



# NEWS

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**Federal Communications Commission**  
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**Washington, D. C. 20554**

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **FCC AMENDS EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM RULES, INCLUDES CHILD ABDUCTION ALERTS**

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it has adopted a Report and Order amending the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules. The Commission adopted several new EAS event and location codes, which broadcast stations and cable systems may use to alert the public in the event of state and local emergencies, including a new Child Abduction Emergency event code which may be used to activate AMBER Plans.

The AMBER Plan is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and the media used to alert the public of serious child abduction cases, where police believe that the child is in danger of bodily harm or death. Under the AMBER Plan, radio and television stations interrupt programming to disseminate information concerning serious child abduction using the EAS. Adoption of the new Child Abduction Emergency event code responds to concerns that the current practice of using the Civil Emergency Message event code to activate AMBER alerts has resulted in confusion as to the intent of the alert.

The revised EAS rules permit, but do not require, broadcast stations and cable systems to modify their existing EAS equipment so that the equipment is capable of receiving and transmitting the new event and location codes. However, new EAS equipment installed by broadcast stations and cable systems after February 1, 2004 must be able to receive and transmit the new codes.

The Report and Order also increases the time period within which Required Monthly Tests of the EAS must be retransmitted from 15 to 60 minutes. Further, it authorizes cable and wireless cable systems serving fewer than 5,000 subscribers to install an FCC-certified EAS decoder only, rather than both an encoder and decoder, if certified decoders become available by October 1, 2002. The order also exempts low power FM stations from the Commission requirement to install an FCC-certified decoder until one year after any such decoders are certified by the Commission. Meanwhile, broadcast satellite and repeater stations, which rebroadcast 100% of the programming of their hub station, will now be exempt from the requirement to install EAS equipment.

Action by the Commission on February 22, 2002 by Report and Order (FCC 02-64). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Martin.  
EB Docket No. 01-66

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