

# COMPASS

*Moving Forward Together*

## AMBER Alert Awareness Day - January 13

Thirty years ago this month, the abduction and tragic murder of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman in Arlington, Texas, forever changed how we protect children.

Each year on January 13th, we observe National AMBER Alert Awareness Day in remembrance of Amber Hagerman, who was abducted while riding her bike, and brutally murdered. NCJTC's [AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Team](#) is committed to honoring her legacy—and that of countless families who have faced the unthinkable—by equipping professionals with the training, resources, and collaboration needed to protect and safely recover missing and abducted children across the nation.

We work with law enforcement, child protection professionals, tribal partners, families and other community members to:

- ✓ Enhance response strategies for missing and abducted children.
- ✓ Deliver specialized training tailored to tribal and rural communities.
- ✓ Provide resources to improve child safety and recovery efforts.

### AMBER Alerts work.

As of December 18, 2025:

**1292** children have been recovered because of AMBER Alerts

View upcoming training and learn more about the [AMBER Alert Program](#) and our [AMBER Alert in Indian Country](#) TTA Program!

## 65<sup>th</sup> Edition of the AMBER Advocate magazine

Our Winter 2026 issue is dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the abduction and murder of young Amber Hagerman—a crime that remains unsolved but one that led to the creation of AMBER Alerts in 1996.

Our lead story spotlights the overarching lessons drawn from the high-profile investigation into Amber's murder. It also includes a timeline reflecting key moments in AMBER Alert history: from its inception and global expansion to its most innovative technological achievements.

For our "Faces" spotlight, we sat down with the case's lead investigators—past and present—to get an update on the inquiry and hear about their relentless hunt for justice. Amber "did not die in vain," notes retired Arlington (Texas) Police Department Sergeant Mark Simpson, whose Q&A yields important takeaways all law enforcement agencies should consider before facing a missing child case.



## IN THIS EDITION:

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**ACT NOW**  
2 MONTHS AWAY

### Court Safety and Security Conference

March 24 - 26, 2026  
Appleton, WI

### What you'll gain

- Effective strategies and best practices to foster a **collaborative courthouse security philosophy**.
- **Tools and guidance** from state and federal court-security experts on planning, jury/witness safety, and threat assessment & management.
- **Insights into** current and emerging trends, lessons learned from real-world cases, and experiential/interactive learning opportunities.

### LEARN MORE & REGISTER

[ncjtc.org/css](https://ncjtc.org/css)

*Courthouses serve as the heart of government, legal, and community activity—but they may also face significant security threats.*

Find this issue—plus numerous learning opportunities, resources, and more—at [AMBERAdvocate.org](https://AMBERAdvocate.org).

# Conference Updates - Stay in the Know

## 2026 Solving Crimes Through Emerging Technologies Conference

Over three days, professionals from law enforcement, ICAC, digital forensics, and crime-technology fields came together from across the country for hands-on learning and real-world training. Sessions explored digital forensics, IoT, vehicle telematics, cellular/GPS data, genetic genealogy, cryptocurrency investigations, and digital evidence time-mapping.

Our 2026 conference brought real discussion, hands-on case analysis, honest rethinking of processes, and meaningful learning from peers and experts who have been there.

This event is possible because of the people behind it. Thank you to our participants, sponsors, exhibitors, event partner, and NCJTC staff and committee members for making this conference meaningful from start to finish.

*Your work strengthens how emerging technologies support modern investigative efforts, and you should be proud of the impact you're making!*



## Upcoming NCJTC Conferences

Through our conferences, we are proud to provide comprehensive training from a variety of subject matter experts and valuable networking opportunities with other participants. **REGISTER NOW** for one of the 5 remaining NCJTC-hosted conferences available in 2026!

- ✓ **Court Safety and Security Conference**  
March 24 -26 | Appleton, WI | [REGISTER HERE](#)
- ✓ **National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference**  
April 21 - 23 | Las Vegas, NV | [REGISTER HERE](#)
- ✓ **School Resource Officer Training Conference**  
June 9 - 11 | Appleton, WI | [REGISTER HERE](#)
- ✓ **WI Law Enforcement Administrative Professionals Conference**  
June 17 - 19 | Onalaska, WI | [REGISTER HERE](#)
- ✓ **WI Serving Victims of Crime Conference**  
August 18 - 20 | Green Bay, WI | [REGISTER HERE](#)

For all conference details, visit [ncjtc.org/conferences](https://ncjtc.org/conferences)

## Still time to get involved at our Conferences!

Become a presenter at our **Serving Victims of Crime Conference**! Call for Presentations is open **until March 4!** Learn more and submit your presentation [HERE](#).



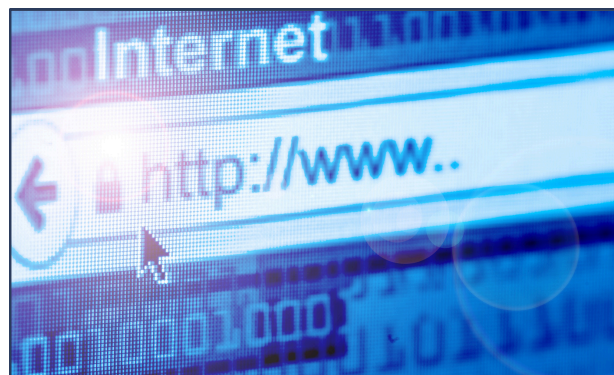
Want to gain National attention for your organization? Our conferences are still accepting Exhibitor and Sponsorship opportunities.

[We can't wait to work with you!](#)

# What's Happening at NCJTC?

## Safer Internet Day is February 10

Established in 2013, Safer Internet Day has been focused on educating adults and children about using the internet safely. While the internet offers opportunities for learning and interaction, it can also be used to exploit children, facilitate human trafficking, and engage in harmful behaviors such as sextortion and cyberbullying. At NCJTC, we offer training opportunities to protect children online and educate about using internet resources in investigations.



## UPCOMING TECHNOLOGY INVESTIGATION CLASSES

### [Casting the Digital Footprint](#)

March 2-3 | Hot Springs, AR  
May 4-5 | Carlsbad, CA

### [Beyond Google - Discovering Online Resources in Investigations](#)

April 20-21 | Everett, WA

### [Internet of Things: Criminal Investigation Considerations](#) | [Live Online](#)

March 11 | April 2 | April 29  
May 19 | June 2 | June 24

### [Internet of Things: Privacy Concerns: What Communities Need to Know](#) | [Live Online](#)

March 19 | April 30 | May 20 | June 25

### [Criminal Connections: Child Exploitation Material and Child Sexual Abuse](#)

March 23-24 | Nashville, TN

### [Protecting Children in a Digital Age](#)

March 31 | Live Online

### [Mobile Device Investigations](#)

May 27-29 | Marysville, WA  
November 2-4 | Hewitt, TX

Can't make a live training?

No worries - Check out our video library of [Recorded Webinars](#)



## NEW Technology Related Self-Paced Opportunity



### Engaging Communities on IoT Device Safeguards

As the Internet of Things (IoT) becomes commonplace in our everyday lives, there are important privacy and security concerns that citizens should be aware of. This self-paced training provides an overview of popular IoT devices and explores practical ways to engage with communities to share clear, useful information about IoT privacy and security. Participants will learn steps community members can take to use these devices more safely, along with effective strategies for connecting with diverse audiences around IoT risks and prevention. [Learn More](#)

View all Self-paced training [HERE](#).



# What's Happening at NCJTC?

## Upcoming Training

### [Suspicious Death Investigations: Finding the Right, Eliminating the Wrong, and Avoiding the Undetermined](#)

February 9 -10 | Nashville, TN  
May 11-12 | Everett, WA

### [Child Sex Trafficking: From Suspicion to Disclosure](#)

February 10 | Live Online  
April 7 | Live Online

### [Investigative Strategies for Child Abduction Cases](#)

February 10 | Live Online

### [Advanced Strategies for Investigating and Prosecuting Domestic Violence](#)

February 11 -13 | Nashville, TN

### [Following the Evidence in Child Abuse and Child Exploitation Cases](#)

February 17-18 | Live Online  
April 7-8 | Live Online

### [Verbal De-Escalation and Conflict Resolution](#)

February 17-18 | Live Online  
April 30 | Live Online

### [Sex Offender Registration and Notification](#)

February 25-26 | Live Online

### [Child Abuse: From Suspicion to Disclosure](#)

February 26 | Live Online  
May 28 | Live Online

### [Search and Canvass Operations in Child Abductions](#)

February 26-27 | Salt Lake City, UT

For all training dates,  
visit [ncjtc.org/training](https://ncjtc.org/training)

## February Webinar Opportunities

### [Innovative Use of Rapid DNA in Investigations](#)

February 11 | 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm CT

**Pre-Conference Webinar for MUPC - April 21-23 in Las Vegas, NV**

This webinar will provide information for all stakeholders to further mass fatality incidents, human identification cases, and certain missing person investigations. The webinar and subsequent conference plenary session will focus on Rapid DNA technology as an important forensic tool that has significantly influenced the process of addressing mass fatality incidents, and other similar types of investigations.



Learn more  
and Register



Learn more  
and Register



### [Missing Children Investigations Part 1 - Mapping the Digital Footprint](#)

February 18 | 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm CT

Part One of the Missing Children Investigation Series focuses on the vital role digital evidence plays in these high-stakes cases. In this webinar, learn how to analyze digital clues and utilize platform-specific open-source and OSINT tools to generate actionable leads quickly, because in missing children investigations, every minute counts. Gain the skills to effectively gather and request digital evidence while adhering to legal and procedural standards, including executing exigent, emergency disclosure, and preservation requests to ensure no critical evidence is lost in the search for a child.

*Webinar is pending DOJ approval.*

# NCJTC Impact

## San Diego Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment

*Strengthening the credibility of forensic interviews is critical to child protection.*

NCJTC kicked off the 41st San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment by leading a two-day, intensive pre-conference training on investigating and prosecuting child homicide cases.

Bringing together forensic pathologists, homicide investigators, and prosecutors, this intensive strengthened collaboration where it matters most: **protecting children, supporting victims, and advancing justice**. We are proud to equip professionals nationwide with practical, practitioner-led child protection training.

NCJTC team members and associates brought their expertise to California. **Deputy Administrator Julie Kenniston, MSW, LISW** brought deep expertise to her training sessions, helping professionals balance clinical care with forensic integrity to better protect children. **NCJTC Associate Andi Hamilton** shared evidence-informed investigative approaches at the Conference, aimed at improving outcomes in cases of female-perpetrated child sex crimes.



Couldn't make the training or conference and want to expand your investigative and child-protection skills?

[View our training opportunities surrounding Child Care and Protection.](#)



## Did You Know?

We can come directly to YOUR facility to [host](#) our most highly-sought after training courses!



Did you miss the last issue of the NCJTC Compass? [Read the December issue!](#)



Scan the QR code to subscribe to our newsletter or visit [ncjtc.org/signup](https://ncjtc.org/signup)!

## Connect With Us

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7:00 am - 5:00 pm CT (M - F)



NCJTC

Fox Valley  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE