



Approved:
Chief Marcia Harnden

Subject:

510. Missing Persons

Effective:
April 18, 2018

CALEA Standards: 41.2.5, 41.2.6

Page:
1

Revised:
March 30, 2026

510.1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The policy describes the procedure for acceptance, reporting, documenting, and investigating missing persons in compliance with the requirements of [34 U.S.C. §41307](#), [34 U.S.C. §41308](#), [ORS 146.177](#), [ORS 146.181](#), [ORS 146.187](#), [ORS 146.189](#), [ORS 181A.310](#), [ORS 181A.320](#), and other applicable federal and Oregon laws.

510.1.1: DEFINITIONS

a. **At Risk** – This includes persons who are:

- 1) Are 13 years of age or younger.
- 2) Regardless of age, are believed or determined to be experiencing one or more of the following circumstances:
 - A. Out of the zone of safety for his/her chronological age and developmental stage.
 - B. Mentally or behaviorally disabled.
 - C. Drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life-threatening.
 - D. Absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing.
 - E. In a life-threatening situation.
 - F. In the company of others who could endanger his/her welfare.
 - G. Absent in a way that is inconsistent with established patterns of behavior and cannot be readily explained. Most children have an established and reasonably predictable routine.

- H. Involved in a situation that would cause a reasonable person to conclude the person should be considered at risk.
 - I. Intellectual or developmental disability, or an impaired mental condition such as dementia or brain injury (ORS 181A.320).
 - J. A victim of first- or second-degree custodial interference or kidnapping (ORS 181A.310).
- b. **Missing Person** – Any person who is reported missing to law enforcement when that person’s location is unknown.
- c. **Missing Person Networks** – Databases or computer networks that are available to law enforcement and are suitable for obtaining/sharing information related to missing persons investigations. Missing person networks include:
1. National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
 2. Oregon Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS)
 3. [Oregon State Missing Children Clearinghouse](#)
 4. [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\)](#)
 5. [National Missing and Unidentified Persons Systems \(NamUs\)](#)
- A missing person entry in LEDS/NCIC automatically notifies the Oregon State Missing Children Clearing House.
- d. **Public Alerts** - A local or statewide coordinated and cooperative notification and information gathering system used to broadcast information about missing persons. Examples of public alerts include Amber Alerts, used to resolve child abduction or suspected child abduction incidents, and Silver Alerts, used to resolve missing vulnerable adults with impaired medical conditions, intellectual or developmental disability, or brain injuries. (Refer to [Public Alerts: Policy 641](#))

510.2: POLICY

The Albany Police Department does not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and assumes the missing person is in need of immediate assistance until an investigation reveals otherwise. The Albany Police Department gives missing persons cases priority and does not require a specific amount of time to have passed before initiating a missing person investigation (34 USC 41308(1)).

510.3 ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

- a. Any member encountering a person who wishes to report a missing person, including runaways, shall render assistance without delay.
- b. If a member is unable to give immediate assistance, they shall promptly dispatch or alert another member who can initiate the investigation. This can be accomplished by accepting the initial report via telephone or in-person.

- c. A report shall be taken in all cases and regardless of where the person was last seen, where the person resides, or any other question of jurisdiction.
- d. In other cases, a reporting person may be assisted in contacting the appropriate agency of jurisdiction with approval from a supervisor. If there is a question of whether or not to take a report, a report should be taken.

510.4 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

Members assigned to conduct the initial investigation of a missing person should take the following investigative actions, as applicable:

- a. Respond to the dispatched call as soon as practical;
- b. Interview the reporting party and any witnesses to determine whether the person qualifies as a missing person and, if so, whether the missing person is at risk;
- c. Notify a supervisor immediately if there is evidence or suspicion that a missing person is either at risk or may qualify for a public alert;
- d. Initiate a search as applicable under the circumstances known, including, when appropriate, attempting to determine the person's locations through the telecommunications carrier;
- e. Ensure that entries are made into the LEDS/NCIC, under the following criteria:
 - 1) If the person is at risk, they shall be entered into LEDS/NCIC immediately.
 - 2) In all other cases, the missing person shall be entered into LEDS/NCIC as soon as practical, but no later than 2 hours from the time of the initial report (34 USC 41308(3)).
- f. Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely;
- g. Collect and review:
 - 1) A recent photograph and possible latent fingerprint(s) of the missing person, if available.
 - 2) A voluntary biological sample of the missing person, if available (e.g., toothbrush, hairbrush).
 - 3) Any documents that may assist in the investigation (e.g., court orders, personal writings, etc.).
 - 4) Any other evidence which may assist in the investigation (e.g., cell phones, computers, etc.).
- h. If the missing person report is a case which would ordinarily fall outside of Albany Police jurisdiction, ensure that the agency having jurisdiction is notified as follows:
 - 1) Notification regarding at-risk missing persons should be made without delay so that the appropriate jurisdiction may take over the investigation as appropriate.

- 2) Notification of other missing person cases should be made via report routing.

510.5 REPORTS AND ROUTING

Members should complete all missing person reports and forms promptly and advise the appropriate supervisor as soon as a missing person report is ready for review.

Members shall add to the routing section of the report, if applicable:

- a. The appropriate law enforcement agency of jurisdiction for the missing person's residence in cases where the missing person resides in another jurisdiction;
- b. The agency of jurisdiction where the missing person was last seen;
- c. The agency of jurisdiction for the missing person's destination, if known; and
- d. The Detective Unit.

510.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The supervisor shall review missing person reports upon receipt and ensure resources are deployed for a search as appropriate.
- b. The supervisor shall ensure that applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented and that records have been entered into appropriate missing person networks.
- c. The supervisor should take reasonable steps to identify and address any jurisdictional issues to ensure cooperation among agencies. If the case falls within the jurisdiction of another agency, the supervisor should facilitate transfer of the case to the appropriate law enforcement agency of jurisdiction.

510.5.2 RECORDS SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

Any member assigned to the Records Section who receives a missing person report through routing shall:

- a. Route reports as directed in the routing section of the report.
- b. Grant permission to the Communications Specialist or designee to have the missing person record in NCIC updated with additional information obtained from missing person investigations (34 USC 41308(4)(E)). Verify and update such records with any additional information within 30 days after the original entry into any missing person networks (34 USC 41308(4)(A)).

510.6 DETECTIVE UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

If a person who has been reported as missing has not been located within 30 days after the missing person report is made, the Detective Unit supervisor shall assign the case to a detective for follow-up investigation.

In addition to completing or continuing any actions listed in Section 510.4 or 510.5, the investigator assigned to a missing person investigation:

- a. Should ensure that the missing person's school is notified as applicable.
 - 1) The notice should be in writing and should also include a photograph if possible.
 - 2) The investigator should request contact from the school in the event the school receives a request to transfer the student to another school.
- b. Should recontact the reporting person and/or other witnesses to determine if any further information is available.
- c. Shall attempt to obtain a biological sample (DNA) from the missing person or from family members of the missing person. The investigator shall forward the biological sample obtained for use in a missing persons case as directed by the Oregon State Police (ORS 146.187).
- d. Should contact any other agencies involved in the case to determine if any additional information is available.
- e. Shall verify and update records entered into LEDS/NCIC and any other applicable missing person networks with any additional information, including, where available, medical and dental records, and a photograph taken during the previous 180 days. If such information has not already been obtained, the investigator shall seek to obtain medical and dental records, and a photograph taken during the 180 days prior to the date the initial report was made (34 USC 41308(4)(A)).
- f. Should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document those efforts via supplemental narrative report in accordance with and pursuant to the [Case Management: Policy 505](#). Missing Persons reports should remain active/open until the person reported missing is located or identified.
- g. Shall maintain a liaison with the state and local child welfare systems and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) if the missing person is under age 21. If the person is missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution, the investigator shall promptly notify NCMEC (34 USC 41308(4)(C-D)).
- h. Should make appropriate inquiry with the Medical Examiner's Office.
- i. Should, within 30 days, obtain and forward medical and dental records, photos, X-rays, and biological samples to the Oregon State Police Forensic Laboratory utilizing their [OSP Forensic Services Request: Form 49](#) and Family Reference Sample Submission Form (34 USC 41308(4)(A)).
- j. Should make appropriate entries and searches in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).

- k. Should consult with a supervisor regarding seeking federal law enforcement assistance when an at-risk missing person has been missing for an extended period of time.

510.7 MISSING PERSON LOCATED

Missing person investigations may be concluded when the missing person is located or when another agency accepts the case and formally assumes investigative responsibilities. When missing person is located, the assigned investigator shall prepare a report documenting the recovery and clearance from applicable missing person networks. The assigned investigator is responsible for ensuring and/or facilitating notification of the missing person recovery to the reporting person and/or the family of the missing person.

Responsible and competent adults who have left home voluntarily cannot be forced to return home. In all cases, the reporting person and/or family will be notified of the well-being of the located missing persons. Unless criminal matters require otherwise, the desires of competent adult missing persons not to reveal their whereabouts should be honored.

Investigators will question the missing person sufficiently to positively confirm the person's identity and determine whether criminal activity was involved in the disappearance.

If the missing person is a juvenile, the parents, guardians, and/or reporting person should be notified as soon as practical. The handling officer should inquire into the circumstances to determine the criminal involvement of any persons. The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline should be notified, if appropriate.

The Records and Systems Supervisor shall ensure that, upon receipt of information that a missing person has been located the following occurs:

- a. Notification is made to Oregon State Police via LEDS/NCIC;
- b. If the missing person is a juvenile, the child's school is notified;
- c. Entries are made and/or updated in appropriate missing person networks;
- d. Notification is made to any other law enforcement agency which took the report or otherwise participated in the investigation;
- e. Unless required for further investigation or prosecution, ensure all information and materials obtained for the purpose of identifying the missing person will be destroyed if the person is discovered to be living, or sealed if the person is found to be no longer living (ORS 146.189(2)).

510.7.1 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS

Department members investigating a case of an unidentified person who is deceased, or a living person who cannot assist in identifying themselves should:

- a. Obtain a complete description of the person, including the following if available and/or relevant: gender, race, estimated year range of birth, estimated date of death, date person found, approximate height, approximate weight, eye color, hair color, scars/marks/tattoos, and jewelry.
- b. Enter the unidentified person's description into the LEDS/NCIC Unidentified Person File.
- c. Members encountering an unidentified person shall make reasonable efforts to identify the person and should contact a supervisor or the Detective Unit supervisor for guidance, if needed. In the event the unidentified person is deceased, members should also refer to the [Death Investigation: Policy 550](#). Oregon State Police Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) Unit is another resource maintaining continuous, 24-hour operations.

510.8 CASE CLOSURE

The Detective Unit supervisor may authorize the closure of a missing person case after considering the following:

- a. The missing person is confirmed to have been located or whose remains have been discovered and identified.
- b. Exhaustion of leads in the investigation should not be the reason for closing a case. Missing persons who are residents of Albany or cases in which this department is the lead agency should be kept under active investigation for as long as the person may still be alive (34 USC 41308(2)).
- c. In cases where this department is not the primary investigating agency, and the lead agency has been notified and after all entries have been made into appropriate missing person networks, the case may be designated as inactive.
- d. Missing person cases should not be closed or reclassified simply because a person would have reached a particular age or the age of majority, or is the subject of a criminal or civil warrant.

510.9 TRAINING

The Administrative Lieutenant should ensure that members of this department whose duties include missing person investigations and reports receive training that minimally includes the following components:

- a. The initial investigation:
 - 1) Assessments and interviews;
 - 2) Use of current resources;
 - 3) Confirmation of missing status and custody status of minors;
 - 4) Evaluation of the need for a heightened response;
 - 5) Identification of the zone of safety based on age and developmental stage.

- b. Interaction with individuals with cognitive impairment, including dementia, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and brain injuries;
- c. Briefing of additional department members or other resources at the scene;
- d. Identification of NCIC Missing Person File categories (e.g., disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile, and catastrophe);
- e. Verification of accuracy of all descriptive information;
- f. Initiation of neighborhood investigation/canvass;
- g. Investigation of recent family dynamics;
- h. Addressing conflicting information;
- i. Key investigative and coordination steps;
- j. Management of missing person cases;
- k. Identification of resources and specialized services;
- l. Update procedures for case information and descriptions;
- m. Preservation of scenes and social media accounts;
- n. Internet and technology issues;
- o. Media relations.