

JACKSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy: 10-6

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MISSING PERSONS INVESTIGATIONS

PURPOSE: To instruct employees on the proper procedures and importance of accurate, complete, and prompt investigations of a missing person report.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Jacksonville Police Department to methodically investigate reports involving missing persons to include conducting preliminary investigations, communicating such information, conducting subsequent follow-up contacts and investigations, and/or searches, as necessary.

The Jacksonville Police Department will expeditiously respond to and thoroughly investigate all reports of runaways and missing children. A child who is missing under “unusual circumstances” shall be considered “at risk” until sufficient information to the contrary is confirmed.

DEFINITIONS:

- I. MISSING ADULT: as defined in A.C.A. §12-12-205, means any person:
 - A. Who is eighteen (18) years of age or older;
 - B. Whose residence is in Arkansas or is believed to be in Arkansas; and
 - C. Who has been reported to a law enforcement agency as missing under circumstances indicating that:
 1. The individual has a physical or mental disability as evidenced by written documentation;
 2. The individual is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary;
 3. The individual is missing under circumstances indicating that the individual’s safety may be in danger; or
 4. The individual is missing as a result of a natural or intentionally caused catastrophe.
- II. MISSING CHILD: Means any person:
 - A. Who is under the age of eighteen (18) years;
 - B. Whose residence is in Arkansas or is believed to be in Arkansas;
 - C. Whose location is unknown or who has been taken, enticed, or kept from any person entitled by law or a court decree or order to the right of custody; and
 - D. Who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.
- III. RUNAWAY: Any minor (under the age of 18) child who has failed to return to or has left without consent or knowledge of the parent or guardian and has been reported to the authorities as a runaway. Children under the age of ten (10) will be classified as missing and not as a runaway.
- IV. UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Any missing child under the age of eight-teen (18) years of age or younger whose disappearance involves circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the child should be considered at risk. Those circumstances could include the child being:
 - A. Out of the “zone of safety” for his or her age and developmental stage;
 - B. Mentally incapacitated (e.g. developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed);
 - C. Medically dependent (e.g. insulin dependent);

- D. Drug involved;
 - E. A potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation;
 - F. In a life-threatening situation;
 - G. Reported to the police as missing after a delay on the part of the parents, guardians, or other responsible person;
 - H. Believed to be with adults or older juveniles who could endanger his welfare; and/or
 - I. Absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior.
- V. ZONE OF SAFETY: The distance a child could travel from the location where last seen before he or she would most likely be at risk of injury or exploitation based on the child's age, developmental stage or other related matters.

PROCEDURES:

I. ENTERING A MISSING PERSON (7.35)

A missing person record must be entered into ACIC/NCIC for the following: (as according to Arkansas Law)

- A. Missing Adult - According to A.C.A. §12-12-205: Upon receiving notice of a missing adult, a law enforcement agency shall complete a missing person report and immediately enter identifying and descriptive information about the missing adult into the computerized system of the clearinghouse (ACIC/NCIC) provided the entering agency has:
 - 1. Signed documentation from a family member, friend, or other authoritative source (witness statement).
 - 2. Including a signed report by an investigating official when other documentation is not reasonably attainable, stating the conditions under which the person is declared missing (JPD incident report).
- B. Missing Juvenile - According to A.C.A. §12-12-205: Upon receiving notice of a missing child, a law enforcement agency shall complete a missing person report and immediately enter identifying and descriptive information about the missing child into the computerized system of the clearinghouse (ACIC/NCIC).
- C. All Department personnel must be aware that there is no formal waiting period required before this Department will accept a missing persons report.

II. MISSING ADULTS

A. Initial Description and Information Gathering

- 1. The officer upon arrival shall talk to the complainant. The following information should be gathered:
 - a. Name of the person(s) missing;
 - b. Race and sex;
 - c. Date of birth and age;
 - d. Height and weight;
 - e. Hair and eye color;
 - f. Scars, marks, or tattoos;
 - g. Clothing last seen wearing, including any jewelry;
 - h. Mode of transportation;
 - i. Date last seen;
 - j. Person who last saw the missing person;
 - k. Person's relationship to the missing person(s);
 - l. A current photograph of the missing person, if possible;

- m. Driver's License/Identification number;
 - n. Social Security number;
 - o. Physical and mental state;
 - p. Employment;
 - q. Friends and relatives, along with addresses; and
 - r. Names of any person(s) which the missing person(s) might be accompanying.
- B. Dissemination of Collected Information: After the officer has collected all of the information concerning the missing person(s), he shall request a "Be On the Look Out" (BOLO) message on the radio to other officers working and also a BOLO message be sent out, using ACIC/NCIC, to surrounding agencies and/or agencies where the missing person(s) may be traveling through or enroute to. All information about the missing person(s) physical and/or mental state should be included and any medical alerts that officers need to be aware of (i.e. diabetes, Alzheimer's)
- C. NCIC Entry of Missing Person(s): Once the incident report is completed, the officer will fax the report to the Communications Center. In all cases, this report will be completed prior to the officer being relieved from duty for the day. The dispatcher will enter the person(s) into NCIC (National Criminal Information Center) under the appropriate file and attach the NCIC printout to the officer's report. The dispatcher will then advise the officer of the National Identification Code (NIC) number, which will be entered into the incident report.
- D. If the Missing Person is a senior or adult with cognitive disorder or Alzheimer's disease the Silver Alert System will be activated. (Arkansas State Police Silver Alert Form)
- E. NCIC Removal of Missing Person(s): Upon notification, confirmation, and/or location of any missing person(s), the Communication Center will notify the shift supervisor and assign an officer to complete a supplemental report stating the location of the missing person(s), and date of location. The missing person will promptly be removed from NCIC Missing Persons Files.
- F. Follow-up with Reporting Person(s): Once the officer has gathered the information from the reporting person, that person shall be given a business card with the name of the reporting officer, the incident number, and the JPD phone number. The report will be submitted for review and forwarded to CID. After review by CID, the reporting person will be contacted by a detective for follow-up.
- G. Follow-up and Search Investigations: Once the missing person(s) report has been filed, the initial officer will determine if a search is warranted for the missing person(s) based on, but not limited to, any physical or emotional disabilities. The shift supervisor shall be notified of same and shall initiate a search of the immediate area, using any resources available.
- H. If the missing person(s) is not found in the immediate area, the search should be extended to surrounding areas, relaying the information via radio to other agencies for their assistance. If the missing person(s) is not found within a reasonable amount of time, the case will be forwarded to the CID for follow-up.

III. MISSING JUVENILES

- A. Runaway Juvenile:
- 1. Upon determining that a juvenile has run away from his home or environment, and there is concern among family members for the welfare of such individual, the officer will secure the necessary information and complete an incident report in regard to a runaway. In all cases, this report will be completed prior to the officer being relieved from duty for the day.
 - a. As soon as possible after taking the initial report, the reporting officer shall broadcast a complete description of the runaway and, if known, a possible direction of travel and means of transportation.
 - b. Reports of runaways and/or missing juveniles shall be entered immediately into NCIC in accordance with applicable federal law.

- c. The reporting officer will obtain an updated photograph of the runaway either digital or paper.
- d. The family or reporting person of the runaway need not have information of the whereabouts of the runaway prior to taking a report. However, if the family or reporting person has reason to believe that they know the location of the child in question, then the officer taking the report will follow up on any information provided to make certain the child is returned to his home.
- e. Officers will advise the reporting party to contact the Jacksonville Police Department in the event a reported runaway returns home or notifies them of their location.
- f. If the child is not located and the case will be assigned to investigations for follow-up.
- g. The assigned detective will contact the reporting person and advise the assignment of the case and that a BOLO will be sent to Patrol Officer's and be placed on the Police Department web site and on social media (Facebook and Twitter).
- h. When the runaway is located, they will promptly be removed from ACIC and a supplement will be completed.

B. Missing Children

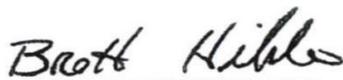
1. Responsibilities of the Communications Center: A dispatcher who receives the report of a missing child is responsible for ensuring that appropriate information is collected to assist the responding officer. This includes but may not be limited to the following:
 - a. Determine if the circumstances of the report meet the definition of a missing child as set forth in this policy.
 - b. Prioritize the call based on the factors determining "unusual circumstances" and dispatch officers accordingly, and notify supervisor.
 - c. Collect essential information from the caller to transmit appropriate radio alerts providing descriptive information about the child, where the child was last seen, and any information concerning potential abductors and their means and direction of travel.
 - d. Inform the parent or guardian that they should not disturb or tamper with the home, school, or location where the child might have been or any of the child's belongings.
 - e. Where unusual circumstances exist, issue an immediate radio alert to all Department personnel and notify surrounding agencies.
 - f. Ask the parents to stay in place until police personnel arrive.
2. Responsibilities of the First Responding Officer: The officer assigned as the primary unit to the incident should prioritize and perform as appropriate the following tasks:
 - a. Unless acting in direct response to the child's safety, respond directly and promptly to the individual who made the initial report.
 - b. Irrespective of any search that may have been conducted previously by the parents or others, verify that the child is missing by conducting a consensual search of the house and grounds to include places a child could be hiding, trapped or asleep. A thorough search of the child's home should be conducted even if the disappearance occurred elsewhere. With the assistance of additional personnel, search the residence, out buildings, other structures and vehicles related to the property.
 - c. Conduct interviews with parents or other person who made the initial reports in order to gain insight into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and gather other information needed to conduct an initial assessment of the case.
 - d. Obtain a detailed description of the missing child, several recent photographs, and detailed description and forward to communications for broadcast.
 - e. Confirm the child's custody status, whether a custody dispute or similar problem exists between the parents, whether a restraining order is in effect, or if the child has expressed an interest in living with the non-custodial parent.
 - f. Determine when, where and by whom the child was last seen; interview those who last

- saw the child.
- g. Secure and safeguard the incident scene or place last seen. Ensure the personnel do not tamper with potential evidence.
 - h. Identify the zone of safety for the child's age and developmental stage.
 - i. Based on the available information, make an initial determination of the type of case, the needs for additional resources, and whether the incident should be initially classified as "unusual" as defined in this policy.
 - j. If the child was believed to have been abducted, obtain a description of the abductors if available, the mode of travel, vehicle description and related information and transmit this information to Communications for broadcast. If the abductor is a family member, obtain photographs of the suspect.
 - k. Fully identify and separately interview anyone at the scene of the disappearance.
 - l. Prepare a chronological account of actions taken and information obtained from the point of contact to relief.
 - m. Once information has been collected on the missing child, a BOLO should be created with the child's information and photograph to be distributed to other officers. A canvas of the neighborhood should be done as soon as possible to identify and interview residents and others within the "abduction zone".
3. Responsibilities of Supervisory Personnel: When a child is missing under unusual circumstances, the supervisor will ensure that the following measures are taken:
- a. Obtain a briefing from the first responding officer and other Department personnel at the scene sufficient to determine the scope and complexity of the case and develop an appropriate response. Conduct this briefing away from family, friends and other involved individuals.
 - b. The Code Red Alert system should be activated and determined if the Alert will go to all Jacksonville citizens or a set radius from the missing child's home.
 - c. Ensure the first responding officer responsibilities have been fully and properly carried out.
 - d. Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed to assist in the investigation to include the activation of the Morgan Nick Amber Alert System (Procedure and requirements in subsection C).
 - e. If necessary, establish a Command Post (away from the child's residence) to assist in field management of the search and investigation. If a Command Post is established, ensure the following tasks are accomplished:
 - i. Appoint a search operations coordinator to organize search efforts.
 - ii. Contact the Public Information Officer to deal with media inquiries and, if deemed appropriate, solicit media assistance in locating the missing child.
 - iii. Establish a liaison with family who can explain police efforts and work with the family to uncover any information useful to the investigation.
 - iv. Once a command post has been established, the supervisor should be responsible for organizing a neighborhood canvas.
 - f. Ensure that all required notifications have been made to include officers and investigative personnel of the Police Department, other law enforcement agencies, and available community resources.
4. Responsibilities of the Detective: Where a case involves unusual circumstances as defined in this policy, the assigned detective shall ensure the following measures are taken:
- a. Obtain a briefing from all involved personnel at the scene.
 - b. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information concerning the child, being alert to facts or statements that may conflict with those obtained by the first responding officer or supervisor.
 - c. Canvas the neighborhood as soon as possible to identify and interview residents and

- others within the “abduction zone”.
 - d. Obtain a general history of recent family dynamics from family members, neighbors, classmates, teachers, school counselors, and other persons who may have had close personal interaction with the child and/or family.
 - e. Conduct in-depth fact finding interviews with all witnesses, friends, or relatives of the missing child, teachers, classmates, or others who knew and/or routinely interacted with the child, placing particular emphasis on identifying any conflicting information offered by these or other individuals.
 - f. Review any records generated about the family or child within local law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and other related organizations or agencies.
 - g. Reassess the need for additional resources or specialized services.
 - h. Notify the Division of vital Records of the Department of Health and the superintendent of the school where the child was attending within five (5) business days (A.C.A. §12-12-801). (13.21)
5. Follow-Up Responsibilities
- a. If the case is not resolved promptly, update descriptive records and those records entered into the ACIC/NCIC missing persons database as needed.
 - b. Determine whether a truth verification examination is warranted and request such an examination where indicated for the parents, guardians or other persons as appropriate.
 - c. Monitor media relations to include a review of all Department releases to the media to ensure that information is not released which will compromise the investigation.
 - d. Provide the family with whatever support is possible and appropriate.
 - e. Upon notice that the missing juvenile has returned home, the assigned detective will:
 - i. Physically go to the residence and confirm the return of the juvenile; and
 - ii. Talk with the juvenile to ensure his safety has not been jeopardized; and
 - iii. Determine if charges need to be brought up against any person.
- C. Morgan Nick Amber Alert Activation: The Morgan Nick Amber Alert System is a cooperative project between the Arkansas State Police and other participating law enforcement agencies working together with more than 250 Arkansas radio and television stations, other news mediums, and public agencies to provide a rapid and reliable line of communication that can connect instantaneously with thousands of Arkansans bringing them into the search for missing children. (7.35)
1. The Morgan Nick Amber Alert System consists of two (2) activation levels. The criterion for activation of each level is as follows:
- a. Level I - Emergency Alert System Activation
 - i. The missing child must be less than eighteen (18) years of age;
 - ii. An Arkansas State Police (ASP) Investigator will be dispatched to consult and assist the local law enforcement agency requesting the activation.
 - iii. The Detective will complete the Morgan Nick Amber Alert System Initial Reporting form, sign the document and transmit it by e-mail or facsimile to ASP “Troop A” Communications Center.
 - v. A photograph of the child will be emailed to ASP “Troop A” Communications Center or provided directly to the ASP Investigator responding to the scene.
 - vi. In addition to those items listed above, the following facts shall be considered as well:
 - a. Threat assessment of imminent harm or death to the missing child;
 - b. Age of the child;
 - c. Time of initial report in relation to time of disappearance;
 - d. Witness information;
 - e. Possible domestic or parental dispute; and

- f. Other facts that might indicate the child was abducted or is in imminent danger (e.g. witnessed kidnapping, accounts from witnesses of abuse and other forms of violence directed at the child).
- b. Level II- E-mail Network Activation
 - i. If the circumstances of the disappearance involving the child do not rise to the level of the criteria allowing for a Level I-EAS Activation, an alternate form of mass notification may be utilized to notify both print and broadcast newsrooms across the state.
 - ii. The criteria for a Level II activation includes the following:
 - a. The missing child must be less than eighteen (18) years of age;
 - b. The Detective will complete the Morgan Nick Amber Alert System Initial Reporting form, sign the document and transmit it by facsimile to ASP "Troop A" Communications Center; and
 - c. A photograph of the child will be emailed to ASP "Troop A" Communications Center.
 - d. Additional information developed from the continued investigation into the disappearance of a child may warrant reconsideration as to whether to activate the Level I Emergency Alert System. This information should be relayed to the ASP "Troop A" Communications Center for consideration by their Criminal Investigation Division or Division Commander. The system may then be upgraded under their established protocol.
- D. Silver Alert Activation: The Silver Alert System is a cooperative project between the Arkansas State Police and other participating law enforcement agencies working together with more than 250 Arkansas radio and television stations, other news mediums, and public agencies to provide a rapid and reliable line of communication that can connect instantaneously with thousands of Arkansans bringing them into the search for the missing adult. (7.35)
- E. When a law enforcement officer is notified by the parents, guardian, or other person having custody of a child that a child is missing, the law enforcement officer shall:
 - 1. Ensure that the missing child information, including a photograph(s), is entered into the Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse within the Arkansas Crime Information Center in accordance with A.C. A. § 12-12- 205 and the National Crime Information Center, and;
 - 2. Within five (5) business days after being notified by the parents, guardian, or other person having custody of the child, inform by certified mail, return receipt requested, the Division of Vital Records of the Arkansas Department of Health and the superintendent or school administrator of the school where the child was attending that the child has been reported as missing;
 - 3. The division shall enter on or attach to the child's birth certificate a notice that the child has been reported missing. The school the child was attending shall make or attach the same notation on the child's school records.

ALEAP: 7.35; 13.21


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