

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®

2018 AMBER Alert Report

Analysis of AMBER Alert Cases in 2018



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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 home. Her murder remains unsolved. Dallas-Fort Worth area residents were outraged and began calling radio stations, not only to vent their anger and frustration but also to offer suggestions to prevent such crimes in the future. One person, Diana Simone, suggested a program be implemented allowing use of the Emergency Alert System, known as 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.

This program was eventually taken to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®, known as NCMEC, with a request for a national initiative. It then became known as America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response or the AMBER Plan, which allows broadcasters and transportation authorities to immediately distribute information about recent child abductions to the public and enables the entire community to assist in the search for, and safe recovery, of the child. What began as a local effort in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area has grown into a seamless system of such programs in every state across the country. Each year these alerts help safely recover abducted children. Since the inception of the program in 1996, through Dec. 31, 2018, 956 children have been safely recovered specifically as a result of an AMBER Alert being issued.

This program is a voluntary partnership among law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, transportation agencies, and the wireless industry to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious cases of child abduction. Broadcasters use EAS to air a description of the abducted child and suspected abductor. This is the same concept used during severe weather emergencies. The goal of an AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for, and safe recovery, of the child. In the summer of 2004, NCMEC began to develop a network of internet content providers, trucking industry associations, social networking websites, digital billboards, and wireless industry representatives to further enhance the alerting capabilities of each state/territory's AMBER Alert program. The AMBER Alert program has now evolved to use all available technology when alerting the public. More recently, Wireless Emergency Alerts and targeted distribution on social media continue to improve and expand the reach of the AMBER Alert program.

April 30, 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today or PROTECT Act of 2003 (Pub. L. No. 108-21). Building on the steps already taken by the Bush Administration 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.¹

¹*National Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, www.amberalert.gov/ntl_strategy.htm, accessed Feb. 26, 2019.

AMBER Alert Definitions

This report presents information about AMBER Alerts issued in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands from Jan. 1, 2018, through Dec. 31, 2018, and intaked by NCMEC. Although an AMBER Alert case may be activated in multiple areas, this report only accounts for alerts in the state/territory of first activation. This report analyzes cases according to the case type for which the AMBER Alert was issued, not the case type at the time of recovery.

When a law enforcement agency is notified about an abducted child, it must first determine if that child's case meets the program's AMBER Alert criteria. The U.S. Department of Justice's recommended guidelines 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, known as NCIC, database.

An AMBER Alert may involve one or more children and is issued on either a state/territory, regional, or local level. Once an AMBER Alert is activated, the alert may be issued in another state/territory at the request of the originating state's AMBER Alert coordinator, thus creating a **multistate/territory activation**. A state-/territory-wide alert is issued in the entire state or territory, a regional alert is issued in multiple counties, and a local alert is issued in one county or a smaller geographic area. 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.

At the outset of an AMBER Alert case, law enforcement categorizes the case as one of the four types listed below, defined for the purposes of this report as:

- **Family abduction** or 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** or 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** or 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** or ERU – Any missing child between 11 and 17 years of age who is missing of his or her own accord and whose whereabouts are unknown to his or her parent(s) or legal guardian.

Law enforcement may determine an AMBER Alert should be re-categorized based on new information developed during the case investigation. For example, when the AMBER Alert is issued, law enforcement may believe the child is an NFA victim, but at the conclusion of the case may determine the child was in fact an ERU.

Law enforcement occasionally encounters cases in which an AMBER Alert should not have been issued, later determining those cases were either **unfounded** or a **hoax**:

- A **hoax** occurs when an individual falsely reports a child missing or when a child reports him- or herself missing with the intent to mislead law enforcement.
- An **unfounded** case occurs when a child is reported missing based on available information at the time, but the investigation determines a child was never missing.

Cases are categorized as **resolved** when any of the criteria listed below are met. The child:

- Returns home to his or her parent or legal guardian.
- Remains in the custody of law enforcement.
- Is in contact with his or her 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's case is only labeled recovered/deceased by NCMEC if a body has been found and positively identified.

A child's recovery is considered a **success story** when his or her 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.

Summary of AMBER Alerts

From Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018, 161 AMBER Alerts were issued in the U.S. involving 203 children.

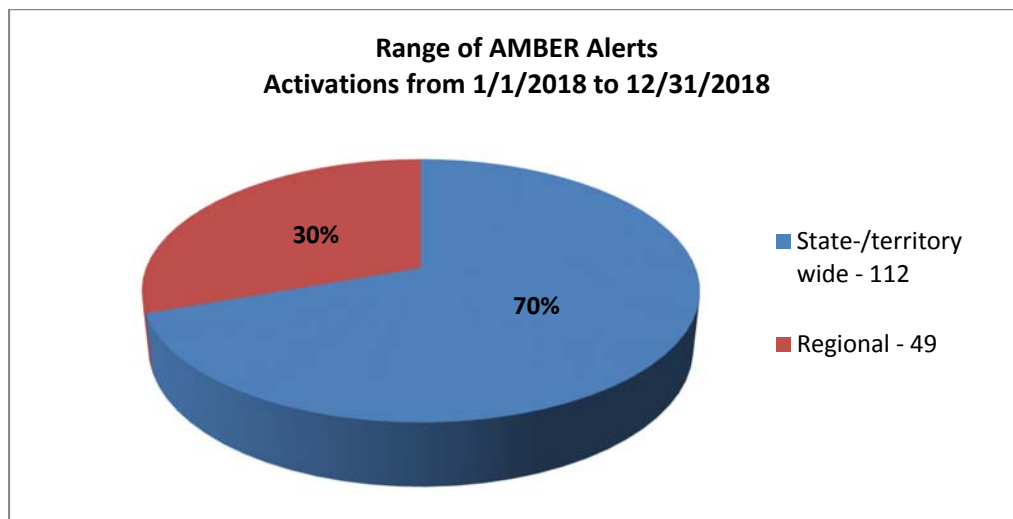
At the time the AMBER Alert cases were intaked at NCMEC, there were 97 FAs, 56 NFAs, six LIMs, and two ERUs. Eleven cases were later determined to be hoaxes, and 12 cases were later determined to be unfounded.

Of the 161 AMBER Alerts issued from Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018, 155 cases resulted in a recovery, 28 of which were successfully recovered as a direct result of an AMBER Alert being issued. As of Feb. 26, 2019, when statistics for this report were finalized, for the AMBER Alerts issued in 2018, 11 children remained actively missing and seven children were located deceased.

AMBER Alerts by Range

In 2018, 70 percent (n=112) of AMBER Alerts were issued state-/territory wide, 30 percent (n=49) of AMBER Alerts were issued regionally, and no AMBER Alerts were issued locally.

Figure 1: Range of AMBER Alerts



AMBER Alerts by State/Territory

From Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018, 161 AMBER Alerts were issued in 37 states. Texas issued the most AMBER Alerts with 14 percent (n=23) followed by Ohio with 9 percent (n=15).

Table 1: Number and Percent of AMBER Alert Cases by State/Territory

State/Territory	Number of alerts	Percent
Texas	23	14
Ohio	15	9
California	11	7
Florida and New York	9 each	6 each
Colorado and North Carolina	7 each	4 each
Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Virginia	6 each	4 each
Arizona and Arkansas	5 each	3 each
Georgia, Michigan, and Washington	4 each	2 each
Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, and Missouri	3 each	2 each
Alabama, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Montana, West Virginia, and Wisconsin	2 each	1 each
Connecticut, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, and Wyoming	1 each	1 each
Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Vermont	0 each	0 each
Total	161	~100

Multistate/Territory AMBER Alerts

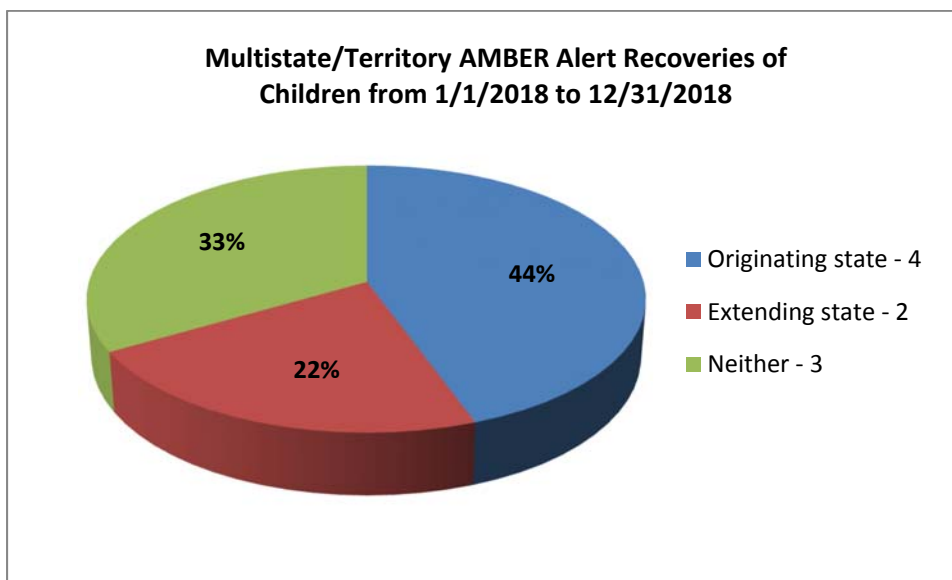
When an AMBER Alert is issued, an abductor may take the child outside the jurisdiction of the issuing law enforcement authority. In some cases, the AMBER Alert coordinator in the state/territory where the AMBER Alert originated may request an AMBER Alert be extended into another state/territory. In 2018, seven AMBER Alerts were extended beyond the limits of the state where the AMBER Alert first originated.

Table 2: List of Multistate/Territory AMBER Alerts

Originating	Extending
Florida	Georgia
Kansas	Missouri
Louisiana	Mississippi
Michigan	Indiana
Missouri	Kansas
Nebraska	Wyoming
Virginia	North Carolina

In two cases, four children were recovered in the state where the alert originated. In two cases, two children were recovered in the extending state, and in three cases, three children were recovered in neither the originating state nor the extending state.

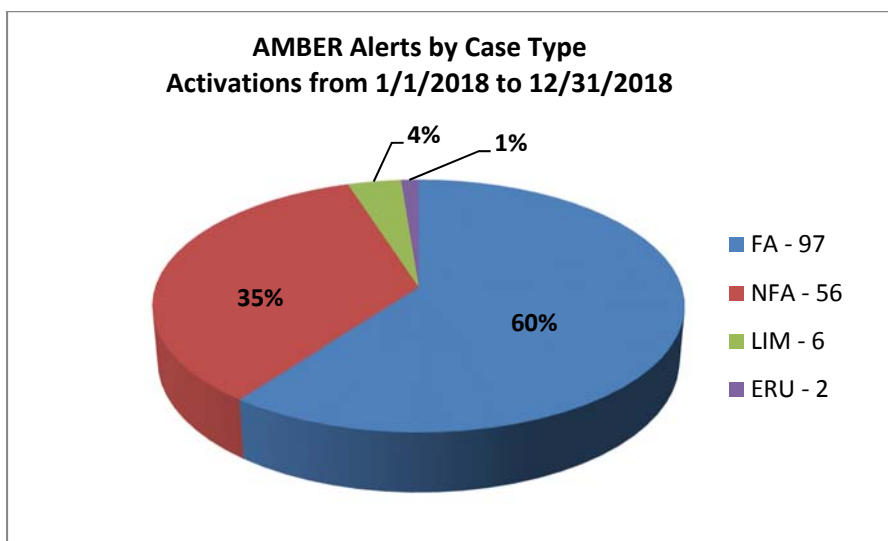
Figure 2: Multistate/Territory AMBER Alert Recoveries



AMBER Alerts by Case Type at Intake

In 2018, 60 percent (n=97) of AMBER Alert cases were intaked as FAs, 35 percent (n=56) were NFAs, 4 percent (n=6) were LIMs, and 1 percent (n=2) were ERUs.

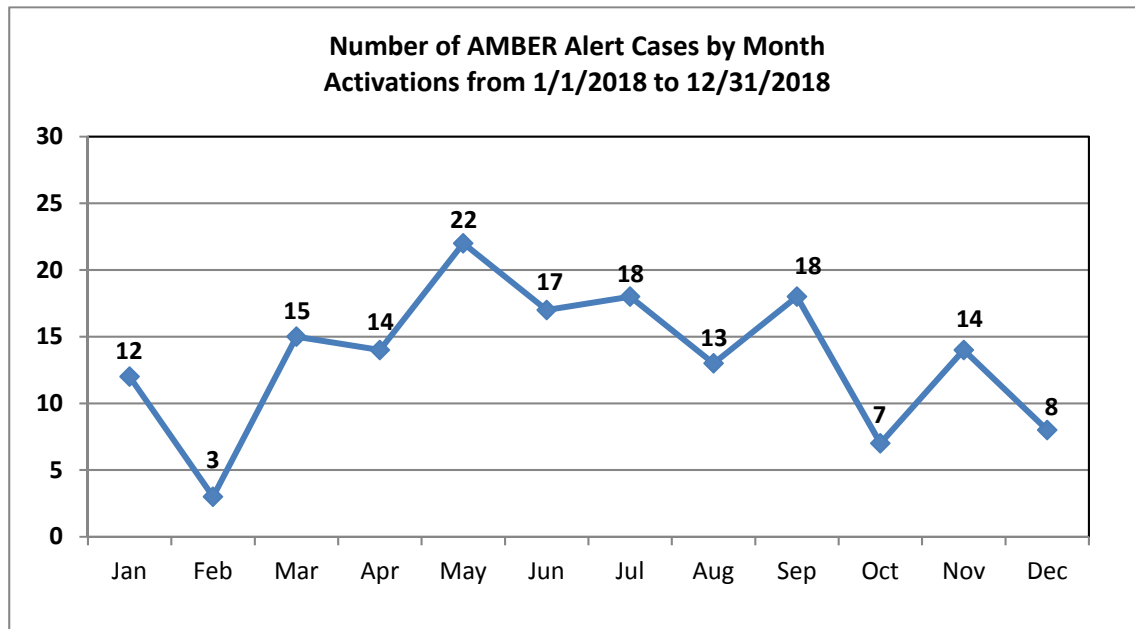
Figure 3: AMBER Alerts by Case Type



Number of Cases by Month

In 2018, the number of AMBER Alerts issued per month ranged from a low of three in February to a high of 22 in May.

Figure 4: Number of AMBER Alert Cases by Month



Number of Case Types at Intake by Month

In 2018, AMBER Alerts were issued most frequently for FAs (n=13) in July. The highest number of NFAs (n=8) occurred in June. AMBER Alerts for LIMs (n=3) were the most frequently issued in May. The only Alerts for ERUs (n=1) were issued in March and April.

Table 3: Number of Case Types by Month

	FA	NFA	LIM	ERU	Total	Total percent
Jan	7	4	1	0	12	7
Feb	3	0	0	0	3	2
Mar	12	2	0	1	15	9
Apr	7	5	1	1	14	9
May	12	7	3	0	22	14
Jun	9	8	0	0	17	11
Jul	13	5	0	0	18	11
Aug	6	7	0	0	13	8
Sep	12	6	0	0	18	11
Oct	5	1	1	0	7	4
Nov	7	7	0	0	14	9

	FA	NFA	LIM	ERU	Total	Total percent
Dec	4	4	0	0	8	5
Total	97	56	6	2	161	100

Number of Children by Case Type at Intake by Month

In 2018, 203 children were involved in 161 AMBER Alert cases. Sixty-six percent (n=133) of children were intaked as FAs followed by 31 percent (n=62) of children intaked as NFAs. Three percent (n=6) were intaked as LIMs, and 1 percent (n=2) were intaked as ERUs.

Children intaked as FAs were most frequently involved in AMBER Alerts during the month of July (n=20). The highest number of children intaked as NFAs (n=9) occurred in the months of June and November. AMBER Alerts for LIMs (n=3) were most frequently issued in May. Children were only intaked as ERUs (n=1) in the months of March and April.

Table 4: Number of Children by Case Type by Month

	FA	NFA	LIM	ERU	Total	Total percent
Jan	7	4	1	0	12	6
Feb	3	0	0	0	3	1
Mar	17	3	0	1	21	10
Apr	11	5	1	1	18	9
May	18	7	3	0	28	14
Jun	14	9	0	0	23	11
Jul	20	6	0	0	26	13
Aug	8	7	0	0	15	7
Sep	17	7	0	0	24	12
Oct	5	1	1	0	7	3
Nov	8	9	0	0	17	8
Dec	5	4	0	0	9	4
Total	133	62	6	2	203	~100

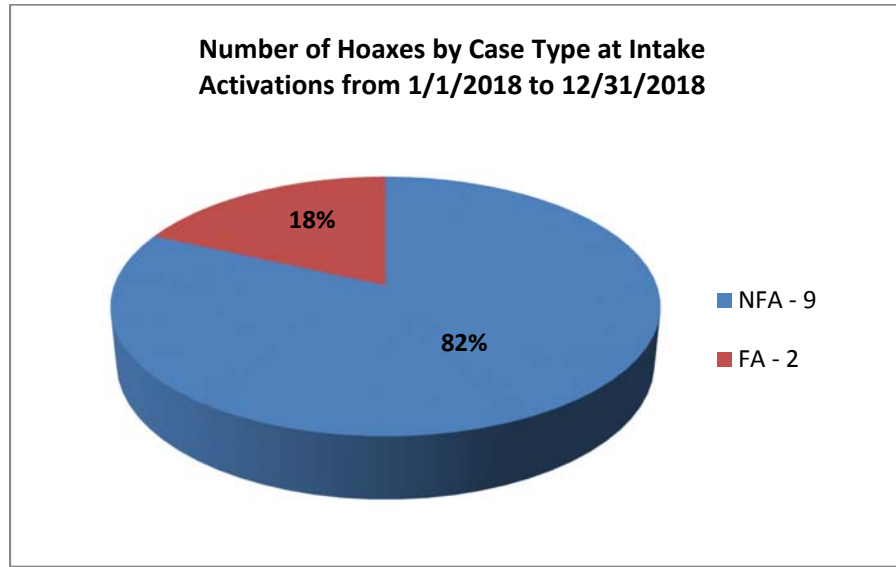
Cases Determined to Be Hoaxes

A case is determined to be a hoax when either an individual falsely reports a child missing or when a child reports him- or herself missing with the intent of misleading law enforcement.

In 2018, 7 percent (n=11) of AMBER Alerts issued involving 13 children were later determined to be hoaxes. Eighty-two percent (n=9) of hoaxes were originally intaked as NFAs and FAs at 18 percent (n=2).

In 82 percent (n=9) of hoaxes, false information was provided by the child's parent and 9 percent each (n=1 each) was provided by the child's neighbor and uncle.

Figure 5: Number of Hoaxes by Case Type at Intake



Of the 11 cases determined to be hoaxes, six cases had known locations from which the children involved were reported missing. Of those cases, 50 percent (n=3) were reported missing from a store and 33 percent (n=2) were reported missing from home. Additionally, 17 percent were reported missing from the street (n=1).

Children Involved in Hoaxes

In 2018, 11 AMBER Alerts involving 13 children were later determined to be hoaxes. Fifty-four percent (n=7) of children involved in hoaxes were boys, whereas girls represented 46 percent (n=6) of children involved in hoaxes. Eighty-six percent (n=6) of boys involved in hoaxes were younger than 8. Of the six girls involved in hoaxes, 83 percent (n=5) were younger than 8.

Table 5: Age and Sex of Children Involved in Hoaxes

Age	Girls	Boys
<1	1	1
1	1	1
2	0	2
3	0	1
4	0	0
5	1	0
6	1	0
7	1	1
8	0	0
9	0	0
10	0	0
11	0	0

Age	Girls	Boys
12	0	0
13	0	0
14	0	1
15	0	0
16	1	0
17	0	0
Total	6	7

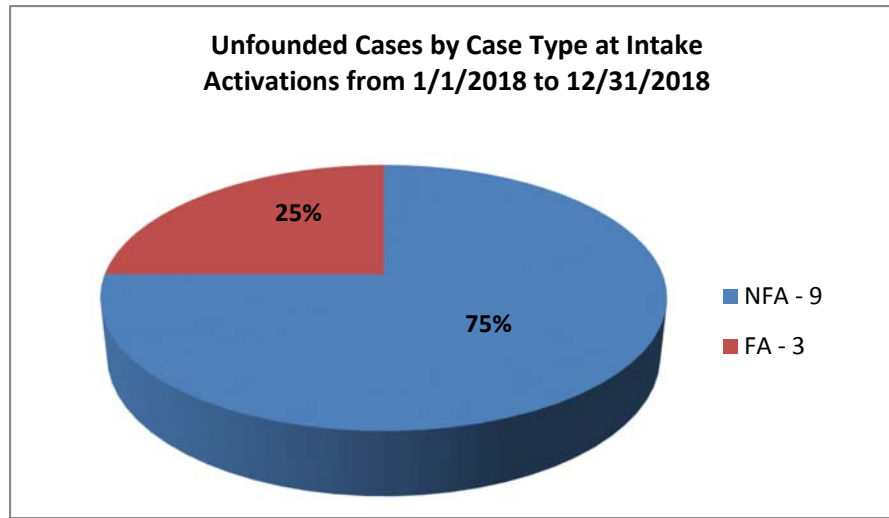
Table 6: Age and Case Type at Intake of Children Involved in Hoaxes

Age	FA	NFA	LIM	ERU
<1	0	2	0	0
1	0	2	0	0
2	0	2	0	0
3	0	1	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5	1	0	0	0
6	0	1	0	0
7	2	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0
14	0	1	0	0
15	0	0	0	0
16	0	1	0	0
17	0	0	0	0
Total	3	10	0	0

Cases Determined to Be Unfounded

A case is determined to be unfounded when a child is reported missing based on available information at the time, but the investigation determines a child was never missing. Twelve AMBER Alerts involving 14 children were determined to be unfounded, representing 7 percent of the total number of AMBER Alerts issued in 2018. These unfounded cases were originally intaked as NFAs at 75 percent (n=9) and FAs at 25 percent (n=3).

Figure 6: Unfounded Cases by Case Type at Intake



Children Involved in Unfounded Cases

In 2018, 12 AMBER Alerts involving 14 children were later determined to be unfounded. Boys represented 64 percent (n=9) whereas girls represented 36 percent (n=5) of all children involved in unfounded cases. Of the nine boys involved in unfounded cases, 56 percent (n=5) ranged from 2 to 7 years of age. Of the five girls involved in unfounded cases, three were between the ages of 15 and 17.

Table 7: Age and Sex of Children Involved in Unfounded Cases

Age	Girls	Boys
<1	1	0
1	0	0
2	0	2
3	0	0
4	0	0
5	0	1
6	1	1
7	0	1
8	0	0
9	0	1
10	0	0
11	0	1
12	0	0
13	0	0
14	0	0
15	1	0
16	1	1

Age	Girls	Boys
17	1	0
Unknown	0	1
Total	5	9

Table 8: Age and Case Type at Intake of Children Involved in Unfounded Cases

Age	NFA	FA	LIM	ERU
<1	0	1	0	0
1	0	0	0	0
2	2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	1	0	0
6	1	1	0	0
7	1	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0
9	0	1	0	0
10	0	0	0	0
11	1	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0
15	1	0	0	0
16	2	0	0	0
17	1	0	0	0
Unknown	1	0	0	0
Total	10	4	0	0

Secondary Distribution of AMBER Alerts

The AMBER Alert Secondary Distribution system, known as AASD, is comprised of wireless carriers, internet service providers, digital signage, social networking websites, content providers, and major retailers who distribute AMBER Alerts to a geographically targeted audience in support of the AMBER Alert coordinator. These alerts assist in notifying the public about recently reported child abductions with information to help in the search for the abducted child, suspected abductor, and/or suspected vehicle.

In 2018, 86 percent (n=139) of AMBER Alert cases were secondarily distributed whereas 14 percent (n=22) of the cases were not secondarily distributed because the AMBER Alert was canceled before secondary distribution was possible.

AMBER Alert Secondary Distribution was issued for 82 FAs, 51 NFAs, five LIMs, and one ERU. Nine NFAs and two FAs were later determined to be hoaxes. Seven NFAs and two FAs were subsequently identified as unfounded.

Number and Characteristics of Children Reported Missing

Girls (n=105) were involved in AMBER Alert activations more often at 52 percent, compared to boys who represented 48 percent (n=98).

Thirty-six percent (n=73) of children involved in AMBER Alerts were Black, 33 percent (n=66) were White, 19 percent (n=39) were Hispanic, 8 percent (n=17) were Biracial, 3 percent (n=6) were Asian, and 1 percent (n=2) were American Indian. AMBER Alerts were issued at a rate of 33 percent (n=66) for White children, whereas minority children represented 67 percent (n=137).

Figure 7: AMBER Alerts by Race of Children

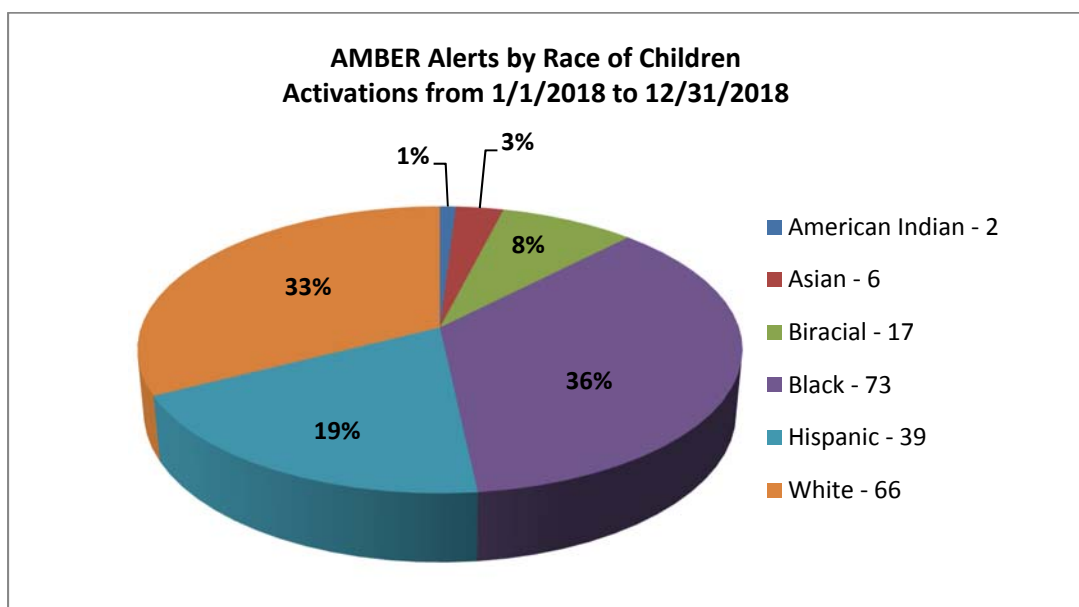
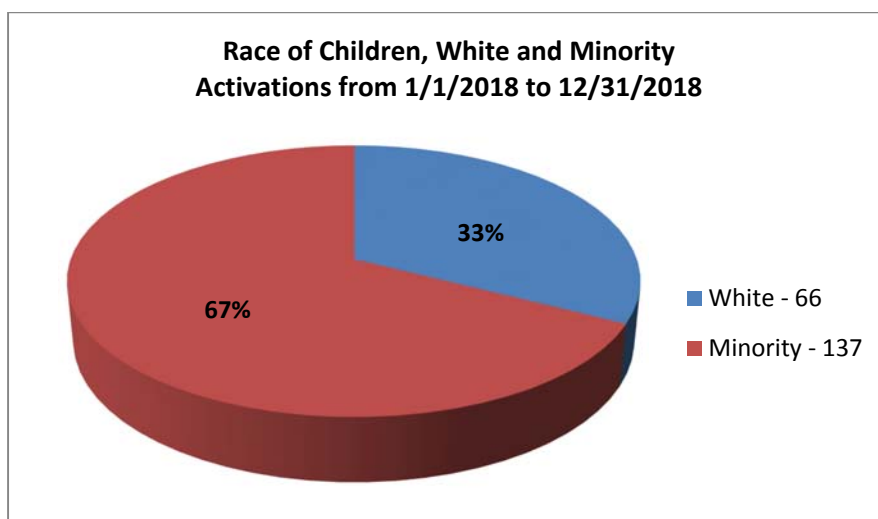
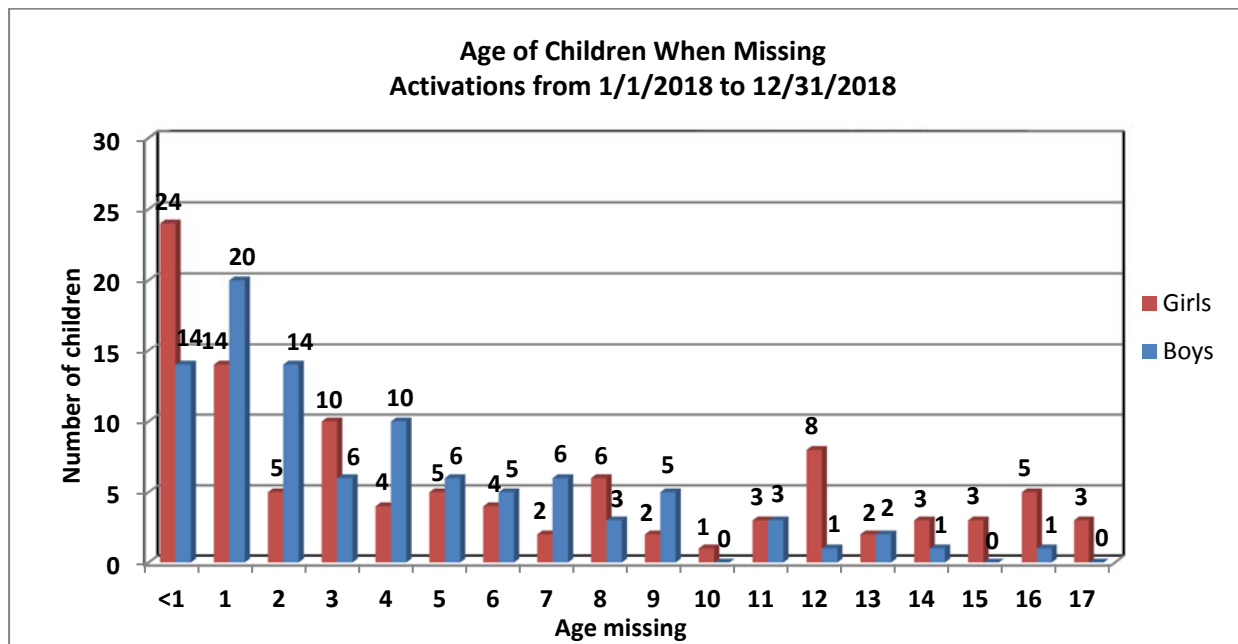


Figure 8: Race of Children, White and Minority



Boys and girls who were 5 years old and younger represented 65 percent (n=132) of the children who were reported missing with known ages. Of all children reported missing, girls younger than 1 (n=24) were most frequently involved in AMBER Alerts, whereas boys 1 year old (n=20) were most frequently involved in AMBER Alerts. The age of two children was unknown.

Figure 9: Age of Children When Missing



Number and Characteristics of Abductors

In 2018, 163 abductors were identified as being involved in 147 AMBER Alert cases.

The majority of abductors were female at 54 percent (n=88), and 46 percent (n=75) of abductors were male.

Thirty-nine percent (n=64) of abductors were White, 33 percent (n=54) of abductors were Black, 17 percent (n=28) of abductors were Hispanic, 7 percent (n=11) of abductors were Biracial, 2 percent (n=3) of abductors were Asian, and 2 percent (n=3) of abductors were American Indian.

Abductors with a Known Relationship to the Child

Of the 163 abductors involved in AMBER Alerts in 2018, 106 abductors had known relationships with the children. 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. The boyfriend would also be considered an abductor in a family abduction, although he is not related to the child.

Of the 97 FA cases, 91 abductors involved had known relationships with the children. They consisted of one aunt, 49 fathers, five grandmothers, 31 mothers, two mother's boyfriends, one other relative, one

parent, and one stepfather. In some FA cases, the exact relationship of the abductor to the child is unknown.

Of the 56 NFA cases, 14 abductors involved had known relationships with the children. For the remaining cases either there was no relationship or the relationship was unknown. The abductors consisted of one babysitter, four boyfriends, two ex-boyfriends, one ex-girlfriend, two friends/classmates, three friends of the family, and one mother's boyfriend.

Of the six LIM cases, one abductor involved had a known relationship with the children. This included one friend/classmate.

Table 9: Abductor Relationship to Child

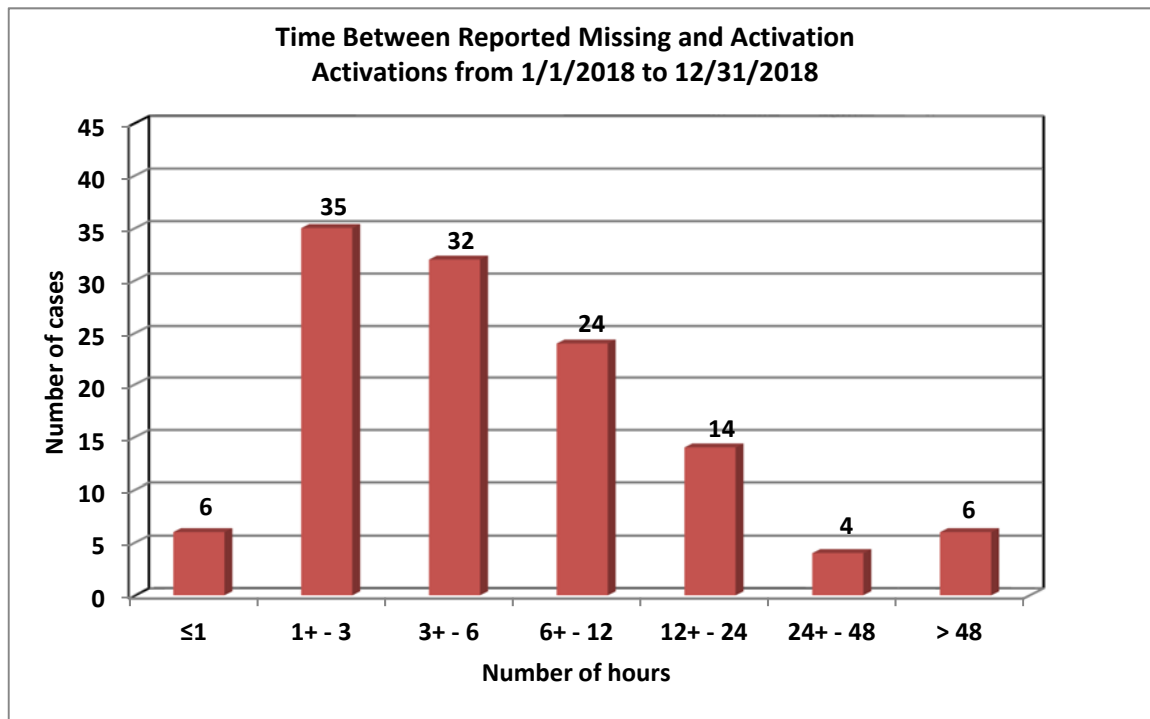
Abductor relationship to child	FA	FA percent	NFA	NFA percent	LIM	LIM percent	Total	Total percent
Aunt	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Babysitter	0	0	1	7	0	0	1	1
Boyfriend	0	0	4	29	0	0	4	4
Ex-boyfriend	0	0	2	14	0	0	2	2
Ex-girlfriend	0	0	1	7	0	0	1	1
Father	49	54	0	0	0	0	49	46
Friend/classmate	0	0	2	14	1	100	3	3
Friend of family	0	0	3	21	0	0	3	3
Grandmother	5	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Mother	31	34	0	0	0	0	31	29
Mother's boyfriend	2	2	1	7	0	0	3	3
Other relative	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Parent	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Stepfather	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	91	~100	14	~100	1	100	106	~100

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. Hoaxes and unfounded cases were excluded in the statistics because a child was determined not to be missing in those AMBER Alert cases.

Forty-one AMBER Alerts were issued within three or fewer hours from when the child was reported missing. Thirty-two cases were activated between more than three and six hours from when the child was reported missing, and 24 cases were issued between more than six and 12 hours.

Figure 10: Time Between Reported Missing and Activation

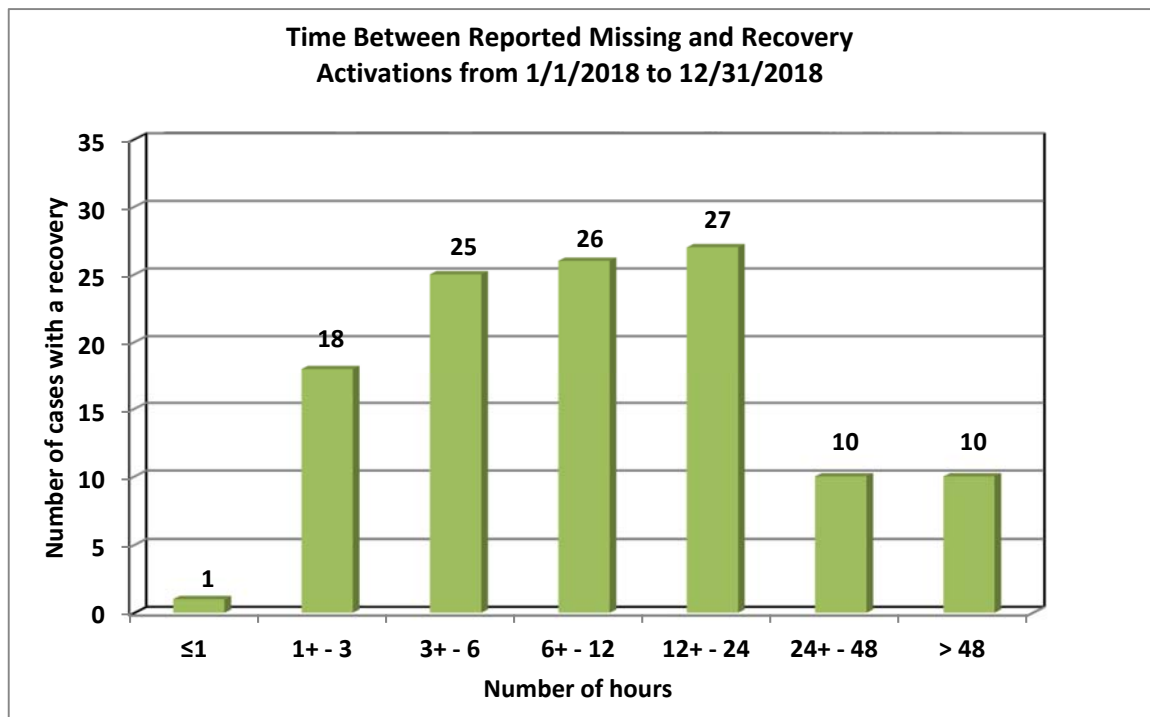


Time Between Reported Missing and Recovery

Information about the time between when the child was reported missing to law enforcement and the AMBER Alert recovery was available in 117 cases. Hoaxes and unfounded cases were excluded in the statistics because a child was determined not to be missing in those AMBER Alert cases.

In 19 of the cases when AMBER Alerts were issued, the children were recovered within three or fewer hours from when the child was reported missing. Children in 25 cases were recovered between more than three and six hours from when the child was reported missing, and in 26 cases the children were recovered between more than six and 12 hours.

Figure 11: Time Between Reported Missing and Recovery

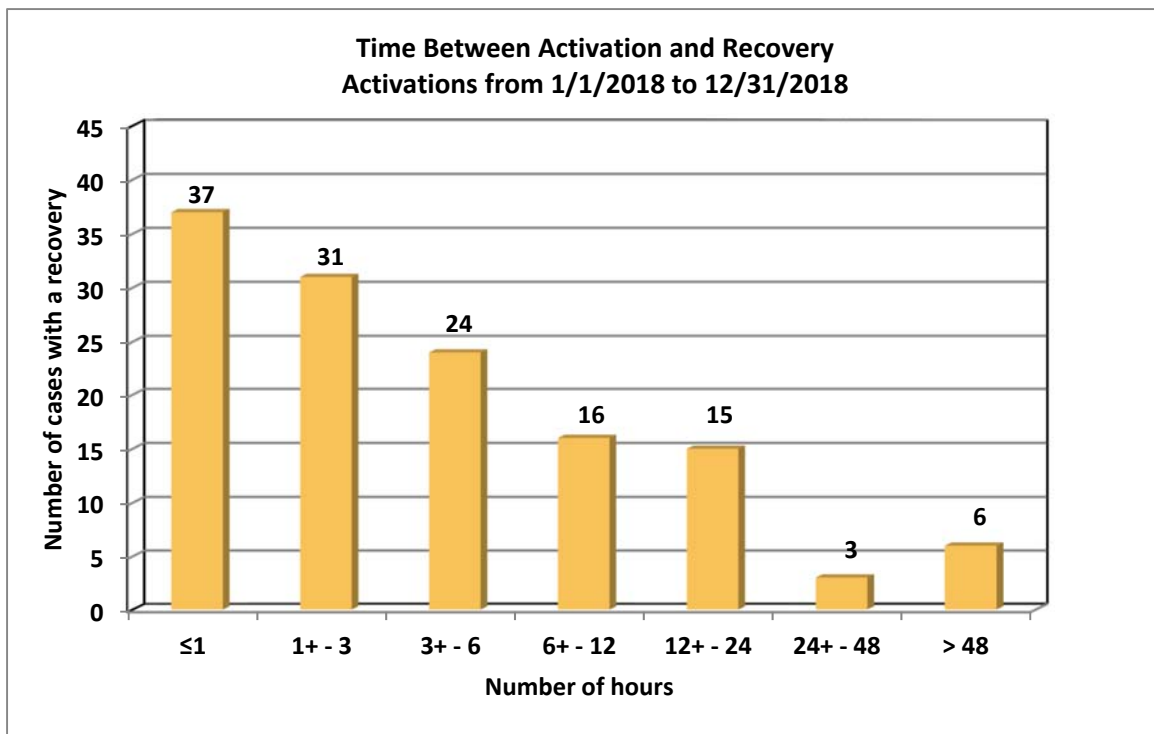


Time Between Activation and Recovery

Information about the time between when the AMBER Alert was activated and the AMBER Alert recovery was available in 132 cases. Hoaxes and unfounded cases were excluded in the statistics because a child was determined not to be missing in those AMBER Alert cases.

In 68 cases, the children were recovered within three or fewer hours from when the AMBER Alert was activated. Children in 24 cases were recovered between more than three and six hours from when the AMBER Alert was activated, and in 16 cases the children were recovered between more than six to 12 hours.

Figure 12: 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 all 161 cases.

Table 10: Recovery Within Three Days of Activation

	Time between activation and recovery 1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018
Intaked cases	161
Cases re-classified as hoax or unfounded after intake	23
Intaked children	203
Children whose cases were re-classified as hoax or unfounded after intake	27
Number of cases in which child recovered within 72 hours	128
Percent of cases in which child recovered within 72 hours	93 percent*
Number of children reported as being recovered within 72 hours	158
Percent of children reported as being recovered within 72 hours	90 percent**

*Percentage excludes cases re-classified as hoaxes (n=11) and unfounded (n=12)

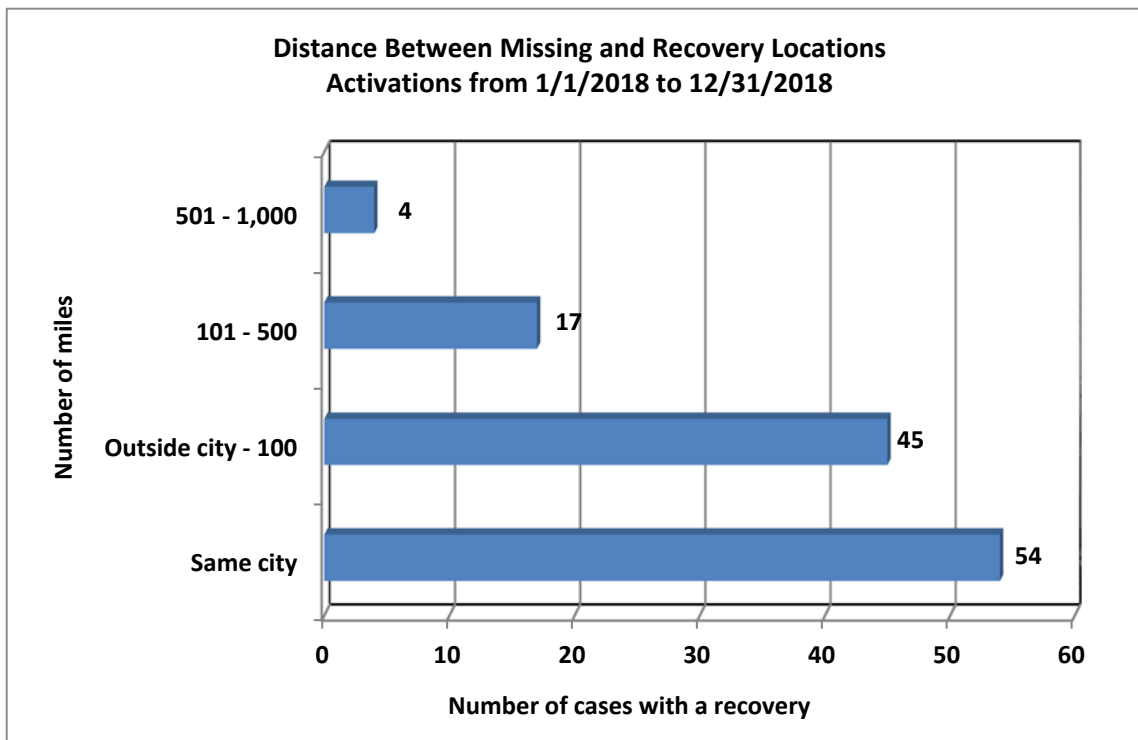
**Percentage excludes children whose cases were re-classified as hoaxes (n=13) and unfounded (n=14)

Travel Distances

In 2018, distances between where the child was reported missing and recovered were known for 120 AMBER Alert cases. Hoaxes, unfounded, and active cases were not included in these statistics because no recovery occurred. The distances reported below are estimates since they were calculated by using city and state. Therefore, distances are not calculated for cases in which the child was recovered from the city where he or she was abducted.

In 54 cases, the missing and recovery locations were in the same city; in 45 cases the distance between missing and recovery locations were outside the city but within 100 miles of each other; in 17 cases the distance between missing and recovery locations ranged from 101 to 500 miles; in four cases the distance between missing and recovery locations ranged from 501 to 1,000 miles; and in no cases the distance was more than 1,000 miles. For 12 cases the distance could not be calculated, and the remaining 29 cases were either hoaxes, unfounded, or active cases.

Figure 13: Distance Between Missing and Recovery Locations



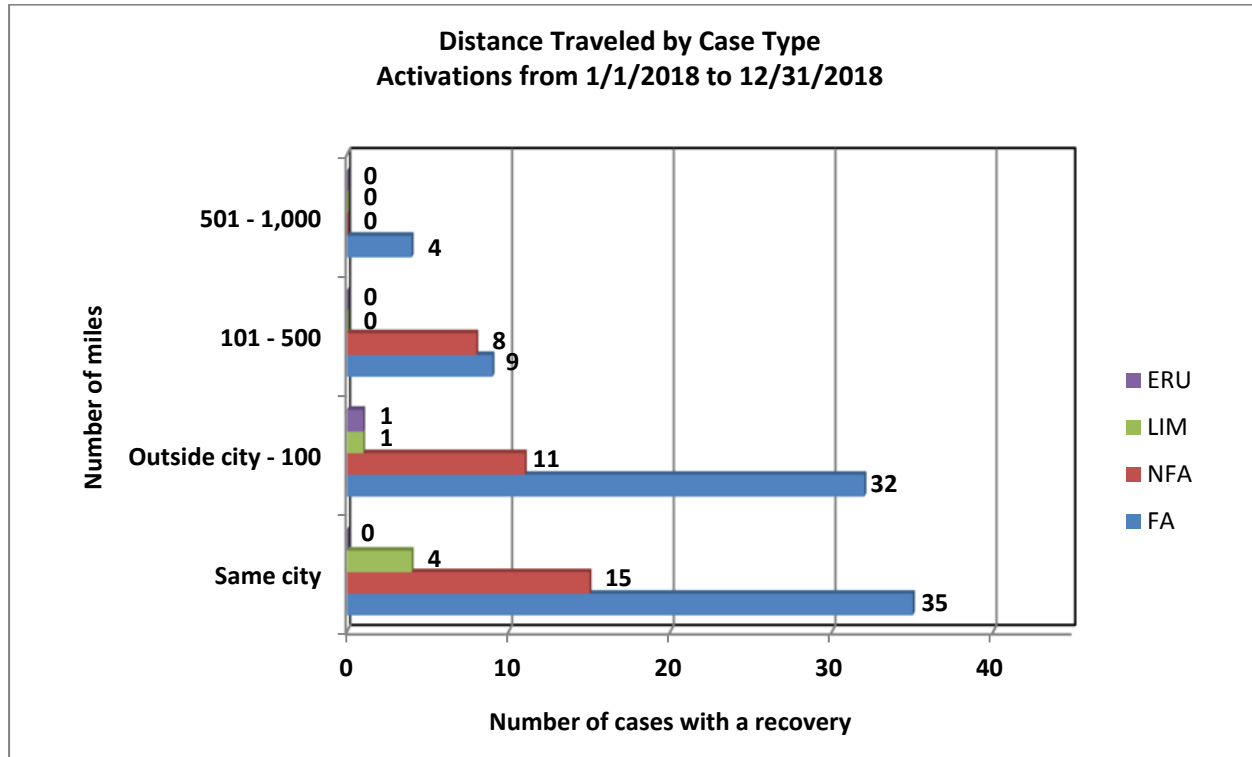
Of the 97 AMBER Alerts issued for FA cases, children in 35 cases were found in the same city. In 32 cases, distances ranged up to 80 miles outside of the city, and in nine cases the distances ranged from 135 to 418 miles. In four cases distances ranged from 523 to 930 miles. In eight cases the distance could not be calculated, and the remaining nine cases were active, hoaxes, and unfounded cases.

Of the 56 AMBER Alerts issued for NFA cases, the children involved in 15 cases were found in the same city. In 11 cases distances ranged from one to 95 miles outside of the city. In eight cases, travel distances ranged from 101 to 423 miles. In three cases, the distance could not be calculated, and the remaining 19 cases were active, hoaxes, and unfounded cases.

There were six AMBER Alerts issued for LIM cases in 2018, and, of those cases, four were found in the same city. In one case the travel distance was 78 miles. The remaining one case was active.

Two cases were intaked as ERUs in 2018. In one case the travel distance was 31 miles. The travel distance for the one other case could not be calculated.

Figure 14: Distance Traveled by Case Type



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. Of the 161 AMBER Alerts issued in 2018, six cases still remain active. Sixteen percent of cases (n=25) had recoveries outside of the state of the original activation. Of those 25 cases, 68 percent (n=17) were FAs and 32 percent (n=8) were NFAs.

Table 11: Recovery Outside of State Where AMBER Alert First Activated

Activation state	Recovery state
Arizona	California
Arizona	Nevada
Arkansas	Oklahoma
California	Colorado
Colorado	Nebraska
Colorado	Utah
Florida	Alabama
Florida	Texas
Idaho	Washington
Indiana	Michigan
Iowa	Illinois

Activation state	Recovery state
Kansas	Minnesota
Louisiana	Mississippi
Nebraska	Colorado
New York	Pennsylvania
Ohio	Georgia
Ohio	South Carolina
Tennessee	Georgia
Texas	Florida
Texas	New Mexico
Texas	Tennessee
Virginia	New York
Virginia	North Carolina
Virginia	Ohio
Virginia	Tennessee

Missing Location

In 2018, there were 127 cases with information about where the children involved were last known to be located. Of those 127 cases, 64 percent (n=81) were last known to be at home followed by 11 percent (n=14) of cases where children were last known to be at a store.

Table 12: Missing Location

Missing location	Number of cases	Percent
Government facility	1	1
Home	81	64
Hotel/motel	1	1
Medical facility	1	1
Office building	1	1
Other	6	5
Park	2	2
Religious facility	1	1
Retail	14	11
School bus stop	1	1
School facility	8	6
Social services	4	3
Street	5	4
Transportation facility	1	1
Total	127	~100

Recovery Location

There were 132 cases with information about where the child was recovered. In 2018, 38 percent (n=50) of children involved in AMBER Alert cases were most often recovered at home followed by recoveries from the street at 17 percent (n=23) and in an automobile at 11 percent (n=14).

Table 13: Recovery Location

Recovery location	Number of cases	Percent
Automobile	14	11
Body of water	2	2
Government facility	1	1
Home	50	38
Hotel/motel	7	5
Law enforcement station	9	7
Medical facility	1	1
Office building	1	1
Other	2	2
Outdoor/open area	5	4
Park	3	2
Parking lot/garage	5	4
Restaurant	1	1
Retail	6	5
School facility	1	1
Street	23	17
Transportation facility	1	1
Total	132	~100

International Abductions

In 2018, one AMBER Alert activation involving four children was an international abduction. The AMBER Alert was activated in Texas and involved three Hispanic boys and one Hispanic girl who were abducted by their mother. The children were recovered in Mexico. Their ages ranged from 11 months and 12 years.

Infants Involved in AMBER Alert Activations

In 2018, 21 infants, who are defined as children 6 months of age or younger, were involved in 21 AMBER Alert activations. Eighty-one percent (n=17) of infants involved were FAs and 19 percent (n=4) were NFAs.

Seventy-six percent (n=16) of infants involved in AMBER Alerts were girls and 24 percent (n=5) were boys. Sixty-seven percent (n=14) of infants involved were Black, 10 percent (n=2) were Hispanic, and 24 percent (n=5) were White.

Success Stories

A successful AMBER Alert recovery is a case in which a child is 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.

Of the 161 AMBER Alert cases in 2018, 34 children involved in 28 AMBER Alert cases were successfully recovered as a direct result of those respective AMBER Alerts being issued.

Table 14: Success Stories

Case type at intake	Number of successful recoveries by case	Percent of successful recoveries by case	Number of successful recoveries by child	Percent of successful recoveries by child
FA	20	71	25	74
NFA	7	25	8	24
LIM	1	4	1	3
ERU	0	0	0	0
Total	28	100	34	~100

The most common reason for an AMBER Alert success story is an individual or law enforcement recognizing the vehicle from the AMBER Alert at 29 percent (n=8) followed by the abductor hearing the AMBER Alert and releasing the child at 25 percent (n=7).

Table 15: Reason for Success Stories

Summary of success stories	Number of cases	Percent of cases	Number of children	Percent of children
Individual or law enforcement recognized vehicle	8	29	9	26
Abductor heard Alert and released child	7	25	10	29
Law enforcement received tips from individuals	5	18	7	21
Individual knew of abductor's/ child's whereabouts	4	14	4	12
Individual or law enforcement recognized child and/or abductor	4	14	4	12
Total	28	100	34	100

Time Between Activation and Recovery for Success Stories

Of the success stories in 2018, 62 percent of the children (n=21), representing 61 percent (n=17) of the cases, were successfully recovered within three hours of those AMBER Alerts being issued.

Table 16: Time Between Activation and Recovery for Success Stories

	Number of cases	Percent of cases	Number of children	Percent of children
Up to 1/2 Hour	1	4	1	3
1/2+ - 1 Hour	3	11	3	9
1+ - 2 Hours	8	29	9	26
2+ - 3 Hours	5	18	8	24
3+ - 4 Hours	3	11	5	15
4+ - 5 Hours	0	0	0	0
5+ - 6 Hours	3	11	3	9
6+ - 12 Hours	3	11	3	9
12+ - 24 Hours	1	4	1	3
24+ - 48 Hours	1	4	1	3
48+ Hours	0	0	0	0
Total	28	~100	34	~100

Children Located Deceased

In 2018, 161 AMBER Alerts were issued for 203 children. Seven children in seven AMBER Alert cases were located deceased. Seventy-one percent (n=5) of children were reported as NFAs, 14 percent (n=1) of children were reported as FAs, and 14 percent (n=1) of children were reported as LIMs. Four boys, ranging in age from 7 months to 4 years, were found deceased, and three girls, ages 11 months, 12, and 13, were found deceased. One child was Biracial, one child was Black, three children were Hispanic, and two children were White.

Of the seven children located deceased in 2018, 29 percent (n=2) were reported missing from their respective homes and 14 percent each (n=1 each) were reported missing from a park, religious facility, and the street. It is unknown where two children (29 percent) were last seen.

One child was recovered in a pond, and at the time of this report the child's cause of death was undetermined. In another case, the child's father abducted and murdered the child. One child's death was ruled as an accidental drowning. In two cases the child's mother was charged with the child's murder due to child abuse. One child was abducted and murdered along with her grandmother by a friend of the family. In another case, the child was abducted and murdered by someone unknown to the family who also stole the child's family's vehicle to carry out the abduction.

Table 17: Children Located Deceased

Activation date	Case type at intake	Race/sex of child	Age when missing	Time between activation and recovery	Distance between missing and recovery	Cause of death
01/24/18	LIM	Biracial boy	4	<72 hours	Same city	Undetermined*
03/07/18	FA	White boy	<1	<72 hours	18 miles	Undetermined homicidal means
03/17/18	NFA	Hispanic boy	2	<72 hours	Same city	Drowning
05/29/18	NFA	White girl	<1	<72 hours	Same city	Undetermined*
08/07/18	NFA	Hispanic girl	12	>72 hours	Unknown	Undisclosed**
09/02/18	NFA	Black boy	2	<72 hours	Same city	Blunt force trauma
11/05/18	NFA	Hispanic girl	13	>72 hours	Same city	Undetermined*

*Undetermined means a cause of death was not determined at the time of data collection.

**Undisclosed means the cause of death was not released by the investigative agency at the time of data collection.

AMBER Alerts Involving Victims of Sexual Assault

In 2018, at the time of data collection one girl in one AMBER Alert activation had been reported to be a victim of sexual assault during the abduction. The child was Hispanic and a teenager.

Team Adam Consultant Deployment

Team Adam is a program of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children providing an 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 2018, Team Adam consultants were deployed to assist with 14 AMBER Alert cases involving 15 children. One case involving one child was later determined to be a hoax. One case involving one child was later determined to be unfounded. Twelve children actually determined to be missing were recovered. At intake, the case breakdown included eight NFAs, three FAs, and three LIMs.

FBI Involvement in AMBER Alerts

The FBI has a specialized Child Abduction Rapid Deployment, or CARD team, designed to deploy experienced personnel to provide on-the-ground investigative, technical and resource assistance to state and local law enforcement. CARD consists of violent crimes against children investigators and analysts

who have in-depth experience in child abduction cases. CARD consists of more than 60 members organized into five regional teams of both special agents and analysts. Additionally, personnel from the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit 3, Cellular Analysis Survey Team, or CAST, and National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime are also consulted during deployments. According to the FBI, since CARD's inaugural deployment in 2006, teams have deployed approximately 157 times to assist law enforcement agencies when an AMBER Alert or mysterious disappearance of a child has occurred. In 2018, CARD deployed three times as a result of an AMBER Alert.

Command Post Use in AMBER Alerts

A command post is a field headquarters/office for scene management to centralize investigative efforts as well as search-and-rescue operations.

In 2018, 28 of the AMBER Alert cases reported to NCMEC involved the use of a command post. Of those cases, 14 were intaked as FAs, 10 were intaked as NFAs, and four were intaked as a LIM.

National Crime Information Center

The National Crime Information Center, known as NCIC, houses a set of databases law enforcement uses to document and query activity and information about missing people. The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (Pub. L. No. 109-248) clarifies an NCIC entry by law enforcement must be made within two hours of receipt of a report of a missing or abducted child.

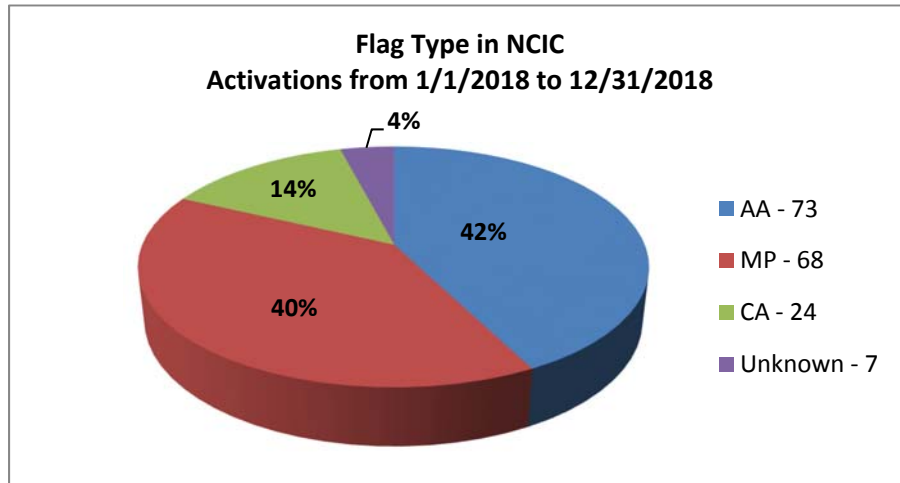
Of the 203 children involved in AMBER Alert cases in 2018, information about 172 children was entered into NCIC, and information about 31 children was not entered into NCIC.

Table 18: Information Entered in NCIC

	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018 percent
Information entered in NCIC	172	85
Information not entered in NCIC	31	15
Total	203	100

Of the 172 children whose information was entered in NCIC from Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018, 73 children were flagged as an AMBER Alert or AA, 68 children were flagged as a Missing Person or MP, and 24 children were flagged as a Child Abduction or CA. The flags for seven children were unknown.

Figure 15: Flag Type in NCIC



NCMEC has permission to modify flags in NCIC to AA status for AMBER Alert cases at the originating agency's request. During the months of January through December 2018, a total of 41 flags were updated in NCIC. Twenty-five flags were changed from MP to AA, 14 flags were changed from CA to AA, one flag was changed from MP to CA, and one AA flag was changed to MP. Law enforcement made the flag updates for 15 children, and NCMEC made the flag updates for 26 children.

The table below shows the NCIC missing person type category for children involved in AMBER Alerts at the time of entry from Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018.

Table 19: Missing Person Type in NCIC

NCIC missing person type	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018 percent
Endangered	80	47
Endangered - caution	12	7
Involuntary	45	26
Involuntary - caution	5	3
Juvenile	24	14
Juvenile - caution	4	2
Other	2	1
Total	172	100

From Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018, information about 38 children was entered and canceled from NCIC within three hours.

Table 20: Hours Between Information About Children Entered and Canceled from NCIC

	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018 total	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018 cumulative total	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018 percent	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018 cumulative percent
Up to 1/2 hour	4	4	2	2
½+ - 1 hour	6	10	3	6
1+ - 2 hours	15	25	9	15
2+ - 3 hours	13	38	8	22
3+ - 4 hours	11	49	6	28
4+ - 5 hours	6	55	3	32
5+ - 6 hours	16	71	9	41
6+ - 12 hours	31	102	18	59
12+ - 24 hours	17	119	10	69
24+ - 48 hours	13	132	8	77
48+ - 72 hours	2	134	1	78
72+ hours	28	162	16	94
Unknown	10	172	6	100
Total	172		~100	

Data collected from the miscellaneous field in NCIC captured additional information entered by law enforcement such as abductor threats and use of weapons for 67 children involved in 53 AMBER Alerts issued in 2018. Law enforcement noted eight abductors were armed with a weapon, six abductors had a history of mental illness, six children had medical issues, two abductors were suspected in a homicide, one abductor threatened to kill himself, one abductor threatened to kill himself and the child, and one abductor had a history of alcohol and/or drug abuse. Twenty-eight children had “other” listed in the miscellaneous field.

Of the 172 children whose information was entered in NCIC, 85 percent (n=147) had vehicle involvement in the AMBER Alert and 12 percent (n=20) did not have a vehicle involved. It was unknown if a vehicle was involved in three AMBER Alerts involving five children.

In order for vehicle data to be entered into the NCIC vehicle field, the license plate number on the vehicle must be available to law enforcement.

License plate information was available and entered in NCIC for 92 children. Of those, 60 children’s records had license plate information entered in the vehicle field only, and in 19 children’s records the license plate information was entered in the miscellaneous field only. **Note:** Law enforcement cannot search for license plate information in NCIC if the vehicle information is entered only in the miscellaneous field. For 13 children’s records, the license plate information was entered in both the miscellaneous and vehicle fields.

Five Year Comparison of AMBER Alerts Issued

Number of AMBER Alerts and Children Involved

The number of AMBER Alerts has shown an overall decrease of 13 percent from 2014 to 2018.

In 2014 there were 186 alerts involving 239 children, in 2015 there were 182 alerts involving 224 children, in 2016 there were 179 alerts involving 231 children, in 2017 there were 195 alerts involving 263 children, and in 2018 there were 161 alerts involving 203 children,

Figure 16: Number of AMBER Alerts from 2014 to 2018

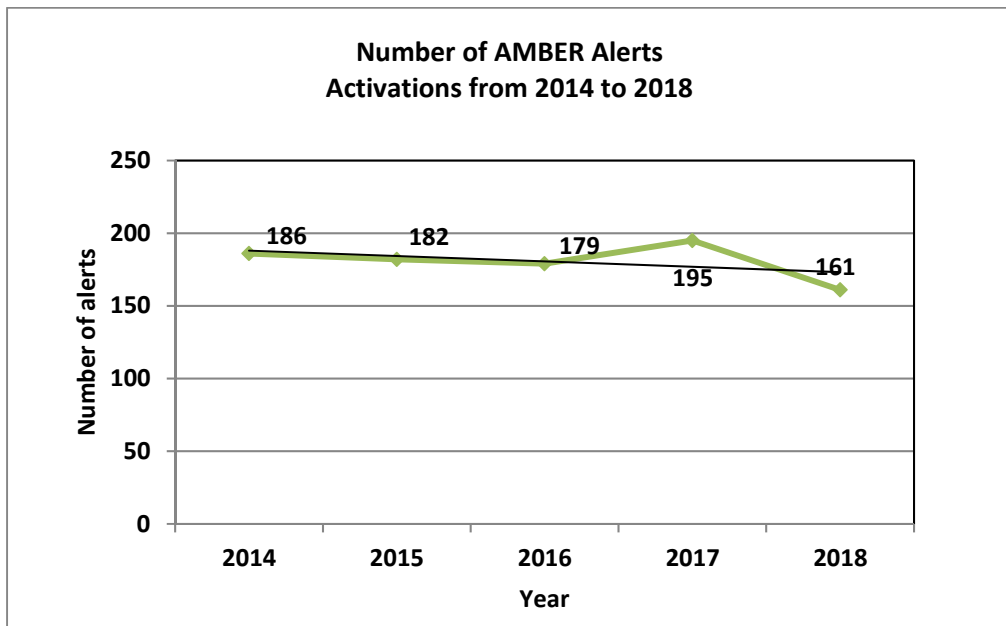
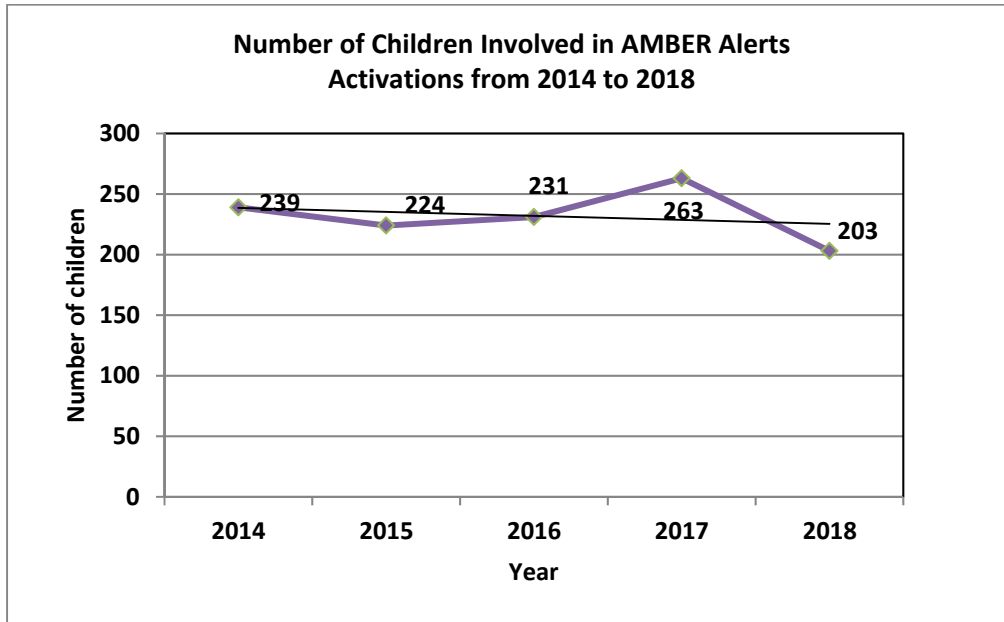


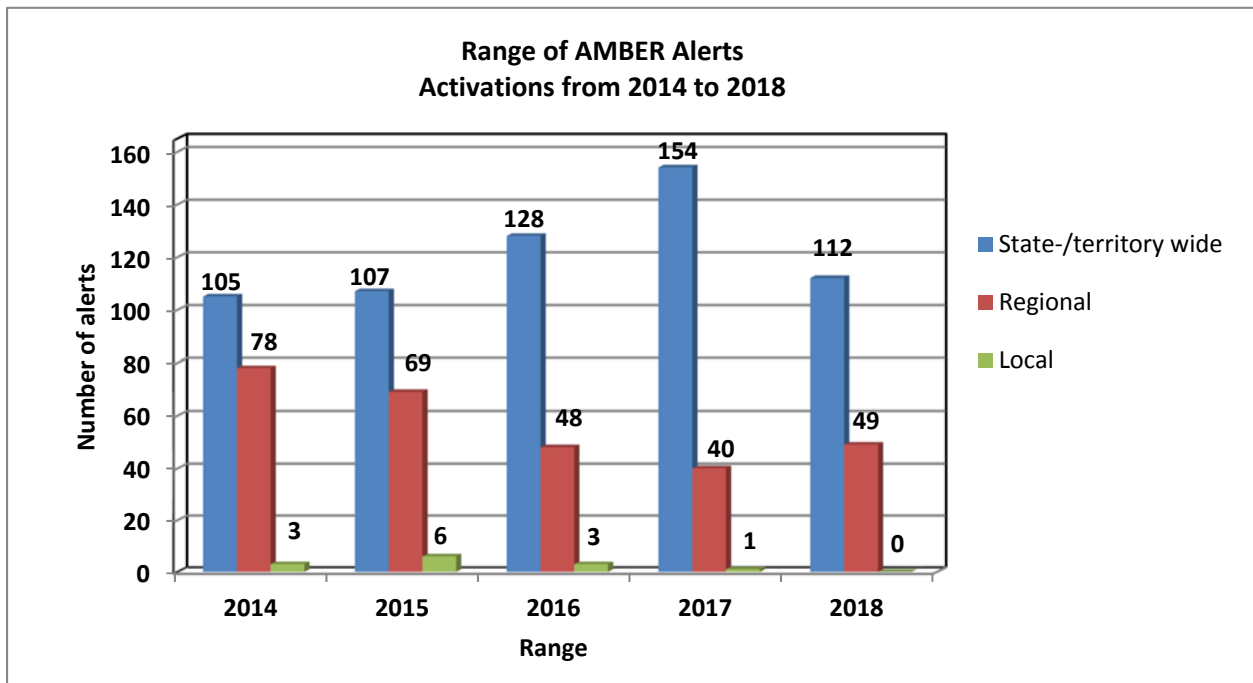
Figure 17: Number of Children Involved in AMBER Alerts from 2014 to 2018



AMBER Alerts by Range

From 2014 to 2018, AMBER Alerts were predominantly issued state-/territory- wide, followed by regional alerts, and then local alerts.

Figure 18: Range of AMBER Alerts from 2014 to 2018



Multistate/Territory AMBER Alerts

The number of multistate/territory AMBER Alerts varied between the years 2014 and 2018. In 2014 there were 14. The number then fell to nine in 2015 and increased in 2016 to 21 multistate alerts issued. In 2017 and 2018 there were respective decreases to 13 and seven.

Number of Cases at Intake by Month

Table 21: Number of Cases by Month from 2014 to 2018

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2014	20	14	13	17	16	13	9	21	16	18	10	19
2015	11	9	19	8	17	15	19	17	18	22	14	13
2016	8	17	14	19	18	12	11	18	20	17	14	11
2017	20	11	17	19	20	18	18	23	16	13	10	10
2018	12	3	15	14	22	17	18	13	18	7	14	8
Total	71	54	78	77	93	75	75	92	88	77	62	61

Table 22: Cases and Percent Increase/Decrease by Month from 2014 to 2018

	2014	Percent change	2015	Percent change	2016	Percent change	2017	Percent change	2018
Jan	20	-45	11	-27	8	150	20	-40	12
Feb	14	-36	9	89	17	-35	11	-73	3
Mar	13	46	19	-26	14	21	17	-12	15
Apr	17	-53	8	138	19	0	19	-26	14
May	16	6	17	6	18	11	20	10	22
Jun	13	15	15	-20	12	50	18	-6	17
Jul	9	111	19	-42	11	64	18	0	18
Aug	21	-19	17	6	18	28	23	-43	13
Sep	16	13	18	11	20	-20	16	13	18
Oct	18	22	22	-23	17	-24	13	-46	7
Nov	10	40	14	0	14	-29	10	40	14
Dec	19	-32	13	-15	11	-9	10	-20	8
Total	186	-2	182	-2	179	9	195	-17	161

Case Type at Intake

The number of cases intaked as FAs decreased 16 percent from 116 alerts in 2014 to 97 alerts in 2018.

There were 60 alerts issued for NFAs in 2014, the number fell to 47 alerts in 2015, and rose in 2016 to 60 again. In 2017 the number of alerts issued fell to 50 and increased to 56 in 2018.

Overall the number of cases intaked as LIMs ranged from a high of 10 alerts in 2014 and 2017 to a low of six alerts in 2016 and 2018.

In 2014 there were no alerts issued for ERUs. From 2015 to 2017, the number of ERUs largely remained the same (n=6, 6, and 7), and then fell to two alerts in 2018.

Figure 19: AMBER Alerts by Case Type at Intake from 2014 to 2018

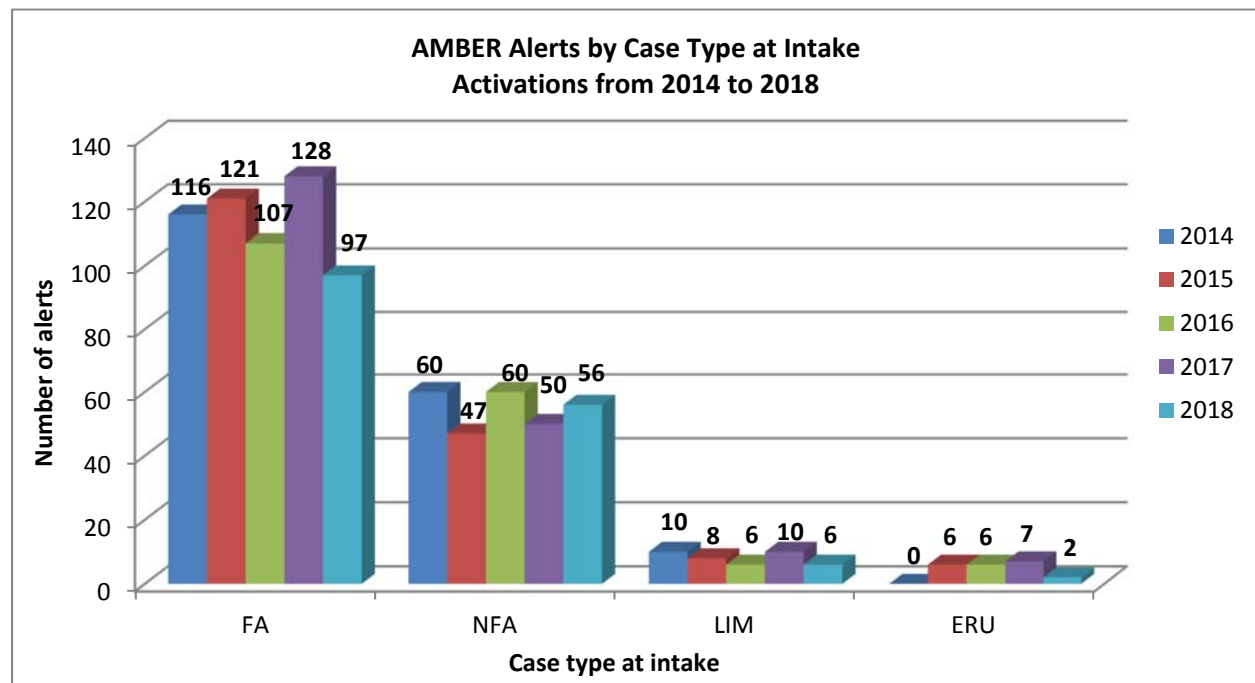


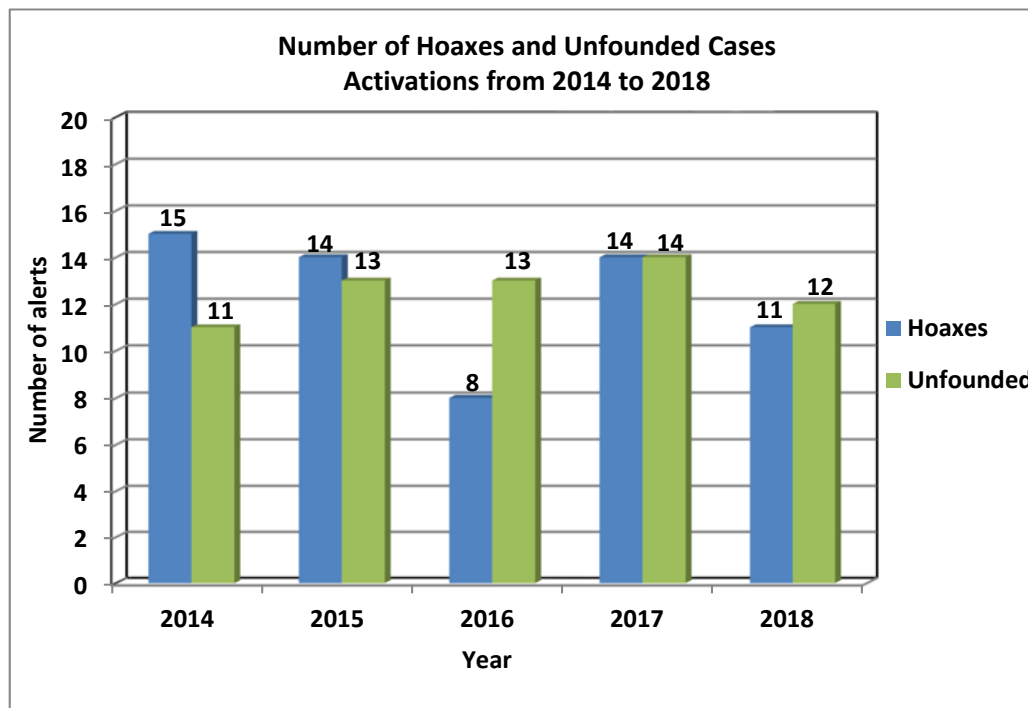
Table 23: Cases and Percent Increase/Decrease by Case Type from 2014 to 2018

	2014	Percent change	2015	Percent change	2016	Percent change	2017	Percent change	2018
FA	116	4	121	-12	107	20	128	-24	97
NFA	60	-22	47	28	60	-17	50	12	56
LIM	10	-20	8	-25	6	67	10	-40	6
ERU	0	0	6	0	6	17	7	-71	2
Total	186	-2	182	-2	179	9	195	-17	161

Hoaxes and Unfounded Cases

The number of hoaxes was about the same for years 2014 and 2015 with n=15 and 14. In 2016, the number of hoaxes decreased to eight, in 2017 the number rose to 14, and then fell in 2018 to 11. The number of unfounded cases remained relatively stable from 2014 to 2018, (n=11, 13, 13, 14, and 12).

Figure 20: Number of Hoaxes and Unfounded Cases from 2014 to 2018

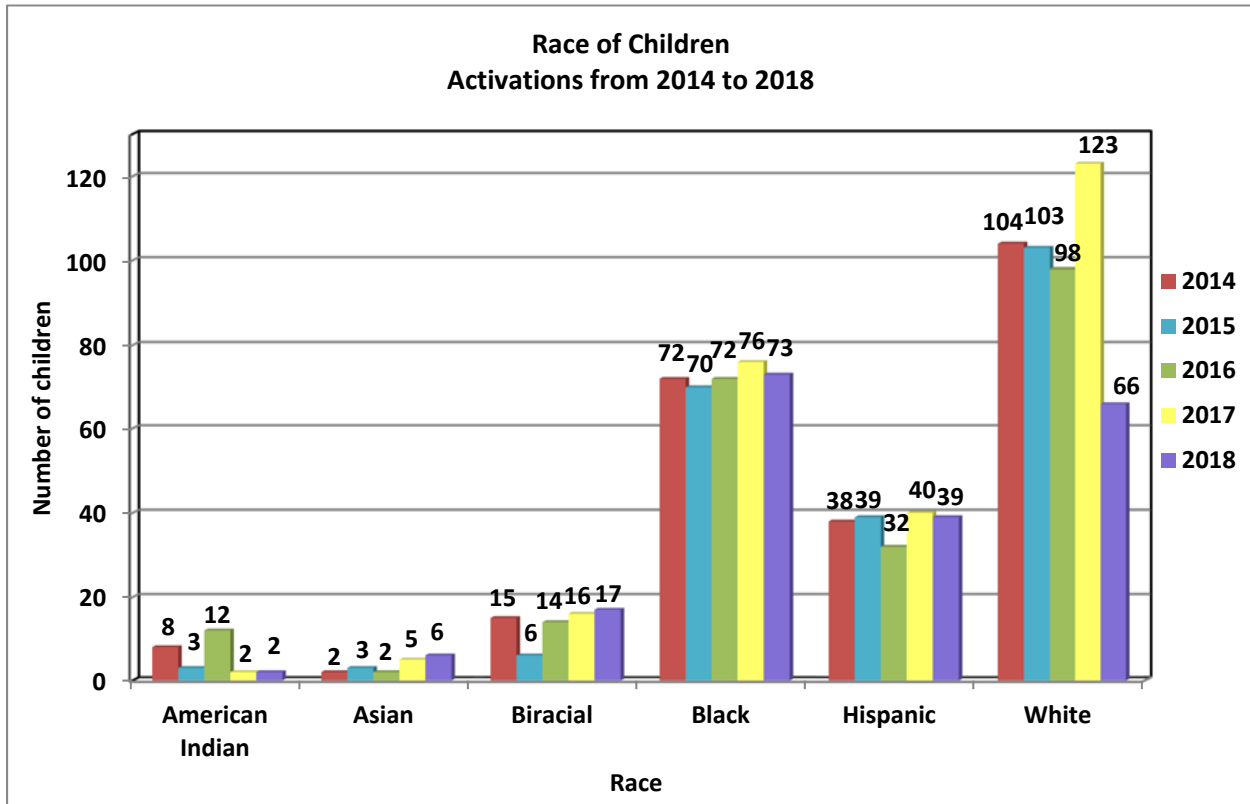


Number and Characteristics of Children Involved in AMBER Alerts

Boys were more frequently involved in AMBER Alerts than girls in 2014, while in 2015 the number of boys and girls involved in AMBER Alerts was the same. Girls were more often involved in AMBER Alerts in 2016. In 2017 the number of boys and girls involved in an alert was nearly the same. There were slightly more girls involved in AMBER Alerts than boys in 2018. In 2014 boys comprised 51 percent (n=123) of AMBER Alerts, whereas girls comprised 49 percent (n=116). AMBER Alerts were issued for 112 boys and 112 girls in 2015. In 2016 girls represented 59 percent (n=136) of children involved in AMBER Alerts, and boys made up 41 percent (n=95). In 2017, boys (n=132) and girls (n=131) each made up 50 percent of AMBER Alerts, and, in 2018, 52 percent (n=105) of AMBER Alerts were girls and 48 percent (n=98) were boys.

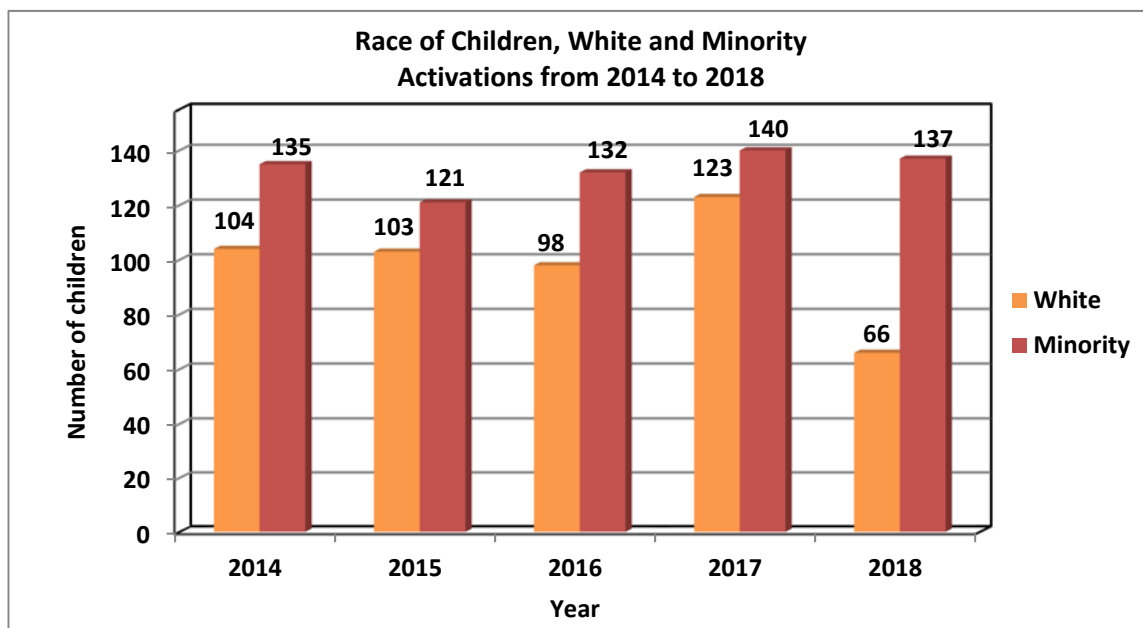
The number of American Indian children involved in AMBER Alerts had a general pattern of decreasing and increasing from 2014 to 2018 (n= 8, 3, 12, 2, and 2). The number of Asian children generally increased from 2014 to 2018 (n=2, 3, 2, 5, and 6). The number of Biracial children fluctuated from 2014 to 2018 (n=15, 6, 14, 16, and 17). For Black children, there was a stable pattern from 2014 to 2018 (n=72, 70, 72, 76, and 73). The number of Hispanic children generally remained the same from 2014 to 2018 (n=38 39, 32, 40, and 39). The number of White children fluctuated between 2014 and 2018 (n=104, 103, 98, 123, and 66).

Figure 21: Race of Children from 2014 to 2018



From 2014 to 2018 minority children were involved in AMBER Alerts more frequently than White children.

Figure 22: Race of Children, White and Minority from 2014 to 2018



International Abductions

In 2014, there was one AMBER Alert involving one child who was recovered in Mexico. In 2015, there were two AMBER Alerts involving two children. In one case, the child was abducted and recovered in Canada. In the other case, the child was recovered in Mexico. In 2016, there were no AMBER Alerts issued for international abductions. In 2017, there was one AMBER Alert for a case originating in Canada, and the child was recovered in Washington state. In 2018, one AMBER Alert involving four children was an international abduction. The children were recovered in Mexico.

Children Located Deceased

A total of 40 children who were involved in AMBER Alerts issued from 2014 to 2018 were located deceased, (n=6, 8, 13, 6, and 7).

While children intaked as NFAs who were located deceased were overall more frequent between 2014 and 2018, there were more children intaked as LIMs who were located deceased in 2017.

Table 24: Number of Children Located Deceased from 2014 to 2018

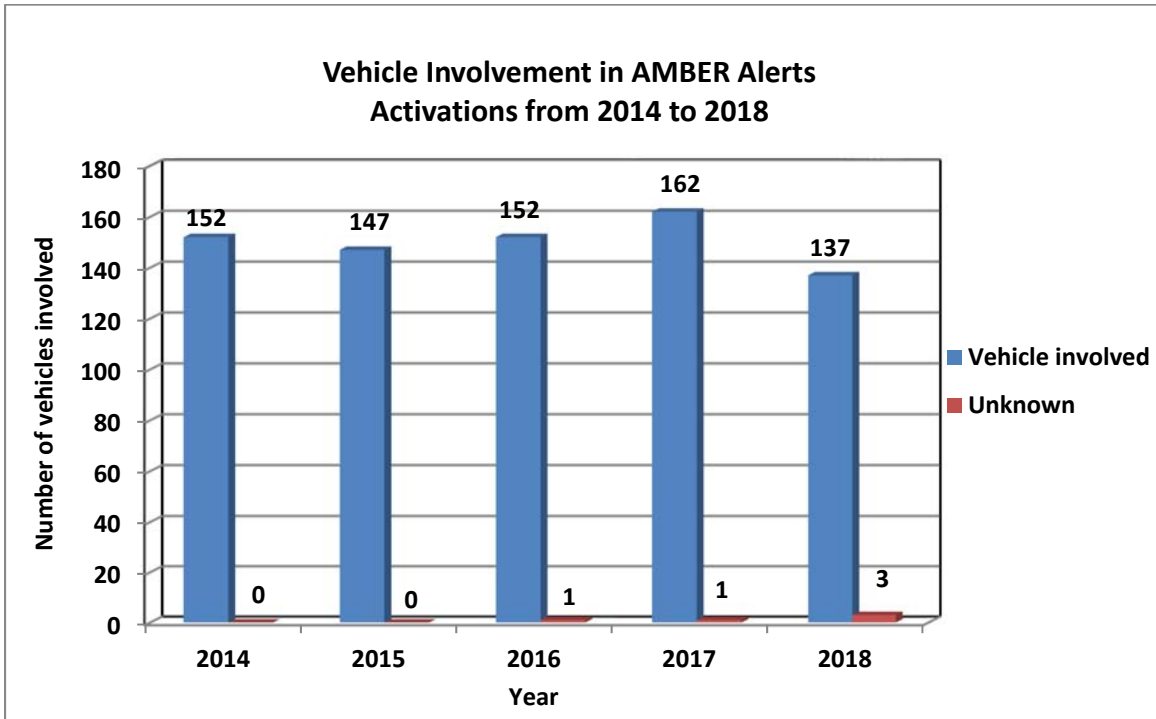
Case type at intake	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
FA	0	3	5	0	1	9
NFA	4	3	7	2	5	21
LIM	2	2	1	4	1	10
ERU	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	8	13	6	7	40

National Crime Information Center

In regard to children's information entered in NCIC from 2014 to 2018, it was 81, 78, 78, 85, and 85 percent respectively (n=194, 174, 181, 223, and 172). The AA flag was the predominant flag type from 2014 to 2018.

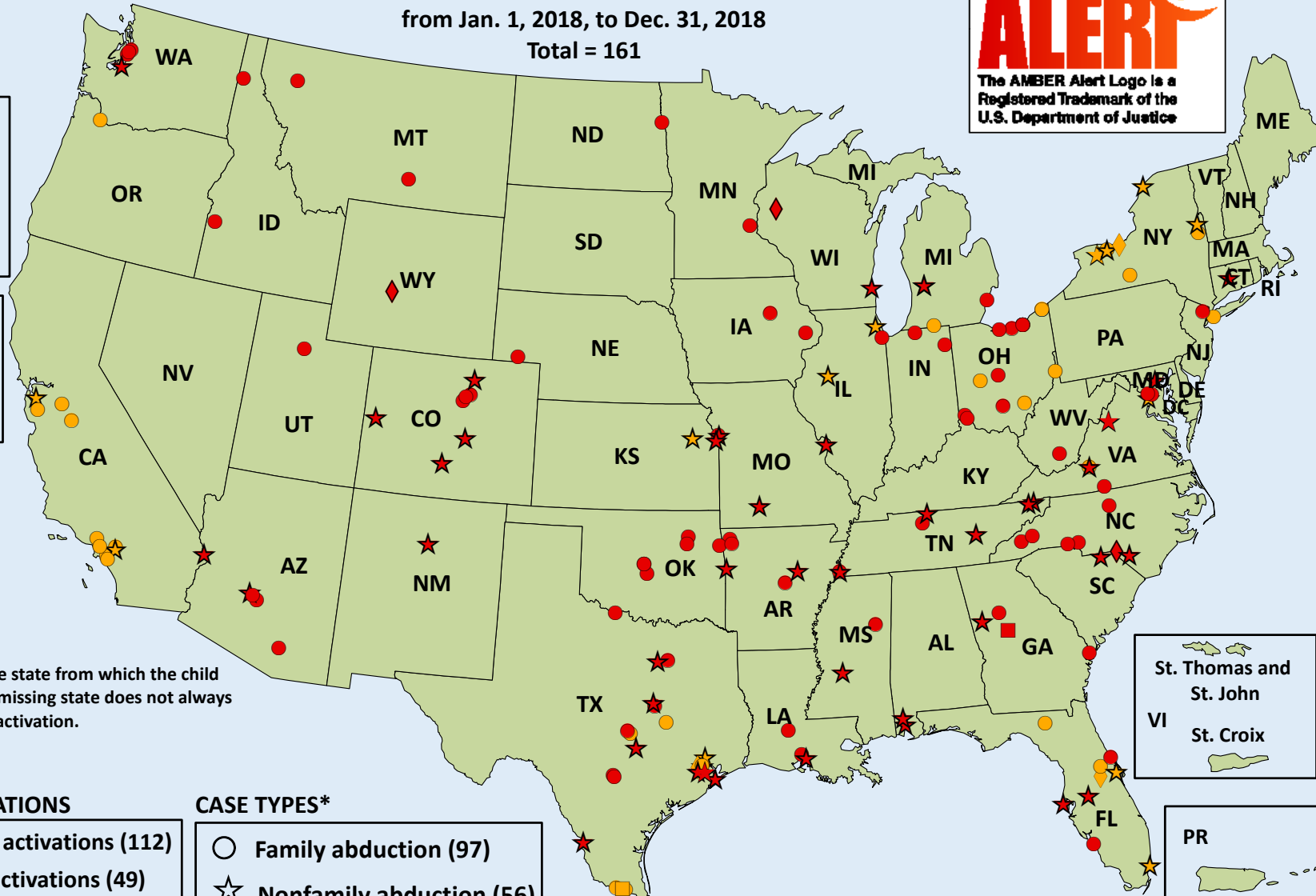
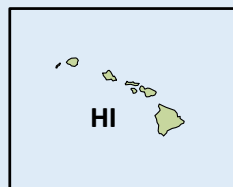
From 2014 to 2018 there were more instances when it was known a vehicle was involved in the alert (n=152, 147, 152, 162, and 137) than unknown.

Figure 23: Vehicle Involvement in AMBER Alerts from 2014 to 2018





AMBER Alert Activations Issued from Jan. 1, 2018, to Dec. 31, 2018 Total = 161



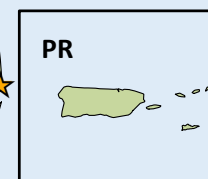
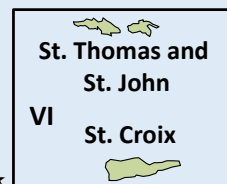
*Symbols represent the state from which the child is missing. The child's missing state does not always represent the state of activation.

RANGE OF ACTIVATIONS

- Statewide activations (112)
- Regional activations (49)

CASE TYPES*

- Family abduction (97)
- Nonfamily abduction (56)
- Lost injured missing (6)
- Endangered runaway (2)



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