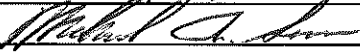


Old Saybrook Department of Police Services



General Order - 5.28



Missing Person Investigations	Issued By: Michael A. Spera, Chief of Police
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CALEA:	

Policy

It is the Policy of the Old Saybrook Department of Police Services to establish guidelines for managing, investigating, and documenting Missing Persons Investigations.

Definitions

Missing Person: Any person, who is reported missing to a law enforcement unit, until the person is located or determined to be a voluntarily missing adult. It includes any child who is missing voluntarily or involuntarily, or under circumstances not conforming to his or her ordinary habits or behavior and who may be in need of assistance per CGS 46b-120.

Adult Missing Person: An individual who has attained the age of eighteen years and is determined to be a Missing Person as defined above.

Missing Child: Any person who is under the age of eighteen years, whose temporary or permanent residence is in Connecticut or is believed to be in Connecticut, whose location has not been determined and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.

Reporting Myth: An incorrect assumption that 24 hours, or any other time frame, must pass before a law enforcement agency will accept a missing person report. There is NO waiting period for reporting a missing person.

At Risk: Persons "at risk" include, but are not limited to; Regardless of age, a missing person, when missing under circumstances in which the individual is in danger of serious physical injury or death, or the missing person being the victim of a crime or foul play, or in need of medical attention, or no history of running away or disappearing, or the victim of a family/parent abduction or mentally impaired. This policy presumes that every missing person will be considered at high risk until a reasonable and articulable basis to conclude otherwise exists.

Missing/NOT At-Risk Adult: An adult will NOT be considered At-Risk if any of the following criteria are met:

1. Absent Spouse: An absent spouse has committed no crime and is legally free to come and go. Caution should be exercised both in preserving the privacy rights of the spouse in

their wish to keep their whereabouts unknown and in making sure that the “absent spouse” is not, in fact, the victim of foul play related to domestic abuse.

2. An adult who has left a note and/or told a credible person that they are leaving. An exception would be a suicide note.
3. An adult who simply has not been in touch with the reporting party for an extended period of time, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
4. Fugitives from justice including AWOL service personnel.
5. Adult who is being sought for business or social purposes such as debt collections or school reunions.

Missing Child Report: A report prepared on a form designated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection for the use by private citizens and law enforcement agencies to report missing children information to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse. Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under eighteen years of age shall immediately accept such report for filing, inform all on duty police officers of the existence of the missing child report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Missing Person Clearing House: Missing Person Clearing House is established within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The clearing house established services deemed appropriate by the department to aid in the location of missing children and as a central repository of information regarding missing children and other missing persons. Information is collected and disseminated to assist in locating missing children.

Family with Service Needs: A family that includes a child who is at least seven years of age and is under eighteen years of age who;

1. Has without just cause run away from a parental home or other properly authorized and lawful place of abode.
2. Is beyond the control of the child’s or youth’s parent, parents, guardian or other custodian.
3. Has engaged in indecent or immoral conduct
4. Is a truant or habitual truant or who, while in school, has been continuously and overtly defiant of school rules and regulation, or
5. Is thirteen years of age or older and has engaged in sexual intercourse with another person and such other person is thirteen years of age or older and not more than two years older or younger than such child or youth.

Runaway: Any child who is voluntarily missing. Example: A fifteen-year-old child, who was angry about the parent’s strict rules, is reported missing after leaving home without telling the parents and fails to return.

Lost: A missing person who has strayed away and whose whereabouts are unknown.

Suspicious Circumstances: Circumstances which give rise to a belief that “foul play” may have been involved; the disappearance is out of character for the individual and no known reason can be determined.

Stranger Abduction: Missing person taken/kidnapped by a stranger (includes cases of a known abductor who is not a family member).

Parent/Family Abduction: A child who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent or non-parent family member.

Dependent Adult: Adult who has physical or mental limitations which restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, mentally handicapped).

Alzheimer's Disease: A progressive, degenerative disease of the brain in which brain cells die and are not replaced. It results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior.

Voluntary Missing Adult: Missing adult who has left on his/her own free will.

Unknown Missing: Child or adult who is reported missing, but there are insufficient facts to determine the circumstances.

Catastrophic Missing: Missing person is possibly a victim of a disaster (i.e., boating accident, plane crash, earthquake, flood, fire, terrorist act, etc.).

Mass Alerting and Notification System: A communications technique that can deliver phone and/or electronic messages to thousands of recipients at once. Example: A Child is Missing, Everbridge, and social media.

AMBER Alert: Defined as "America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response" Alert, is a nationally recognized program used by law enforcement to help find children under the most serious life threatening conditions. This is a rapid notification to the public, which utilizes all available technology during the critical period after a child/missing person has been abducted. The system can be activated by any police agency in the state. The State Police Message Center is the clearinghouse for all AMBER Alert information and there is a set procedure for activating, broadcasting and deactivating the system. The specific criteria for AMBER are:

1. The child must be under eighteen (18) years of age, unless there are special circumstances such as a proven mental or physical disability.
2. Law Enforcement must believe the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
3. There must be enough descriptive information to believe a broadcast will help.
4. The information must be received in a timely manner.

SILVER Alert: An alert system activated by the State Police Message Center. Information is disseminated to media outlets in the state of Connecticut in an effort to notify the public for assistance in locating the missing person. The criteria for SILVER are:

1. Persons who are under the age of eighteen (18) but do not meet the criteria of AMBER or
2. Adult persons with a mental impairment or medical condition, or
3. Any person over the age of sixty-five (65).

Blue Alert: An emergency alert system activated by the State Police message center to assist law enforcement agencies in the apprehension of persons suspected of killing or seriously injuring police officers or in the location of missing peace officers. The criteria for a blue alert are:

1. A peace officer has been assaulted by another person resulting in such officer's death or serious physical injury or has been assaulted by another person with a deadly weapon, and the person suspected of such assault;
 - a. Has not been apprehended; and
 - b. Poses an imminent threat to the public or other peace officers; or
2. A peace officer is missing while in the performance of such officer's duties under circumstances warranting concern for such officer's safety.
3. Sufficient descriptive information must be available concerning the suspect or the suspect's vehicle or circumstances of the peace officer's disappearance.

CART Team: Computer Analysis Response Team. Comprised of specially trained FBI investigators utilized as a resource in an effort to coordinate an immediate and quick response to the report of a missing child. They will assist the investigating agency.

TRAK: Technology to Recover Abducted Kids. Operated by the Connecticut Missing Person Clearinghouse, which is organized to assist with missing person investigations and to do research and planning. The clearinghouse can create, retrieve, and distribute missing person color posters electronically through the TRAK system. Another major resource is the National Missing Children Hotline, accessible at (800) 843-5678. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) also offers the Lost Child Alert Technology Resource (LOCATER), which is also available to law enforcement at no cost.

Eagle Eye Network: System used whenever a child under the age of 16 is suspected or known to be abducted and cannot be located. It is initiated by contacting State Police CCIU to arrange for a missing person poster to be sent to the U.S. Postal Service for distribution. The information may also be posted on the SPIN electronic bulletin board.

DNA: Material that is found in the nucleus of white blood cells and some structures outside the nucleus called mitochondria. Known as the "blueprint of life," it acts as a genetic code that distinguishes one person from another.

DNA Database: Department of Justice DNA database for all cases involving the report of an unidentified deceased person or a high-risk missing person. The DOJ database is called CODIS, an acronym for "Combined DNA Index System."

CODIS: Combined DNA Index System for Missing Persons generates investigative leads in cases where biological evidence is recovered from the crime scene.

UPS: Unidentified Persons System. An automated database maintained by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

NCIC: National Crime Information Center. A nationwide, on-line computer telecommunications system, that is maintained by the FBI. NCIC's Missing Person File was implemented in 1975.

Records in the Missing Person File are retained indefinitely, until the individual is located or the record is canceled by the entering agency. A NCIC Number, a computer generated number automatically assigned by NCIC to each accepted record, shall be recorded in all reports.

NamUs: National Missing and Unidentified Person System. Serves as a searchable online repository for missing and unidentified persons records that includes case data and circumstances, agency information, dental records and NCIC coding, fingerprint classifications and DNA testing status. NamUs is accessed through www.findthemissing.org.

IAFIS: Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System. A national fingerprint and criminal history system maintained by the FBI, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division.

ViCAP: Violent Criminal Apprehension Program. This national data center is designed to collect, collate, and analyze information on crimes of violence.

Family Reference Samples: Samples collected from immediate family members of the reported missing person. These samples can only be searched against the unidentified human remains index and can be entered as an identifier in NAMUS

Family Reference Sample Collection Kit: A standardized collection kit that provides a safe and effective, noninvasive means for obtaining DNA reference samples from appropriate family members of a missing person. Samples are entered into the FBI's Missing Persons DNA Database Program for comparative purposes.

Procedure

A. Notification of a Missing Person

1. Employees of the Department who take the initial complaint/call, by telephone, in person, or by electronic media, shall determine if the call is a missing person case according to the definition of a missing person.
2. If public safety dispatchers or patrol officers are unable to make a determination, the matter shall be immediately referred to the shift supervisor.
3. A missing person report/complaint shall be handled without delay as the missing child/adult may potentially be in danger.
4. Reporting parties and families of missing persons often experience feelings of helplessness and anxiety. Department personnel interacting with these persons should be sensitive to those feelings and respond accordingly maintaining a professional demeanor and exhibit a positive attitude.
5. There are two dimensions to a missing person investigation:
 - a. Locating and determining the well-being of the missing person, and
 - b. Supporting the person(s) initiating the report and the family and friends of the missing person.
6. Department employees involved with missing person investigations need to act in a swift, organized and efficient manner. In cases of child abductions, studies show the

majority of children are harmed or murdered within the first three hours of the abduction.

7. The report of a missing person, missing adult person or runaway shall be taken without delay and regardless of jurisdiction.
8. When our Department is the initial agency the missing person was reported to, we shall promptly notify, and send copies of the report to, the jurisdiction where the missing person resides, where they were last seen and their intended destination.
9. When our Department is notified by another jurisdiction about any aspect of a missing person investigation we shall give prompt assistance, provide follow up, and provide all reports, records and appropriate assistance.

B. Initial Responsibilities

1. Employees of the Department who take the initial complaint/call, by telephone, in person, or by electronic media, shall determine if the call is a missing person case.
2. The employee taking the initial call shall utilize the Emergency Police Dispatch Protocol. If unable to utilize the protocol the employee taking the initial complaint shall attempt to obtain no less than the following information:
 - a. Name, age and physical description of the missing person
 - b. The reason why the person is missing or has runaway.
 - c. Last known location
 - d. Possible medical or mental issue
 - e. Locations of any search already conducted.
 - f. Description of any person(s) or vehicle(s) seen in the area.
3. An officer shall be dispatched and the supervisor shall be notified without undue delay.
4. **When a child is reported missing or the missing person is deemed to be “at risk”, regardless of the reason, the supervisor shall respond to the scene and the Chief of Police or his designee shall be notified.**
5. A “Be On the Look-out” (BOLO) bulletin shall be broadcast within our jurisdiction for ALL missing person regardless of the reason they are missing.
6. Determine if a police K-9 unit should be contacted to aid in the search. Identify potential “scent articles”, but do not touch the article. It should only be handled by the K-9 handler.
7. Prepare and enter the missing person information into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communications Teleprocessing (COLLECT) and N.C.I.C., without delay, and no later than two (2) hours of the initial report.
 - a. If the missing person is located prior to the person being entered into the COLLECT system, the person shall still be entered into the COLLECT system and then canceled from the system.
8. Obtain a list of:
 - a. Persons known by the missing person, friends, co-workers, associates
 - b. Locations frequented by the missing person

C. Officer's Initial Contact at the Scene and Responsibilities

1. The responding officer shall interview, with sensitivity, the reporting party and any witnesses to determine:
 - a. That this is a missing person or adult missing person case;
 - b. If the person may be at risk or the existence of any suspicious circumstances;
 - c. If there are any potential crime scene areas and/or potential witnesses.
2. The Missing Person Worksheet shall be completed by the investigating officer and be attached to the case report.
3. Often parents and guardians offer items to assist law enforcement, to include, DNA samples, finger print cards, pictures and other documents. The officer shall accept these items and document their collection as evidence.
4. The following information must be obtained to aid in the search of the person and the completion of reports:
 - a. Name, age, and physical description of the missing person
 - b. The relationship of the reporting person to the missing person
 - c. Time and place the missing person was last seen and the identity of anyone accompanying the person
 - d. The extent of any search already conducted
 - e. Whether the missing person has been reported missing before and the degree to which this is different from established behavior patterns, habits or plans
 - f. Whether the missing person has been involved in:
 - i. Domestic problems; are there any court orders, verify them?
 - ii. Suffered emotional trauma or life crisis?
 - iii. Demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior?
 - iv. Has talked about running away or committing suicide?
 - v. Is dependent on drugs or alcohol?
 - vi. Has a history of mental illness?
 - g. The physical condition of the person, whether they are on medication and if they have the medication with them
 - h. Vehicle information or other form of transportation
 - i. Did the missing person take anything with them such as food, money, clothing, weapons or personal items? Does the person have a bank card, charge card or bank accounts? Check to see if they have been used.
 - j. If at the missing person's home check for:
 - i. Notes, travel folders, newspaper articles or like items
 - ii. A computer, check to view his/her social networking sites considering safeguards for later analysis.
 - k. At the earliest possible moment, and as information develops, notify the Emergency Communications Center and other on duty officers
 - l. Determine if the missing person has a cell phone or pager;
 - i. Record the cell phone or pager number
 - ii. Determine the cell phone carrier and consider contacting the carrier for help.
 - iii. Call the number; leave a message if it goes to voice mail.

- m. Determine if the missing person had relatives, friends or neighbors whom he or she may visit or contact.
 - n. Determine if the missing person has failed to perform some important task, such as pick-up children or feed pets.
5. Further assessment shall be undertaken to determine what reasonable steps should be taken to locate the missing person. At a minimum the actions should include:
- a. Begin to determine what personnel and resources will be required for an area or neighbor canvas. Determine a potential staging area.
 - b. Search the immediate and surrounding area in a logical and systematic manner. For missing children, search the house first, even if the parents said they have already done so.
 - c. Determine if there is a crime scene that needs to be protected.
 - d. Process the potential crime scene for evidence.
 - e. Identify and interview potential witnesses.
 - f. Examine court orders regarding custodial matters, if applicable.
 - g. Notify other agencies seeking their assistance in locating the missing person.
 - h. Determine if the missing person fits the mandatory criteria for an AMBER Alert. The criteria are:
 - i. The child must be under eighteen (18) years of age, unless there are special circumstances such as a proven mental or physical disability.
 - ii. Law Enforcement must believe the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
 - iii. There must be enough descriptive information to believe a broadcast will help.
 - iv. The information must be received in a timely manner.
 - i. Determine if the missing person fits the mandatory criteria for a SILVER Alert. The criteria are:
 - i. Persons who are under the age of eighteen (18) but do not meet the criteria of AMBER or
 - ii. Adult persons with a mental impairment or medical condition, or
 - iii. Any person over the age of sixty-five (65).
 - j. Request from the family or reporting party:
 - i. Recent photographs, photographs showing teeth are beneficial for dental comparisons.
 - ii. Personal electronic devices, credit cards, ATM cards, toll passes, computers, screen names, passwords, e-mail sources, website history
 - iii. Personal clothing, bedding, hygiene items that may include potential DNA evidentiary value.
 - k. The missing person shall be entered into the NamUs data base as soon practical. NamUs is accessed through www.findthemissing.org

D. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Ensure the completion of the procedures as outlined above.
2. Contact the Chief of Police or his designee if the criteria for doing so are met.

3. Complete the Department's Supervisor Missing Person Investigation - Supervisor Check List and attach to the case report.
4. Determine if a mass alerting and notification system should be utilized. If a mass alerting and notification system is used the Chief of Police or his designee shall be notified.
 - a. Everbridge Emergency Notification System
 - b. A Child is Missing (ACIM)
 - c. Social Media
5. Determine if the criteria are met for an AMBER Alert, SILVER Alert or Blue Alert. If the criteria is met and the service is requested the Chief of Police or his designee shall be notified.
 - a. DPS 81 C – AMBER Alert / Missing Child / SILVER Alert Request form must be immediately transmitted to the State Police Message Center to request alert activation.
Message Center – 860-685-8190 or 800-842-0200 or FAX 860-685-8346 or dps.messagecenter@ct.gov
 - b. The form is for use by private citizens and law enforcement. If the Department receives such report of a missing child under eighteen years of age the Department shall immediately accept such report.
6. When the criteria for a Blue Alert is met, the Chief of Police or his designee shall be notified.
 - a. The Chief of Police or his designee shall determine if a Blue Alert will be requested from the State Police message center.
Message Center – 860-685-8190 or 800-842-0200 or FAX 860-685-8346 or dps.messagecenter@ct.gov
7. Supervisor shall review all reports prepared by investigating officers.

E. Locating the Missing Person

1. When the missing person is located notification shall be made to:
 - a. The reporting party
 - b. On duty officers
 - c. The Chief of Police or his designee, if they were contacted.
 - d. Assisting agencies, whether law enforcement or other.
 - e. Any mass alerting and notification system shall be canceled.
 - f. The COLLECT entry shall be canceled.
 - g. The NamUs entry shall be canceled.
 - h. The AMBER, SILVER or Blue Alert shall be canceled.
2. When a missing person is located prior to being entered into the COLLECT system the person shall still be entered into COLLECT system and then canceled from the system.
3. An interview of the missing person should occur. This may reveal information regarding the reasons for going missing, their location and who they have been with.
4. Officers should be mindful that sometimes a person may runaway to escape abuse by a family member, caregiver or other person. If the interview is done in their presence it is unlikely the abuse will be revealed.

F. Missing Persons not Immediately Located

1. The investigation should be reviewed at least once a week during the first month of the investigation by the assigned officer.
2. Contact shall be maintained with the family and or reporting person
3. The NamUs data base shall be updated.
4. Assistance should be given to the family or reporting person in entering the missing person into two clearing houses:
 - a. For a missing person under the age of 17, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
 - b. For a missing person over the age of 18, contact the National Center for Missing Adults

G. Reporting Responsibilities

1. NOTE: A report of a missing person under the age of 21 must be reported to N.C.I.C. per Federal Law.
2. Investigating officers shall prepare reports regarding the investigation of the missing person without delay.
3. The Missing Person Worksheet shall be completed by the investigating officer and be attached to the case report. All findings noted on the worksheet shall be detailed in the incident report.

H. Additional Resources

1. Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations
2. Contact information for the following resources is available through the Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations
 - a. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, www.missingkids.com
 - b. Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" Program, www.alz.com
 - c. US Department of Justice Child Abduction Response Plan
 - d. US Department of State, Child Custody Division, 202-736-7000
 - e. US Department of State, Office of Passport Services, 202-955-0307
 - f. US Postal Service, 202-268-4267
 - g. US Department of Defense, 800-336-4592
 - h. US office of Personnel Management, 202-606-2424
 - i. National Center for Missing Adults. www.theyaremissd.org
 - j. National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), www.findthemissing.org

Revision History

January 24, 2014

Replaces S.O. 12-007 issued on August 22, 2012