....	30

## List of Tables

---

Table 1: Number of Originating AMBER Alert Activations by State/Territory .....	8
Table 2: List of Multi-plan AMBER Alerts .....	9
Table 3: Abductor Relationship to Child by Case Type at Intake .....	14
Table 4: Abductor’s Motive for Abduction by Case .....	15
Table 5: Abductor’s Motive for Abduction by Abductor Relationship to Child.....	15
Table 6: Recovery Within Three Days of Activation .....	17
Table 7: Missing Location.....	18
Table 8: Recovery Location .....	20
Table 9: Success Stories by Case Type .....	22
Table 10: Reason for Success Stories.....	22
Table 11: Children Located Deceased .....	23
Table 12: Age and Sex of Children in Hoaxes .....	25
Table 13: Age and Sex of Children in Unfounded AMBER Alerts .....	27
Table 14: Number of AMBER Alerts by Month from 2020 to 2024 .....	28
Table 15: Number of Children Located Deceased from 2020 to 2024 .....	29

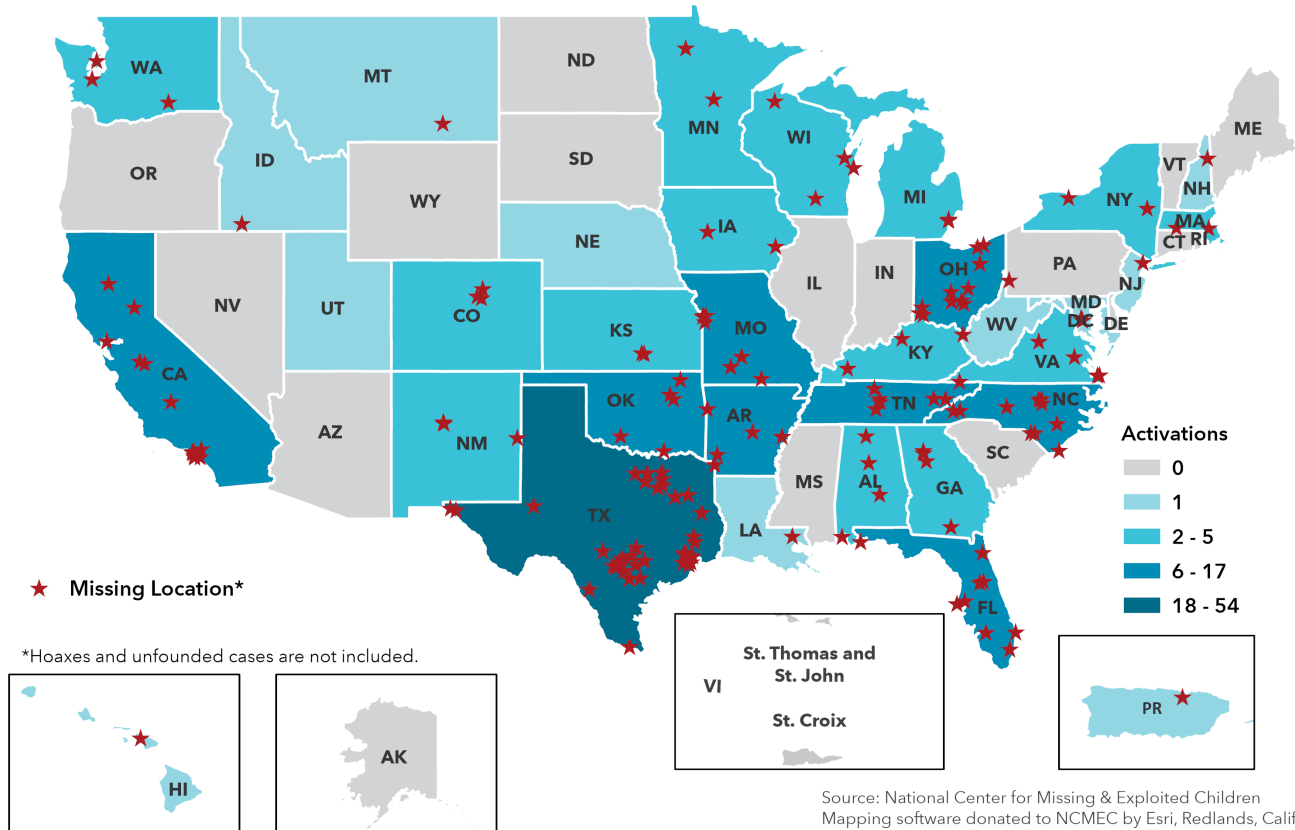
# 2024 Map



## 2024 AMBER Alert Report

AMBER Alert Activations  
from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024

Total = 189



Source: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
Mapping software donated to NCMEC by Esri, Redlands, California  
March 18, 2025