
	Florida State University Police Department	
Missing Persons		
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Rescinds/Amends: 18J (07/12/17, 12/7/16)	Distribution: Department-Wide	References: CFA 15.12; Florida Statutes 937.021 & 937.031
	Pages: 7	

Policy

It shall be the policy of the Florida State University Police Department to conduct all missing person investigations in accordance with Florida law and guidelines set forth in this General Order. The officer/investigator, however will not be limited to these guidelines, but will take any reasonable and prudent actions to bring the investigation to a successful conclusion.

The FSUPD will thoroughly investigate all reports of missing persons. The department shall take immediate steps to determine whether the missing person is considered “endangered” according to definitions provided herein. Children reported as missing should be considered “endangered” until significant information is received and confirmed that would indicate that the child is not endangered. For missing adults, it is imperative that an investigation be conducted in order to determine the status and well-being of an individual who is missing from their expected destination within a reasonable period of time.

Procedure

A. Criteria for Taking a Report [CFA 15.12 A]

1. A missing person report shall be taken for any person if the subject is:
 - a. Considered a “Missing Child” or a “Missing Endangered Person”;
 - b. Reported as missing for 24 hours or more;
 - c. Absent without reasonable explanation or under unusual circumstances.
2. The agency having jurisdiction over the location where the reported missing subject was last known to have been will have jurisdiction and the requirement to file an original missing person report.
3. In addition to a parent or guardian, Department of Children & Families (DCF) or a DCF contractor, may also file a report of a missing person.

B. Initial Response [CFA 15.12 C]

The responding officer will conduct a comprehensive investigation and prepare a report which documents all relevant facts and circumstances concerning the disappearance and the validity of the complaint. Further initial measures shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Interview the complainant and the witnesses to obtain a complete physical description (i.e.; clothing, vehicle, etc.) and any information which may indicated the possible

whereabouts or destination of the missing subject (i.e.; known friends or associates, known hangouts, etc.).

2. Provide the appropriate information to Communications as soon as possible to ensure transmittal of BOLO(s).
3. Determine and document any unusual circumstances of facts such as mental/physical conditions, medical necessities, suicide/farewell notes, possession of weapons and/or drugs, and the possibility of abduction, or other criminal activity.
4. Obtain a recent photograph of the subject and determine if any fingerprints, x-rays, birth and/or dental records are available and the name and location of the dentist/doctor, if possible, and include same in the offense report.
5. Notify a supervisor if additional resources are needed (K-9, Aviation, Dive Team, Investigators, etc.).
6. In the case of a missing child, obtain permission to search the home or place of disappearance. During the search, the officer should be alert for indicators of foul play or other possible reasons for the disappearance. Document if the child has access to the internet, cellular telephone, pager or other electronic messaging device(s).
7. As soon as practical but not to exceed two (2) hours from receiving the missing person information, the appropriate member will forward all required information to the Communications Section for entry into FCIC/NCIC. The entry into FCIC/NCIC will be made within 2 hours of receipt of the report. [CFA 15.12 B] The officer will document the time of the entry in the offense report.

C. **AMBER Alert**

An Amber Alert utilizes the Emergency Alert System to broadcast critical information of a missing/abducted child believed to be endangered, in a timely manner, to the general public via radio and television to assist in the search for and safe return of a child. If it is determined that an Amber Alert should be activated, the on-scene supervisor or designee, must be contacted to approve the request to activate the plan.

1. To activate the Amber Alert the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The child must be under eighteen (18) years of age;
 - b. There must be a clear indication of an abduction;
 - c. A child is missing, there is evidence of foul play, and law enforcement must conclude that the child's life is in danger;
 - d. There must be a detailed description of child and/or abductor/vehicle to broadcast to the public (photo when available); and
 - e. The activation must be recommended by the local law enforcement agency of jurisdiction
2. Additional consideration may be given for the following circumstances:

- a. A vehicle was stolen or car jacked and a child was left inside the vehicle.
 - b. A child is missing and particular consideration is given to their behavior or mental capacity in some way contributing to their disappearance. The child is also considered endangered.
3. The plan may not be used for runaways, custody disputes where the child is not considered endangered or missing children where no foul play is suspected.
 4. If it is determined that an Amber Alert should be activated, the on-scene supervisor or designee, or investigator shall approve the request to activate the plan. Once approval is received, contact will be made with the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) at 1-888-356-4774 to activate.
 5. If the incident does not meet the criteria for the Amber Alert then the "A Child is Missing" system may be used.

D. Missing Child Alert

A Missing Child Alert utilizes e-mail and text messages to broadcast critical information of a missing child believed to be endangered, in a timely manner, to the general public to assist in the search for and safe return of a child. If it is determined that a Missing Child Alert should be activated, the on-scene supervisor or designee, must be contacted to approve the request to activate the plan.

1. To activate the Missing Child Alert the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The child must be under eighteen (18) years of age;
 - b. The law enforcement investigation must conclude that the child's life is in danger;
 - c. There must be descriptive information and a photograph of the child available; and
 - d. The alert must be approved by the local law enforcement agency of jurisdiction.
2. If it is determined that a Missing Child Alert should be activated, the on-scene supervisor or designee, or investigator shall approve the request to activate the plan. Once approval is received, contact will be made with the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) at 1-888-356-4774 to activate.
3. If it is determined that a Missing Child Alert should be activated, the on-scene supervisor or designee, or investigator shall approve the request to activate the plan. Once approval is received, contact will be made with the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) at 1-888-356-4774 to activate.

E. Silver Alert

The Silver Alert System has been developed to aid in the rescue or recovery of a missing elderly person who suffers from irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties.

1. The standardized criteria for the Florida Silver Alert Plan are as follows:

- a. Missing person must be sixty (60) years or older and there must be a clear indication that the individual has an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties (i.e., dementia) or;
 - b. Under extraordinary circumstances when a person age eighteen (18) to fifty-nine (59) has irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties and the supervisor or designee has determined the missing person lacks the capacity to consent and that the use of dynamic message signs may be the only possible way to rescue the missing person.
2. The primary criteria for the dynamic message sign activation, in which all criteria must be met, in addition to the above standard criteria are:
 - a. The supervisor or designee has already activated a local or regional alert by contacting media in the local and/or surrounding jurisdictions;
 - b. The investigation must conclude that the disappearance poses a credible threat to the person's welfare and safety;
 - c. There must be a description of the vehicle and a tag number to display on the Florida Department of Transportation dynamic message signs;
 - d. The investigating officer/investigator must verify vehicle and tag information; and
 - e. The investigating officer/investigator must have entered the missing person into the FCIC/NCIC and issued a statewide BOLO to other law enforcement/911 centers.
 3. If it is determined that a Silver Alert should be activated, the on-scene supervisor or designee, must be contacted to approve the request to activate the plan. Once approval is received, contact will be made with the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) at 1-888-356-4774 to activate.
 4. Once the individual is located, the Silver Alert must be canceled.
 5. If the incident does not meet the criteria for the Silver Alert then the "A Child is Missing" system may be used.

F. A Child is Missing Alert:

1. Upon receipt of a citizen's call to report a missing child, elderly or disabled person, the Florida State University Police Department Communications Section will dispatch an officer to the scene to conduct an initial investigation. The Communications Supervisor or designee will notify the supervisor or designee of the incident.
 - a. The supervisor will consult with the responding officer to determine if "A Child Is Missing" (ACIM) assistance is needed. If assistance is needed as determined by the supervisor or designee will call Toll Free 1-888-875-2246 to activate the rapid response calling system.
 - b. The supervisor or designee will provide the following information to an ACIM operator: Florida State University Police Department, supervisor's name, contact phone number, location, zip code, search area, description of missing person(s), and a number for the public to call.

- c. The ACIM operator will feed this information into their data bank and generate approximately 1000 calls per hour, giving faster response for the safety of the missing person.
- d. Once the missing person(s) is located, the supervisor/designee will call ACIM to deactivate the rapid response system.

G. Runaway Juveniles

There are additional circumstances when a law enforcement officer may take a juvenile into custody without affecting an arrest.

1. When the officer or investigator has reasonable grounds to believe that the juvenile has run away from his/her parent(s) or legal custodian(s), the juvenile shall be returned to his/her parent(s) or legal custodian(s) following consultation with the juvenile authorities. If this is not possible, the juvenile shall be taken to an authorized facility, i.e., Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC).
2. When the officer or investigator has reasonable grounds to believe that the juvenile is absent from school without authorization, the officer or investigator will contact the school and or the local Truancy Center at 850/575-2851.

H. Missing Person Investigation [CFA 15.12 C]

When a missing person investigation has been referred to Investigations, the assigned member shall conduct a follow up investigation to include but not limited to the following, if applicable:

1. Review all reports to ensure that necessary data is documented and that proper entry has been made into FCIC/NCIC.
2. Re-contact the complainant and continue contact as much as practical during the investigation.
3. If the subject remains missing for more than thirty (30) days, the investigator will make contact with the next of kin, spouse, guardian, etc. and request a written consent to contact the dentist of the missing person for release of the person's dental records. [CFA 15.12 E]
4. The investigator will deliver the release to the dentist, if local, and obtain the necessary dental records for entry into FCIC/NCIC. [CFA 15.12 E]
5. If the dentist is not local, the release is to be sent by certified mail.
6. Upon receipt of the dental records, a copy will be forwarded for entry into FCIC/NCIC.
7. If available, copies of birth records, fingerprints, x-rays, and other applicable records should be obtained at this time.
8. If a person who has been reported as missing has not been located within ninety (90) days after the missing person report was filed, the assigned member will attempt to obtain a biological specimen for DNA analysis from appropriate family members of the missing person in addition to any documentation necessary to enable the agency to use the specimens in conducting searches of DNA databases. [CFA 15.12 F]

9. In the case of a missing child the investigator should coordinate with school officials to determine if any contact has been made by the missing child.
10. Notwithstanding the above suggested procedures, the assigned member should utilize all investigative methods at his/her disposal in a continuing effort to locate the missing person.
11. Once the missing person has been located, verification shall be confirmed and all data entered into FCIC/NCIC will be removed at this time. [CFA 15.12 D]
12. Missing person cases will not be closed until the missing person is located.
13. The assigned investigator will conduct a monthly review of missing person data in FCIC/NCIC to verify that the case is still active and whether the data will be maintained in the database. [CFA 15.12 D]

I. Additional Notifications

The following notifications are required if the reported missing person is a current FSU Student:

1. The Dean of Students Office will be notified as soon as practical.
2. If the student resides in an on-campus housing facility:
 - a. The FSU Housing Director and/or designee will be notified as soon as possible;
 - b. The individual listed as the student's missing person contact (on file with University Housing) shall be contacted within 24 hours of the student being reported as missing. *(In addition to registering an emergency contact, student's residing in on-campus housing have the option to identify an individual to be contacted in the event the student is determined to be missing.)* If the student does not have a missing person contact registered, the individual listed as the primary emergency contact shall be contacted.

Glossary

ADULT – Any person eighteen (18) years of age or older.

AMBER ALERT - America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response plan. The Florida Amber Plan/ Florida Emergency Missing Child Alert (Amber Alert), was established by the FDLE in conjunction with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Florida Association of Broadcasters, Inc. (FAB, Inc.) to use the Emergency Alert System to broadcast critical information of a missing/abducted child believed to be endangered, in a timely manner, to the general public via radio and television to assist in the search for and safe return of a child.

MISSING ADULT - A person eighteen (18) years of age or older whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed to be in, the state of Florida, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.

MISSING CHILD - A person who is younger than eighteen (18) years of age whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed to be in, the state of Florida, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.

MISSING CHILD ALERT – A second level activation of the Amber Alert System that can issued for a child who is missing and believed to be in danger, when there is no apparent sign of abduction, or does not meet all four Amber criteria but circumstances indicated the child may be in danger.

MISSING ENDANGERED PERSON - A missing child; a missing adult younger than 26 years of age; a missing adult 26 years of age or older who is suspected by a law enforcement agency of being endangered or the victim of criminal activity; or a missing adult who meets the criteria for activation of the Silver Alert Plan of the Department of Law Enforcement.

MISSING ENDANGERED PERSONS INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE (MEPIC) – The Florida Department of Law Enforcement’s (FDLE) central repository of information regarding missing endangered persons in Florida. Assists law enforcement and citizens in finding missing persons by providing analytical services and engaging the public in a search.

PARENTAL ABDUCTION - Circumstances involving a family member abduction; including a divorced or separated parent’s failure to return the child to the child’s guardian or taking the child without the knowledge or permission of the child’s guardian or any violation contrary to a valid and current court order.

RUNAWAY JUVENILE - A juvenile who has run away on his/her own volition without the consent of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

SILVER ALERT – A process that provides information of a missing elderly person who suffers from irreversible deterioration or intellectual faculties (dementia) to the community.

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES - If during the preliminary investigation the officer determines or suspects that unusual circumstances exist, the on duty supervisor will be notified and determine the appropriate resources to be activated. These circumstances include but are not limited to:

1. The missing youth/adult is mentally incapacitated.
2. The missing youth/adult is drug dependent (prescribed or illegal medication).
3. The missing youth/adult is a potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.
4. There is reason to believe that the missing youth is subjected to a “Dangerous Environment.” This is a relative term that depends on the age and development of the child.
5. The absence is a significant deviation from established patterns of behavior and cannot be explained.

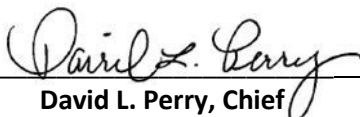
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Attachments-None

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Approved: 
David L. Perry, Chief

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