



MTA BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 24, 2002

SUBJECT: AMBER ALERT NETWORK

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file report outlining the MTA's participation in the California Child Safety AMBER Network for the safe and rapid recovery of abducted children.

ISSUE

At the request of Director Hahn, the MTA's Office of Security and Law Enforcement contacted the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) Transit Group, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department's (LASD) Transit Services Bureau, about MTA's participation in the California "AMBER Alert" program. The AMBER Alert program is a statewide network of information systems designed to rapidly notify law enforcement agencies and the general public about abducted children. The purpose of this network is to mobilize government resources and the general public to be on the lookout for suspects and their vehicles when a child is abducted. It is extremely important for these abducted children to be rescued as soon as possible because as time elapses the probability of finding these children unharmed is reduced. Participation by the MTA will increase the number of people in this region who are on the lookout for the suspect and/or suspect's vehicle.

DISCUSSION

Governor Davis recently announced a comprehensive plan to help provide a coordinated and rapid response to instances of child abduction in California. Central to this new initiative is implementation of the California Child Safety AMBER Network, which incorporates the use of existing alerts systems and a comprehensive prevention campaign. This network of information systems includes several components linking law enforcement agencies, Caltrans, and other agencies with the mass media in a coordinated effort to disseminate timely information about abducted children and possible suspects. The purpose of the AMBER Alert is to make critical information available to law enforcement agencies, and the general public, so these children may be found as soon as possible.

Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

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MTA Participation

When an AMBER Alert is issued by a law enforcement agency, LAPD or LASD transit units will receive that information via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS). They will then FAX the alert information to the MTA's Bus Operations Control Center (BOCC) and the Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC). These two principal communications and control centers would then transmit that alert information to all operations staff, including bus and rail operators as well as supervisory staff, through periodic announcements over our vehicles radio systems.

The alert information would also be immediately faxed to each operating division for posting within the operators Train Rooms and at check-in windows. It would also be disseminated by a supervisor at the check-in windows to each operator as they report in for work.

The information will also be provided to our passengers via the Visual Message System (VMS) within the Metro Rail Stations. With the MTA fielding more than 2,000 transit vehicles and support vehicles during peak times this agency's active participation significantly adds to the number of "eyes and ears" on the street to support law enforcement efforts.

Nearly all of the MTA field staff have immediate access to either radio or cell phone communications that can be used to report any possible sightings. Since the MTA's transit routes cover a large portion of the heavily populated Los Angeles County, the participation of this agency can add to the effectiveness of this statewide system. To date, the MTA has participated in two AMBER Alerts.

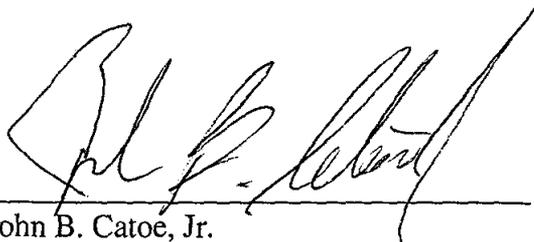
Alert Stand-Downs

In the case of the two (2) AMBER Alerts that MTA has participated in, official notice was received from both LAPD and LASD that the "missing parties" had been located by law enforcement, in addition to the suspect(s) initially sought, within a few hours of the issuance of the initial AMBER Alert activations. Our agency through the BOCC and ROCC quickly moved to cancel those alerts utilizing the same methods that had been used to implement them.

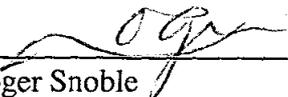
NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to explore any possible method for this agency to participate and enhance statewide or regional efforts to rescue abducted children. If additional areas of participation are identified, they will be reported to the Board.

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