

JUVENILE PROCEDURES

MISSING PERSONS

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and responsibilities regarding this agency's response to all reports of missing persons.

Policy Statement: It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to respond to all reports of missing persons within its jurisdiction and take the appropriate action based on the initial assessment of known facts. This agency holds that every person reported as missing will be considered at risk until information to the contrary has been established. Since the safety of missing persons is paramount, this agency will immediately initiate the required reporting process for any missing person who resides in, or was last seen in this jurisdiction. If a missing person legally resides in this jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, but the law-enforcement agency having venue in that jurisdiction chooses not to take a missing report, this agency will assume reporting and investigative responsibility.

Summary of Changes:

Definitions:

Adult Missing Persons: All adults whose absence is contrary to his/her normal pattern of behavior and no exigent circumstances surrounding their absence exist.

Juvenile Missing Persons: All juveniles over the age of 14 whose whereabouts are unknown to the parent, legal guardian, or responsible party.

Adult Critical Missing – Level 3: All missing adults with diminished mental capacity or of sufficient age to be unable to care for themselves.

Juvenile Critical Missing – Level 3: Juveniles 14 years of age or less whose whereabouts are unknown and all missing juveniles of any age where a reasonable expectation of danger exists but no criminal activity is suspected.

Adult Critical Missing – Level 2: All missing adults in which known elements of danger exist and require an immediate and continuing response.

Juvenile Critical Missing – Level 2: All missing juveniles in which known elements of danger exist, and all juveniles under the age of 12, regardless of circumstances.

Adult Critical Missing – Level 1: Any missing adult that is a kidnapping victim.

Juvenile Critical Missing – Level 1: Any missing juvenile under threat of imminent harm or death.

Procedures:

1 Classification

All missing juveniles and adults will be classified as a *Missing Person*, *Critical Missing Level Three*, *Critical Missing Level Two*, or *Critical Missing Level One*. *Missing Persons* requires the lowest degree of response and each subsequent level requires a higher degree of response with *Critical Missing Level One* requiring the highest degree of response.

2 Initial Response

The initial response is utilized to gather information to formulate the appropriate level of response. During this process nothing should be assumed and everything should be verified. It is much easier to redirect the investigation and resources than it is to make up lost ground. The rule of thumb is to approach every missing person report as if it were your family member that was missing.

- 2.1 Officers will respond promptly and *Missing Persons* reports shall be accepted on all juveniles and adults who become missing in, or who were last seen in the City of North Little Rock. The reportee need not be in North Little Rock.
- 2.2 This policy shall not be used by the public as a means of using police resources to locate persons who are not missing as defined in this policy.
- 2.3 Interview reporting party and verify that the person is in fact missing. Responding officers should never assume that searches conducted by distraught parents or guardians have been performed in a thorough manner. Another search of the house and grounds should be conducted.
- 2.4 Confirm child custody status. Responding officers should ascertain whether a dispute over the child's custody might have played a role in the disappearance.

- 2.4.1 A missing persons report shall be taken unless verification is made that a non-custodial parent is responsible for the disappearance of the child, at which time a child custody report should be made.
- 2.4.2 It should be kept in mind that some cases are criminal and pose a danger to the child.
- 2.5 Identify the circumstances of the disappearance. Responding officers should ascertain whether circumstances surrounding a person's disappearance warrant a heightened level of response.
 - 2.5.1 If circumstances exist that require an immediate and continuing response from law enforcement, the responding officer should notify a supervisor to determine the most appropriate level of response. [CALEA 41.2.6 b]
 - 2.5.2 The officer should identify the child's zone of safety for his or her age, developmental stage, and physical and mental state. Circumstances could include but are not limited to: a small child walks away from his/her home or a place of business; conditions that could raise concerns include extremely hot or cold weather, rain, other conditions that should be considered are proximity to a high traffic area or body of water, a suspicious individual being observed in the immediate area, or a registered child offender living close to the location of a missing child.
 - 2.5.3 If circumstances requiring an immediate and continuing response do not exist, the responding officer shall utilize the information obtained from the reporting party and perform a cursory investigation.
- 2.6 An attempt to locate broadcast should be made as soon as possible.
- 2.7 Upon receipt of a missing person's complaint, the information should be entered into ACIC/NCIC as soon as possible. [CALEA 41.2.5.c]
- 2.8 Reporting party shall be advised that the NLRPD must be notified immediately upon the return of the missing person.
- 2.9 Any member receiving information regarding a found missing person shall write a supplement and ensure that the missing person is removed from ACIC/NCIC. [CALEA 41.2.5c]

3 Initial Response Level Three

The level of response shall be elevated when it is determined the missing person is classified as *Critical Missing Level Three*. The responding officer shall remain on special assignment to locate the missing person.

- 3.1 Responding officers should attempt to determine how far the missing person could travel from the location where last seen. This perimeter will be defined as the first search zone. The person's age, physical, and mental state should be considered. The responding supervisor will assign each officer to search a section of the first zone, either on foot or in vehicle, depending on the circumstances and/or size of the search zone. [CALEA 41.2.5 e]
- 3.2 Responding officers should make notes of all persons contacted and all areas searched in the event the Investigations Division assumes command of the investigation. [CALEA 41.2.5e]
- 3.3 Responding officers should attempt to contact all known relatives and friends to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing individual. Do not assume that the reporting party has already contacted or will contact family and friends. [CALEA 41.2.5e]
- 3.4 Responding officers should contact a supervisor to respond to the location whenever there are any special considerations applicable to the missing person that may warrant a unique or intensified approach. Factors to be considered are age of the child, the elderly, suspicious circumstances, weather conditions, and location where missing from. [CALEA 41.2.5f]
- 3.5 The responding supervisor will ensure that a secondary officer receives the information regarding the missing individual and ensure the information is entered into ACIC/NCIC. The secondary officer will scan and distribute copies of the individual's photograph to each of the area substations, the desk and the Investigations Division.
- 3.6 The responding supervisor will ensure that an officer from the following shift will follow up on the attempt to locate the missing person. This may include additional searching and contacting the reporting party for additional information. Missing persons unable to be located within a reasonable period of time considering the circumstances will be assigned to the Investigations Division. [CALEA 41.2.5d, e]

4 Initial Response Level Two

An immediate and continuing investigation will be conducted when a missing person is determined to be *Critical Missing Level Two*.

- 4.1 In addition to the aforementioned responses, these investigations should include other patrol officers and/or officers from other divisions to assist with locating of the individual. K-9 units may also be utilized.
- 4.2 Other agencies may be notified and utilized as necessary.
- 4.3 The Area Commander will be in charge of the scene until the Patrol Division Commander or the duty captain responds or appoints someone else. The Area Commander will also notify the Public Information Officer.
- 4.4 The responding supervisor will notify the on duty or on call Investigations supervisor.
- 4.5 The responding Area Commander may notify the SRT Commander if a special response is warranted.

- 4.6 The length and scope of the investigation shall be determined by the Area Commander or the Investigations Lieutenant should the Investigations Division be involved.
- 4.7 The Area Commander will determine if the circumstances warrant Level II EAS Activation Criteria as outlined in Policy Directive 7-2, *Morgan Nick Alert/Missing or Abducted Children* and contact Arkansas State Police for evaluation.

5 Initial Response Level One

- In reported cases of non-family abductions, 40% were taken from the street or car and 16% were taken from the home or yard. Half of those abducted were sexually assaulted and a third were physically assaulted. In 71% of reported cases, the abductor was a stranger. In 21% of the cases, the abductor was a slight acquaintance. These cases are true emergencies. A significant number of these cases result in the death of the child.
- 5.1 If an incident meets the *Critical Missing Level One* criteria, the responding officer will conduct a cursory investigation and protect the crime scene if one exists.
- 5.1.1 The responding supervisor shall assess the situation and notify the Investigations Division as per Policy Directive 30-1, *Major Crimes Notification*, as well as the Patrol Division Commander.
- 5.1.2 The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers valuable investigative assistance. They can be contacted at 1-800-843-5678.
- 5.2 The Area Commander will determine if the circumstances warrant Level I EAS Activation Criteria as outlined in Policy Directive 7-2, *Morgan Nick Alert/Missing or Abducted Children* and contact the ASP for Evaluation.

6 Patrol Officer Responsibilities [CALEA 41.2.6e]

- 6.1 The responding officer shall notify a supervisor whenever circumstances justify a *Critical Missing* response or higher. If in doubt, call a supervisor to the scene. [CALEA 41.2.6b]
- 6.2 The responding officer is responsible for obtaining all the pertinent information in a timely manner and disseminating the information (BOLO) as soon as possible. Any delay can be costly. [CALEA 41.2.5 b, 41.2.6c]
- 6.3 The responding officer will interview the person who made the initial report and verify that the person/child is, in fact, missing. Officers will obtain a full physical and clothing description of victim. [CALEA 41.2.5a,] [CALEA 41.2.6 c]
- 6.4 The responding officer will ensure the appropriate member enters the required information into ACIC/NCIC. [CALEA 41.2.5 c]
- 6.5 The responding officer shall obtain a current photograph of the missing individual if one is available.
- 6.5.1 The responding officer or someone designated by the Patrol Lieutenant shall copy the photograph by using the scanner located in the Patrol Admin. Office and fax copies to all the substations as well as the Investigations Division.
- 6.6 The responding officer will conduct a thorough search of the child's residence/parent's vehicles.
- 6.7 The responding officer will record if the child has access to an online computer or cellular telephone.
- 6.8 If it is determined that a crime scene exists, responding officers will preserve the crime scene as outlined in Policy Directive 31-1.

7 Patrol Supervisor's Responsibilities

- 7.1 A patrol supervisor will respond to the scene if the incident meets the *Critical Missing Level Three* response or higher. Refer to Policy Directive 7-2, *Morgan Nick/Amber Alert Missing or Abducted Children* in reference to children.
- 7.2 The patrol supervisor will determine if, "A Child Is Missing" alert will be initiated.
- 7.3 The patrol supervisor on scene will determine if the level of response should be raised or lowered according to the known circumstances. Certain facts may warrant a departure from the listed guidelines. Erring on the side of caution is preferable.
- 7.3.1 Reasons for departure from the guidelines may include the following:
- 7.3.1.1 Juvenile is mature beyond his/her chronological age,
- 7.3.1.2 Juvenile is frequent runaway,
- 7.3.1.3 Juvenile or adult has a history of conduct in which his/her actions contribute to their status as missing, or
- 7.3.1.4 Child custody dispute is suspected and no reasonable cause to believe the child will be harmed or removed from our jurisdiction.
- 7.4 The patrol supervisor on scene will notify the on duty or on call Detective Supervisor if it is determined that Investigations personnel are needed.
- 7.5 The patrol supervisor shall determine if additional personnel and resources are needed to assist in the investigation
- 7.6 The patrol supervisor will organize and coordinate search efforts.

- 7.7 The Patrol Area Commander shall determine the length and scope of the response if a *Critical Incident Level Two* response or higher is warranted.
- 7.8 The Patrol Area Commander will ensure that all required notifications have been made. These might include the Patrol Division Commander, SRT Commander and/or other law enforcement agencies if circumstances warrant.
- 7.9 Establish an Incident command post; remote or at NLRPD Headquarters—Away from the victim's residence.
- 7.10 Establish a liaison with family members to explain what investigative actions are being employed and what they can do to assist in the search.
- 7.11 Confirm that all agency policies and procedures are observed.

8 Debriefing

- 8.1 At the conclusion of any *Critical Missing Incident*, a debriefing shall be conducted as soon as practical to determine the following.
 - 8.1.1 Can improvements be made in the investigative process?
 - 8.1.2 Can changes be made in this policy that could improve our response to the incident?
 - 8.1.3 Can training improve our ability to improve our response to the incident?

9 Resources: [CALEA 41.2.6 c]

- 9.1 "A Child is Missing" program (1-888-875-2246) provides services that include:
 - 9.1.1 Satellite imaging with geographic data of specific area, and
 - 9.1.2 Electronic transmissions of missing child information utilizing database of local phone numbers.
- 9.2 Arkansas State Police (501-618-8400) provides assistance with services that include:
 - 9.2.1 Morgan Nick/Amber Alert,
 - 9.2.2 Thermal Imaging Systems,
 - 9.2.3 Air support, and
 - 9.2.4 Freeway checkpoints.
- 9.3 Department of Corrections (1-870-267-6999) provides assistance with services that include:
 - 9.3.1 Tracking Dogs
- 9.4 "Team Adam" rapid response system (1-800-843-5678) provides services that include:
 - 9.4.1 Search and rescue,
 - 9.4.2 Computer forensics,
 - 9.4.3 Equipment and resources, and
 - 9.4.4 Technical support.

Patrick Thessing
Chief of Police