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PR# 09-018

Fake Wireless AMBER Alert Circulating

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – Nationwide a fake text AMBER Alert Message is circulating. The message reads that a 7-year-old girl was taken by a man in a newer silver truck, license plate number 72B381. **This message is not a genuine AMBER Alert.** Mobile phone users in numerous states have received the text message and now mobile phone users in Alaska are beginning to receive the message as well.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is aware of the hoax. The center coordinates all Wireless AMBER Alerts as a secondary function in real AMBER Alert events. NCMEC reports that no current AMBER Alert in the nation matches the information that appears in the text message. Official AMBER Alert messages are geographically targeted and contain all the necessary information pertaining to the child abductions, including where they were issued and contact information for the investigating law enforcement agency. They will also be followed by a cancellation message when the child has been recovered.

The Alaska AMBER Alert Plan is an early warning system used by law enforcement, in cooperation with broadcasters, to alert the public during a child abduction. The plan is designed to illicit maximum public participation in only the most serious child abduction situations to assist in the recovery of the child. It is hoped that the early warning distributed by the statewide radio and television Emergency Alert System (EAS) will coerce a kidnapper into releasing a child unharmed or speed the locating of the abducted child.

The AMBER Alert program is a highly successful nationwide effort and has resulted in 443 children being safely returned to their families. The success of the AMBER Alert Program depends on the involvement of the entire community. The public has many ways to receive official AMBER Alerts to include Radio, Television, Roadway and Digital Signage, Internet Service Providers, and through their wireless carriers.

To receive official AMBER Alerts on a cell phone, wireless customers can enroll in the Wireless AMBER Alerts program by visiting www.wirelessamberalerts.org or by texting the word AMBER followed by a space and their 5-digit ZIP code to 26237. Wireless AMBER Alerts is a free public service of the wireless industry, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the United States Department of Justice.

For more information on the Alaska AMBER Alert Plan, contact Department of Public Safety Public Information Office at 269-5413. Or, interested members of the public may visit the Alaska AMBER Alert Website at <http://amberalert.alaska.gov/>. Other areas that the public can receive official AMBER Alerts on the Internet would be AOL, AIM, Yahoo, MSN, and MySpace.