


# AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES MANUAL

<b>08.42</b>	<b>Title: MISSING PERSONS/RUNAWAY REPORTS</b>	
	Approved By: Vanessa Wilson, Chief of Police	
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	Associated Policy: <a href="#">APD Form 258</a>	
	References: CRS 19-2-511, CRS 24-33.5-415, C.R.S. 19-3-102, 19-3-304.5	
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## 8.42 MISSING PERSONS / RUNAWAY REPORTS

This policy establishes protocols for the response to calls for service for missing persons and runaways, and provides guidance and assistance regarding programs to community members who may be caring for someone at risk.

Members will investigate all reports of missing adults and missing children when there is a reasonable belief by a police officer that the person is actually missing and it is without reasonable explanation. The report should be taken in person from the reporting person and preferably at the scene where the person was last known to be or lived. Many missing person reports involve individuals who have voluntarily left home for personal reasons, while other reports are often unfounded or quickly resolved. However, there are some instances in which persons disappear for unexplained reasons and under circumstances that are suspicious or where they may be considered at-risk. There is no commonly perceived "24-hour" period or standard waiting period to make a report.

A note of caution: attempts are made in this directive to define common at-risk behaviors and factors which would lead one to believe the person in question is of a higher risk of suicide/homicide or other status requiring urgent action. While these criteria may serve most of the time, it is imperative that responding officers pay close attention to the language and urgent nature of the message from parents, loved ones, friends, or other reporting parties who know the missing person best.

As an example, there may be missing person cases where the person's behavior is significantly different than their normal behavior causing the family or those reporting the missing person to be quite certain and insistent that the situation is of a serious nature.

The majority of Missing Persons / Runaway Reports will be taken in person.

The report of a possible abduction will be a priority response by officers.

Check to see if the missing person is part of the [Home Safe Program \(refer to section 8.42.10\)](#).

If a missing person call has been pending for 30 minutes or longer, a phone report will be taken by a sworn member, front desk staff or other authorized member, so that the descriptive information of the missing person can be entered quickly into NCIC/CCIC. If the pending call was forwarded by a road supervisor to the front desk, then it is incumbent on that supervisor to follow up later in the shift to ensure that there is no necessary immediate follow-up needed by patrol. If it is determined that patrol needs to be involved immediately, a call for on scene follow-up within Aurora by an officer will be entered by the Public Safety Communications Center. That preliminary scene investigation will be documented on a supplemental report.

A phone report may be taken by a sworn member, front desk staff or other authorized members when a missing person with no known risks or suspicious/concerning circumstances is over 13 years of age. Upon completion of the report, the member that took the report must contact a desk or patrol supervisor who must approve the report as soon as possible but no later than the end of his/her shift to facilitate routing to MCU/SVU/ICAC. (These cases must be referred to the proper Major Investigations Unit (MCU/SVU/ICAC) for further victim assessment. The report that has been approved by a supervisor will be coded with a priority code three in the report management system so it will be transcribed quickly and prioritized for approval and forwarding to investigative units. No patrol on scene response is required, unless directed to do so by a supervisor.

A juvenile report of a runaway or escapee, with no known risks, from a recognized and certified custody or treatment facility may be taken over the phone by a sworn member, front desk staff or other authorized member. Escape reports will require filing of charges with the District Attorney's Office and should be forwarded to the appropriate district detective unit for that investigation and filing.

A child (under age 18) reported as missing should be considered at some risk until the preliminary investigation confirms no at-risk or endangered status exist. When a person is reported missing and either resides in, or was last seen in the City of Aurora, a member will initiate the required report and NCIC/CCIC entry process to avoid any delays in locating that person. If a person resides in the city of Aurora and was last seen in another jurisdiction, but that jurisdiction chooses not to take a missing person report, this agency will take a desk or phone report for NCIC/CCIC entry purposes only. ICAC will inform/forward the information to the proper jurisdiction.

A report of a missing child, even if custody has not been formally established, will be taken if the disappearance is without reasonable explanation, as determined by an officer or supervisor. Reporting parties shall obtain legal custody and court documents as soon as possible; however, since the safety of the missing child(ren) is paramount, members will open a case when it can be shown that the child has been removed, without explanation, from his/her usual place of residence or care. Child custody court

paperwork should be scanned into records with the report. Refer to [Directive 6.4 Criminal and Legal Process](#).

Outside Assist requests on missing persons shall be given full attention as if the case was our own.

#### 8.42.1 Definitions

##### Missing Endangered Adult:

- 1) A potential victim of foul play.
- 2) A suspected victim of abduction.
- 3) Their disappearance involves circumstances, not defined under Missing At-Risk Adult, which would cause a reasonable police officer to conclude that the missing person should be considered in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death.

##### Missing At-Risk Adult:

- 1) A person 18 years of age or older who has either an established intellectual or developmental (ID/DD) disability, exhibiting unique and/or radically different behaviors causing great concern with those who know the missing person, suicidal or homicidal statements or suffers from serious life-threatening medical issues that may affect his/her ability to properly safeguard and protect themselves.
- 2) Is considered an elder, being 70 years of age or older, or has reduced mental faculties where the person may be unable to properly safeguard and themselves or is vulnerable to a life-threatening environment.

##### Missing Endangered Child:

- 1) Under the age of 18 and a potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.
- 2) Under the age of 18 and suspected to have been abducted whether by a family member, non-family member or a stranger.
- 3) Under the age of 18 with facts and circumstances which would reasonably cause an officer to believe the child is at risk of serious bodily injury and/or death or is involved in dangerous felonious activity or, exhibiting unique and/or radically different behaviors to include but not limited to suicidal or homicidal statements causing great concern with those who know the missing person best.

##### Missing At-Risk Child:

- 1) Eleven (11) years of age or younger.
- 2) Under 18 years of age with:

- a. An established intellectual or developmental (ID/DD) disability
  - b. Suffers from serious life-threatening medical issues that may affect their ability to properly safeguard and protect themselves or is vulnerable to a life-threatening environment or exhibiting unique and/or radically different behaviors causing great concern with those who know the missing person and may include suicidal or homicidal statements.
- 3) Could include runaway status cases, however due to the At-Risk condition, these cases require a patrol response to assess the circumstances.

Missing Pre-Teen Child

- 1) Twelve (12) years of age to Thirteen (13) years of age
- 2) None of the articulable factors which would qualify for endangered or at-risk except for age.
- 3) Could include runaway status cases, however due to the age, these cases require a patrol response to assess the circumstances.
- 4) Requires the assessment of the child's maturity and if they function at age appropriate levels.
- 5) Requires notification via email to the ICAC Sgt.

Missing Child:

- 1) Under 18 years of age.
- 2) Whereabouts are unknown to a parent, guardian or person responsible for care of the child.
- 3) Could include runaway status cases.

Runaway Child:

Any child under the age of 18 with indications he or she is a voluntary runaway or beyond control of the parent. Articulable facts such as notes, history, motive, calls, or evidence indicating he or she has voluntarily runaway will reduce the risk and level of response, and establish this category as runaway.

All missing person/child cases will be handled with NCIC entry. Reasonable and timely leads will be checked by either patrol, investigations or by referral to an outside agency.

All reported missing children/runaway cases involving children under the age of fourteen (14) will be followed up on by ICAC within 24 hours of notification.

Long-Term Missing Person:

- 1) A person 18 years of age or older, or was a juvenile when originally reported and would currently be 18 years of age or older, and has been missing for more than 1 year.

8.42.2 Initial Patrol Response:

Members may refer to the [Missing Person/Missing Child Investigative Information Sheet \(APD 189\)](#) for possible options.

Responding members' actions should include, but not be limited to constantly assessing risk and response levels. Members should conduct a face-to-face interview with the reporting person when possible and conduct a scene examination for evidence or indications of disappearance being an at-risk or endangered situation versus a voluntary disappearance or runaway. Officers should directly ask the parents/guardians/family members and/or the reporting person if the missing person is suicidal and/or homicidal and if so obtain further details.

When "at-risk" or "endangered" circumstances exist, members will notify a supervisor who will notify the Major Crimes Unit for "Missing-Endangered Adults," Special Victims Unit for "Missing At-Risk Adults," and the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit for children through the Watch Commander.

Notify any tracking agency that may have placed any GPS device with the missing person. Request the agency respond and assist with GPS tracking in search efforts if applicable.

If the reporting person responded to a district station, the report will be taken at the station and NCIC entry made. The desk technician or officer should have an officer dispatched to any Aurora scene of disappearance to conduct necessary scene assessment and follow-up to be noted in a supplemental report, unless it is one of the exceptions such as a chronic missing person.

Members taking "Missing Persons" or "Runaway" or "Missing Child" reports will complete all required reports in the Mobile Report Entry system (MRE) and the following actions:

- 1) Present the parents or guardians of a Missing Child with a copy of ["Information for Parents Reporting Runaway Children" form \(APD 066\)](#) and cover each step listed with them
- 2) Obtain a recent digital photograph of the missing adult or child.
- 3) Identify the current school they attend and document the details in the employment section of an MRE report.
- 4) Consider conducting computer and phone searches of the missing person to see what they may have been googling or where they may have visited. The assistance of the parents or guardians may be needed for these searches.
- 5) Pay close attention to what the parents or guardians are telling you about their hunch/guess as to what may be going on and why the person may be missing.
- 6) Notify the Records Unit of all information contained on the Missing Person report or "Family Offense Report – Runaway." This will be done within 2 hours of the initial call for service.
- 7) Record if the Missing Person or Child has access to an online computer, cellular telephone, and/or pager. If the Missing Person or Child has access to social media,

attempt to ascertain user names, account log-ins, and phone numbers. Try to examine records of activity on various "friends" list for leads and consider other options as technology rapidly evolves.

- 8) For all at-risk persons ensure an e-mail is sent out to APD through the members supervisor to include the following;
  - a. Persons description
  - b. Photo if you have one
  - c. Any other descriptions/details to assist in finding the person
  - d. Any "at-risk" factors
  - e. If the missing person is included in the Home Safe Program

#### 8.42.4 Procedures for the Patrol Supervisor:

Members may refer to the [Missing Person/Missing Child Investigative Information Sheet \(APD Form 189\)](#) for possible options.

The safety of a missing child or adult is always paramount. If there is ever concern regarding the appropriate level of response, the appropriate unit (MCU/SVU/ICAC) supervisor should be consulted.

Actions should include, but not be limited to:

- 1) Constantly assess risk and response levels.
- 2) Review reporting members APD e-mail as outlined in step 8 above in patrol officer's response and determine if additional notifications are necessary. The e-mail information should be forwarded on to the high priority e-mail notification system.
- 3) Utilize the [Missing Child Flow Chart](#) to assist in properly assessing the level of response.
- 4) Determine if "at-risk" or "endangered" circumstances exist, which may necessitate the use of additional investigational resources.
  - a. For any missing person
    - i. Ensure a current photograph of the missing person or child has been disseminated via MDC messages or email to all on-duty officers.
  - b. For any missing pre-teen child, do the above step and
    - i. Provide the missing person/child information (including photograph) to Public Safety Communications Department (Dispatch) and request that they begin community notifications as listed on PSCD form "Missing Child or Endangered Adult." This list includes notification to various departments/companies within Aurora who may have an opportunity to locate the missing person/child.
  - c. For at-risk or endangered child/adult, complete the above steps and
    - i. Consider the use of the reverse 911 system. Supervisors must be mindful of the time of day when activating this resource.

- ii. Provide the missing person/child information (including photograph) to the PIO. The PIO will determine the best method to request the assistance of the media, which may also involve the use of social media.
  - iii. Notify the Major Investigation Section (MCU/SVU/ICAC) on-call supervisor.
- 5) Consider, if appropriate, activating existing interagency response protocols – including CBI Alerts, such as [DM 12.20 Developmental Disabilities Alert](#), [DM 12.10 Amber Alert](#) or [DM 12.19 Senior/Silver Alert](#). The PSCD should be notified of any alert activation.
- 6) Where there is an at-risk or endangered child/adult consider search assistance.
- 7) Establish a liaison with the victim's family. Consider activation and use of the Victim Services Unit for at-risk and endangered situations.
- 8) Approve initial status of the case. Apparent voluntary disappearances and runaways should be reported, entered into NCIC/CCIC and left in an active/open status. At-risk and endangered cases should also remain active with investigations involvement.
- 9) Suspicious or highly unusual circumstances and at-risk or endangered status cases, as determined by the supervisor, should dictate the level of response and investigation versus the Missing / Runaway Report where NCIC entry may be the only urgent step.

#### 8.42.5 Procedures for the Investigators:

Investigators may consider other possible options in checklists during the investigation, if necessary.

Consider activation of the Child Abduction Response Team (FBI-CART), if abduction or suspicious circumstances are suspected; and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). Notification to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) for entry into their database.

Set up tip-line if appropriate.

If the case becomes a Long-Term Missing Person, the investigator will ensure the following:

- 1) As a juvenile, the missing person data was provided to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC);
- 2) For any long-term missing person, ensure the missing person data was provided to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) for entry into their database; and
- 3) Where possible, reference sample DNA has been secured from family members and sent for entry into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).

#### 8.42.6 Case Assignment Procedures for the MCU/SVU/ICAC Sergeants:

Review the report to determine if a case investigator should be assigned.



Review and approve the status or change it to/from Inactive, Open or any other appropriate internal status.

Assign any reasonable and timely leads to be investigated by either patrol, SRO, Investigations or by referral to an outside agency.

If school is not in session, all runaway reports will be investigated by ICAC unless other arrangements are made.

All reports of At-Risk missing children ([as defined on page 3](#)) will be investigated by ICAC.

8.42.7 Recovery of a Missing Adult:

- 1) Ensure the missing adult, having left for personal reasons, clearly communicates whether the Aurora Police can notify anyone involved in the case of his or her location. Use caution if restraining orders or protection orders are in place.
- 2) Notify Records to cancel the CCIC/NCIC entry. Cancel any broadcasts/bulletins. Issue a recovery press release through the PIO if media are involved. Remember: current address and contact information for the missing adult should be confidential and NOT released without expressed consent from him or her or authorized by a member who is knowledgeable in the release of records/information. Caution should be used when there are any protection orders.
- 3) A phone report of return can be taken if call of recovery has been pending for more than 60 minutes and there is no reasonable chance of in-person contact with the missing person, within Aurora.

No Missing Adult case will ever be closed or removed from CCIC/NCIC without locating the adult.

8.42.8 Recovery of a Missing Child:

- 1) Immediately assess the child(ren) to determine if he or she is a victim of a crime. (Some children runaway due to abuse or neglect and should be assessed for that. Some are also victimized, or recruited into criminal acts when on the run.)
- 2) Parents/Guardians who call to cancel a runaway should:
  - a. Be contacted in person if possible and an officer should visually verify the child's return and assess the child(ren) as noted in #1. A phone report by the Front Desk or other authorized member can be taken if the call of return has been pending for 60 minutes or longer and there is no reasonable chance of in person contact with the missing person or child within Aurora.
  - b. The parent/guardian must provide the assigned case number and full information if calling by phone or report in person to cancel the report.
  - c. Use caution if restraining orders or protection orders are in place.



- 3) Child cases may be routed to Crimes Against Children for verification and victim assessment if appropriate or there was no recovery contact with an officer.
- 4) Members who take into custody or are notified of the voluntary return of a local runaway will complete a supplemental report to cancel the original report and should notify Records.
- 5) An electronic MRE Arrest Booking form will be completed if a runaway has been taken into custody and placed outside the home.

No Missing Child case will ever be closed or removed from CCIC/NCIC without locating the child.

#### 8.42.9 Aurora Mental Health Clients Reported as Missing Persons

If a missing person is a client of Aurora Mental Health, their employees will forward that information to Aurora Mental Health Emergency Services. Emergency Services personnel will be the central point of contact between Aurora Mental Health and the Aurora Police Department. The phone number for the contact position is 303-617-2499 and is available 24-hours.

Employees of Aurora Mental Health will first contact their Emergency Services, who will contact the Aurora Police to initiate the investigation and report. Aurora Police personnel are authorized to take a phone report for a missing person from Aurora Mental Health. Members should work with the reporting party to determine if the missing person meets the definition of an At-Risk Adult according to department [Directive 8.42.1 Missing-At-Risk-Adult](#).

Aurora Mental Health will provide the following information regarding their client for the report:

- Name
- Address
- Date and place of birth
- Social security number
- Blood type
- Any injury or illness that may put the client at risk of harm
- Date and time of treatment
- Description of distinguishing physical characteristics

Aurora Mental Health will notify the police department if the missing person is located or returns to cancel the report.

#### 8.42.10 Aurora Home Safe Program and Angel Sense Tracking Program

Aurora's Home Safe Program is a collaboration between the Aurora Police Department, and the community members who provide care for people who are considered at risk or vulnerable. The program is designed to efficiently provide help for people with

intellectual/developmental disabilities, Dementia patients, or persons with a cognitive deficiency who have become separated from those who can best care for them. The program may also benefit parents and guardians of juveniles that have an intellectual or developmental disability and tend to frequently wander or go missing.

The Home Safe Program utilizes notification flags in the Department's records management system which will give the Public Safety Communications Department (PSCD) and first responders the ability to query the missing person, display an identification photo and help in a search for lost individuals who have been registered. It will also provide caregiver, parent, or guardian contact information and instructions to first responders on how to contact and communicate with the at risk or vulnerable person in the safest way. The Home Safe Program is **voluntary**.

### **Registration**

The Aurora Police Department [Home Safe Program Voluntary Registration Form \(APD Form 258\)](#) is available on the City of Aurora's internet web page or by request from any Aurora police officer. This form can be submitted [online](#), can be mailed to The Aurora Police Headquarters Attn: The Aurora Records Unit located at 15001 E. Alameda Pkwy, Aurora CO. 80012, or dropped off with the Aurora Records Unit. The form can also be dropped off with Aurora Police Headquarters Front Desk personnel. Current hours of operation are available on line at [www.auroragov.org](http://www.auroragov.org). When the form is received, Records will route the form to the appropriate unit where Administrative Specialists will enter all provided information into a flag record in the department's records management system. PSC will be notified so that cautionary notes can be attached to the Home Safe participant's address. This will allow first responders the ability to access important information about the participant, including frequented areas, and/or what may trigger a violent tendency. The ultimate goal of the Home Safe program is to reduce the amount of time it takes to locate a registered missing person and reunite them with a guardian or a parent.

The voluntary information provided will only be available to Aurora Police and Fire Department employees with proper security access and only during the scope of their official duties. A database of participating people will be kept by the Aurora Police Department for 3 years. After 3 years, the database administrator, appointed by each appropriate unit, will attempt to contact the participating member's caretaker and ask if they would like to remain in the program. The person responsible for the registration can choose to update their information, or they can withdraw from the program. If we do not get a response within 30 days from the first attempt to contact, the participating person will be automatically removed. PSC will also remove any notes or flag associated to the participant at that time.

At any time, the participating person, or the person responsible can ask that the registration be canceled by calling the Aurora Record Unit at 303-739-6320 or sending an email to [homesafe@auroragov.org](mailto:homesafe@auroragov.org). They can also provide updated information, an updated photo, or re-register someone who's registration may have expired by

resubmitting the Aurora Police Department [Home Safe Voluntary Registration Form \(APD Form 258\)](#). Records can route this information to respective unit's Administrative Specialists.

For information regarding Angel Sense, use these links: [Angel Sense Tracking Program](#) and the [Angel Sense Program Agreement](#).