
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

MORGAN NICK ALERT/MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILDREN

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for use of The Morgan Nick/Amber Alert System and address issues specific to missing/abducted children.

Policy Statement: It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to immediately notify and dispatch a patrol supervisor to the scene of a missing child, when the child is 12 years of age or younger and/or criminal activity is suspected in the disappearance. The Arkansas State Police (ASP) has the authority to activate a Morgan Nick Alert whenever circumstances indicated the need for an immediate large-scale, organized search for a missing child. This alert is to be a cooperative effort between our Department and the Arkansas State Police (ASP) who have been trained to assist local law enforcement jurisdictions in getting vital information to the news media in a timely manner for it to be disseminated to the public in cases of missing children. [CALEA 41.2.6a]

Summary of Changes: New Format.

Definitions

Missing Child: Any person less than 14 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to a parent, guardian, or responsible party.

Morgan Nick/Amber Alert System: The Morgan Nick/Amber Alert System is a cooperative effort among Arkansas state and local law enforcement agencies working in conjunction with more than 250 Arkansas radio and television stations. The system provides law enforcement agencies intermediary access to the on-air signals of broadcasting stations across the state during the critical minutes following an initial report to local authorities of suspicious circumstances involving a child's disappearance.

Family Abduction: A non-custodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court custody arrangement.

Non-Family Abduction: A child taken by an unknown individual through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.

Procedure:

1 Morgan Nick/Amber Alert System Policy and Activation Criteria [CALEA 41.2.6 d]

- 1.1 The missing child must be 12 years of age or younger and /or criminal activity is suspected in the disappearance.
- 1.2 The missing child is seventeen (17) years of age or younger with confirmed mental or physical disabilities and there is a threat of physical injury or death.
- 1.3 The North Little Rock Police Chief or designee, or the incident commander with at least the rank of Lieutenant must complete the Morgan Nick /Amber Alert System Initial Reporting form, sign the document, and electronically mail or fax the form to the Arkansas State Police Troop A Communications Center which is located at Little Rock Headquarters.
- 1.4 An Arkansas State Police Special Agent may be dispatched to consult and assist our police Department in the completion of the Morgan Nick Alert system Initial Reporting Form.
- 1.5 A Photograph of the child will be e-mailed along with the initial reporting form, or it will be turned over to the assigned criminal investigator, who responds to the scene of the disappearance call/incident.
- 1.6 Before activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), an Arkansas State Police Region Commander or his designee must consider the information contained within the initial report form and approve the activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

2 Elements to be Considered in a Missing Child Case are as Follows:

- 2.1 Threat of imminent harm or death to the missing child;
- 2.2 Age of the child;
- 2.3 Time of initial report vs. time of disappearance;
- 2.4 Witness information;
- 2.5 Possible domestic or parental dispute involving the child;
- 2.6 Other facts that indicate the child was abducted or is in danger of serious injury or death, i.e., witnessed kidnapping, abuse, or violence toward the child.

3 Disappearances not Meeting EAS Activation Criteria

- 3.1 Should circumstances of a child's disappearance not meet the criteria to activate the statewide EAS, an alternate form of mass notification can be offered by the Arkansas State Police; also, "A Child Is Missing" may be activated.
- 3.1.1 A photograph and the Morgan Nick/Amber Alert System Initial Reporting Form may be e-mailed through a statewide network of law enforcement agencies, new media offices and other forms of public communication.
- 3.1.2 The e-mail will contain information taken from the Morgan Nick/Amber Alert System Initial Reporting Form submitted by this Department, i.e., name of missing child, physical and clothing description, location last seen, time of disappearance, law enforcement agency requesting general e-mail notification, contact name and telephone number.
- 3.1.3 The e-mail alerting news media and law enforcement of a child's disappearance which does not meet the criteria of a Morgan Nick Alert system **EAS** Activation will include the following paragraph at the beginning of the e-mail:
- 3.1.3.1 *The North Little Rock Police Department has requested the following information be provided to the Arkansas news media and law enforcement agencies.*
- 3.1.3.2 *At the present time, the information being provided to the Arkansas State police by the North Little Rock Police Department has not triggered a Morgan Nick Alert system EAS activation.*
- 3.1.3.4 *It should be left to the discretion of each law enforcement agency and news Department receiving the e-mail whether to release the attached information regarding the disappearance of the child and/ or the child's photograph.*
- 3.1.4 Should an initial investigation into the disappearance produce evidence that may change the initial circumstances as reported to this Department, the incident commander will advise the ASP/CID Regional Commander or his/her designee of the evidence and request that the EAS activation be reconsidered.

4 Communications Center's Responsibilities [CALEA 41.2.6 e]

- 4.1 When the North Little Rock communications Center receives information concerning a reported missing child, the following steps should be taken:
- 4.1.1 Dispatch a patrol unit to the scene of the incident, and ensure that a patrol supervisor is advised of the incident;
- 4.1.2 Provide as much information about the missing child as possible including the descriptions of the child, the abductor (if applicable), and any vehicle involved to patrol units in order for them to begin the search within our city for the missing child;
- 4.1.3 If the Morgan Nick/Amber Alert system has been initiated, communications will broadcast an immediate alert on primary and secondary police radio channels to all police units. This should be done immediately and re-broadcast at least every two hours. Communication personnel will continue to broadcast this information at the beginning of each shift for seven (7) consecutive days or until instructed otherwise by a supervisor.
- 4.1.4 Communications personnel will communicate, by terminal, information about the Morgan Nick/Amber Alert broadcast to all police agencies in the state. Communications will fax the MEMS supervisor the information about the missing child.
- 4.1.5 Assist the incident commander by ensuring that the lines of communication remain open with all agencies assisting with the incident.
- 4.1.6 Utilize the North Little Rock Questionnaire Tip Sheet when receiving any incoming information related to the reported missing child and forward to the appropriate Patrol Division supervisor.

5 The Incident Commander's Responsibilities

- 5.1 The incident commander, who generally will be the on-duty Patrol Lieutenant, must ensure that the strict criteria for a Morgan Nick Alert System Activation is present prior to notifying the North Little Rock Communications Center. Once the Communications Center is notified, the incident commander has the authority to make the notification to the Arkansas State Police Troop A Communications Center about the incident. The notification will be made by facsimile transmission using the Morgan Nick/Amber Alert system Initial Report Form.
- 5.2 The incident commander will notify the on-call Investigations Division Sergeant, who will notify the Investigations Division Lieutenant. The Lieutenant will notify the Division Commander.
- 5.3 The incident commander will notify the Patrol Captain or the on-call staff duty Captain, who will be responsible for notifying the Chief of Police.
- 5.4 The incident commander will also notify the Public Information Officer. [CALEA 41.2.6 b]

6 Investigations Supervisor's Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Investigations Division Supervisor receiving the call will immediately respond to the scene and be briefed of the circumstances and coordinate search efforts with the Patrol Supervisor.

7 Investigations Division's Responsibilities

- 7.1 The responding detective will obtain a briefing from the first responding officer, other on-scene personnel, and make follow-up contact with the reporting party. [CALEA 41.2.5 d]
- 7.2 The responding detective will verify the accuracy of all descriptive information and other details developed during the preliminary investigation.
- 7.3 Initiate a neighborhood canvas using a standardized questionnaire. [CALEA 41.2.5 e]
- 7.4 Collect article(s) of the child's clothing for scent-tracking purposes.
- 7.5 Secure the child's latest medical and dental information.
- 7.6 Contact landfill management and request they segregate garbage and dumping containers.
- 7.7 Prepare and update bulletins for local law-enforcement agencies.
- 7.8 Work in conjunction with communications on a tip line.
- 7.9 Establish a liaison with the victim's family.
- 7.10 Explore the basis of conflicting information.
- 7.11 Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services-FBI, NCMEC Team ADAM.

8 Reunification

Non-Family Abducted Child

- 8.1 Arrange for a comprehensive physical examination of the victim, determine any immediate physical or emotional needs of the child, and help ensure those needs are met.
- 8.2 Conduct a careful interview of the child.
- 8.3 Notify the child's parents/guardians about their child's condition and ask them to refrain from making a public announcement about the child's recovery.
- 8.4 Instruct the parent/guardian to bring along a change of clothing for the child and any familiar or favorite item left behind when the child was abducted.
- 8.5 Arrange to have a victim-witness advocate assigned to the child and family as soon as possible.
- 8.6 Issue a press release and/or hold a press conference announcing appropriate details about the recovery
- 8.7 Cancel Morgan Nick/Amber Alert, and have the case removed from the FBI's NCIC databases.
- 8.8 In cases of a *family abducted child*, conduct an in-depth interview of the abductor and left-behind parent and coordinate with child protective services if temporary shelter is needed.
[CALEA 41.2.6 f]

Mike Davis
Chief of Police