



Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

Sheriff Carl Ritchie

9-29 PROJECT LIFESAVER

- ☐ NEW
- ☒ REVISED
- ☒ REVIEWED

ACA Standards Reference:

CALEA Standards Reference: 17.5.1, 17.5.2, 33.6.1, 41.2.5, 46.2.5

NCCHC Standards Reference:

SCLEA Standards Reference:

SC Minimum Standards:

This policy dated 1/28/2025 replaces prior policy dated 5/29/2008 and supersedes all previously issued directives.

I. Purpose:

Project Lifesaver is a program developed to help reduce the time spent searching for and increase the likelihood of locating lost persons diagnosed with conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Downs-Syndrome, Autism, or any other medically diagnosed condition that may cause someone to wander and become lost. The Charleston County Sheriff's Office Project Lifesaver Program consists of trained personnel who are responsible for placing citizens into the program, monitoring those clients on a bi-monthly basis, and locating those clients who wander from their secure environments. Project Lifesaver provides physical and emotional support to the families and caregivers who fear they will not be able to quickly locate their loved ones should they wander from their homes. (Ref: CALEA 41.2.5 item g and 46.2.5)

II. Policy:

Personnel assigned and trained in the use of the Project Lifesaver equipment will distribute electronic transmitters to qualified candidates called clients. Each client will be assigned a unique frequency that can be tracked by the use of a receiver tuned to the appropriate frequency. Personnel assigned and trained in the use of the Project Lifesaver equipment will respond when called to help search for and locate the clients by their unique transmitter frequency. In addition, they will perform routine bi-monthly maintenance checks of the assigned transmitters.

III. Definitions:

- A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, or Class III, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, and
 2. civilian, non-sworn employee.
- B. *Employee*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members (sworn and non-sworn).
- C. *Project Lifesaver Coordinator*: Unless otherwise specified, the School Resource Officer Unit Sergeant will serve as the coordinator of the Project Lifesaver program.

- D. *Client:* An approved wearer of the Project Lifesaver transmitter.
- E. *Transmitter:* A device worn by the client on the wrist or ankle that emits an FM radio frequency-based signal every second, 24 hours a day (each transmitter emits its own unique radio frequency).
- F. *Receiver:* An electronic portable directional antennae used to locate the unique radio frequency of each transmitter. Only agency personnel trained with Project Lifesaver equipment will be authorized to operate the equipment.
- G. *Electronic Search:* A search conducted by personnel trained with the Project Lifesaver equipment who utilize the equipment to conduct a search for missing clients.

IV. Procedure

- A. Project Lifesaver is a collateral duty functioning as a part of the Bureau of Community Engagement. Deputies interested in participating in Project Lifesaver may submit a request in memoranda form through their chain-of-command to the Project Lifesaver Coordinator. Approved detention deputies may participate in Project Lifesaver in a support role.
- B. A receiver and equipment bag will be maintained at the Law Enforcement Center (LEC) and at each agency sub-station. One receiver will also be permanently assigned to the Aviation Unit.
- C. The Project Lifesaver Coordinator will maintain the digital files on each client.
- D. If a Project Lifesaver client is discovered missing, the person responsible for the primary care of the Project Lifesaver client should call Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (911 Center) to report the person missing.
 - 1. The 911 Center will:
 - a. obtain specific information from the caregiver from a prepared questionnaire; (Ref: CALEA 41.2.5 item a)
 - b. immediately contact the Project Lifesaver on-call supervisor;
 - c. notify the on-duty Patrol supervisor for BOLO broadcast; and,

- d. notify the Aviation Unit. (Ref: CALEA 41.2.5 item *b*)
- 2. Personnel with the Project Lifesaver receiver will respond to the last known location of the missing person and begin their electronic search. The Patrol supervisor will respond to the scene and utilize on-duty Patrol personnel to assist in the same manner they would for a missing person.
- 3. If the missing person is not located after 30 minutes of searching electronically, the Patrol supervisor will follow the departmental protocol for search and rescue. (Ref: CALEA 41.2.5 item *f*)
- E. Once a missing client is located, the ranking ground member at the location scene will determine if medical treatment is necessary and will request medical assistance, if needed.
- F. Personnel trained on Project Lifesaver will determine when an electronic search is to be terminated. However, if the electronic search is terminated, on-duty Patrol personnel will continue to patrol the area under the direction of the on-duty Patrol supervisor. (Ref: CALEA 41.2.5 item *f*)
- G. An incident and/or supplemental reports will be completed by the responding certified Project Lifesaver personnel.
- H. An after-action report will be completed and filed by the Project Lifesaver Coordinator upon completion of the search.
- I. Maintenance of Equipment
 - 1. Designated team members will complete bi-monthly maintenance checks on all transmitters that belong to the Project Lifesaver program.
 - 2. Batteries will be replaced in each device bi-monthly from the date installed. Once batteries are replaced, the old batteries will either be marked with a "T" and used for training purposes, or marked with a "D" for dead and safely disposed of.
 - 3. Bands that secure the transmitter device to the client will also be replaced and adjusted as needed during the bi-monthly maintenance process.

4. After batteries are changed, transmitters will be checked with a transmitter tester to ensure that they are functioning properly.
(Ref: CALEA 17.5.2)
5. The Project Lifesaver receivers, antennas, and all other supplemental equipment will be checked monthly to ensure the equipment is functioning properly and that the batteries are charged.
(Ref: CALEA 17.5.2)
6. Daily maintenance checks of the transmitter will be logged on the Project Lifesaver maintenance log by the client's caregiver, documenting its operational readiness.
(Ref: CALEA 17.5.2)
7. Personnel trained on the Project Lifesaver equipment will participate annually in field training exercises to maintain proficiency with the equipment.
(Ref: CALEA 33.6.1 items *b and c*)

J. Client Installment and Removal from Project Lifesaver

1. Trained personnel will meet with the family or designated caregiver of a potential client and discuss the Project Lifesaver program.
2. After the designated caregiver has signed the required contract, the new client will be fitted with a transmitter and the designated caregiver will be given a transmitter tester and two extra bands.
3. The designated caregiver will be instructed on the use of the transmitter tester. The caregiver will be required to document on the Project Lifesaver maintenance log, the date and time of the required test and will be required to submit such documentation during the bi-monthly equipment swap out.
(Ref: CALEA 17.5.1 item *b*)
4. When the designated caregiver requests to have the client released from the program, a member from the Project Lifesaver program will remove the transmitter from the client and retrieve all equipment. Any and all equipment will remain the property of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office.
(Ref: CALEA 17.5.1 item *a*)
5. Family members or designated caregivers may be responsible for the cost of equipment replacement for any damaged or lost equipment belonging to the Project Lifesaver program.
6. The Project Lifesaver Coordinator has the discretion to determine if a client will be removed from the program.

