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# CHAMPAIGN POLICE DEPARTMENT

## POLICY and PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 41.7

SUBJECT: MISSING PERSONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/09

REVISED DATE: 04/06/16

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REFERENCE ILEAP: OPR.04.01

REFERENCE CALEA: 41.2.5  
41.2.6

POLICY:

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for handling missing adults and children, consistent with Illinois law 50 ILCS 722/5.

DEFINITIONS:

**AMBER Alert Plan:** The AMBER (America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert Plan is named in memory of nine year old Amber Hagerman who was abducted in 1996 and later found murdered. In response, the AMBER Alert plan was developed as a partnership between law enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases.

**Family Abduction:** When a child is abducted or is suspected to have been abducted by a family member of the child.

**Non-Family Abduction:** When a child is abducted or is suspected to have been abducted by a person who is not a family member of the missing child.

**Missing Adult:** A person 18 years of age or older whose whereabouts are unknown or unexplained for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties as highly unusual in consideration of the person's behavioral patterns, plans, or routine.

**Missing Child:** A person under the age of 18 whose location is unknown to his/her caretaker and who is not suspected to be a runaway. Factors to consider in making this determination may include: the age of the child, the existence and status of family relationships, information obtained from friends and witnesses, and whether not the child has a history of running away.

**Runaway:** Any person under the age of 18 who is absent from home without parental or guardian consent.

### 41.7.1 MISSING PERSON PROCEDURE

- A. Many missing person reports involve individuals who have voluntarily left home, while other reports are quickly resolved or proven to be unfounded. However, it is important for Department members to investigate each case carefully without making assumptions about the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- B. All reports of a missing person shall be documented in an incident report and will not be refused on any ground. The Champaign Police Department does not utilize time lines as a basis for determining the status of a missing person.
- C. A missing person investigation will be initiated for residents of Champaign, and also in those situations where the person(s) was last observed in Champaign or his disappearance is suspected or alleged to have occurred in Champaign, unless a supervisor directs otherwise.
  1. In those situations involving persons whose primary residence is in another jurisdiction, information will be provided to the agency having jurisdiction, although the Department retains case investigation responsibility unless other arrangements have been made by the Investigations Commander or his designee.
- D. All reports of missing persons must be given full consideration and attention by members of the Department, to include the careful recording and investigation of circumstances surrounding the disappearance.
- E. Particular care should be exercised in instances involving missing children, persons who may be mentally or physically impaired, or others who are insufficiently capable of taking care of themselves.

### 41.7.2 CLASSIFICATION OF MISSING PERSONS

- A. There is no waiting period required for reporting a missing person. Missing person reports shall be taken without delay in person or by telephone in conformance with this directive.
- B. The following factors shall be considered in determining the potential increased danger posed to the missing person:
  1. Whether the person may be the subject of foul play.

2. If, because of a person's age (young or old), they are or may be unable to properly safeguard or care for themselves.
  3. If the individual suffers from psychological or medical conditions that are potentially life-threatening when untreated/unattended.
  4. If the individual is a patient at a mental institution and is considered potentially dangerous to himself or others.
  5. If the individual has threatened or demonstrated the potential for suicide.
  6. If the individual may have been involved in a boating, swimming, or other accident, or a natural disaster or catastrophe.
- C. Reports of minors under 18 who have voluntarily left home ("runaways") should be classified as such only after thorough investigation.
- D. Based upon the outcome of initial inquiries, a decision may be made concerning the potential danger posed to the missing person and the urgency of police response.
- B. As soon as an officer receives information about a missing person, he shall ensure that METCAD transmits the name, age, and description of the individual without un-necessary delay to all local agencies. Officers should remain alert any unusual circumstances surrounding the disappearance that would require immediate action or the mobilization of additional resources.
- C. Upon report of a missing person, a missing person report shall be completed and appropriate entries made, without delay, in local, state, and national information databases in accordance with established procedures for LEADS, NCIC, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The reporting officer shall have the entire report completed prior to the end of his tour of duty.
1. If the missing person does not fit specifically into one of the other LEADS categories, "MISSING – ENDANGERED" will be the category under which the person is entered into LEADS.
  2. Records for missing persons under the age of 21 must be entered into the appropriate Missing Person file category within 2 hours of receipt of the complete initial missing person report. LEADS agencies must document the date and time to allow the Illinois State Police (ISP) audit staff to effectively evaluate compliance.
- D. Missing person investigations not requiring an urgent response will be assigned to Investigations for follow-up.

#### **41.7.3 INITIAL REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. The initial responding officer must gather as much pertinent information as possible in order to properly classify a missing person report and initiate a proper response. This includes the following information:
1. Name, age, and physical description of the subject and the relationship of the reporting party to the missing person.
  2. A recent photo of the missing person.
  3. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of individuals who last had contact with the missing person, and the names of any other person who may provide information as to the whereabouts of the missing person.
  4. The extent of any search for the subject.
  5. Whether or not the subject has been missing on prior occasions, and the degree to which the absence departs from their established behavioral patterns, habits, or plans.
  6. Whether the individual has been recently involved recently in domestic incidents, suffered emotional trauma or life crises; demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic; or bizarre behavior; is dependent upon drugs or alcohol; or has a history of mental illness.
  7. The current psychological and physical condition of the subject, and whether or not the person is currently taking any prescription medication.
  8. Basic information concerning the missing person's employment and/or school, places frequented, and known acquaintances.

#### **41.7.4 FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION**

- A. Follow-up investigations of missing persons should include, but not be limited to:
1. Confirming and updating all missing person computer entries.
  2. Requesting dental records and fingerprints, when available.
  3. Contacting area hospitals and the coroner's office, as appropriate, for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
  4. Thoroughly checking the location where the missing person was last seen and conducting interviews with persons who were with the individual or who may work in or otherwise frequent the area.
  5. Interviewing any additional family, friends, work associates, schoolmates, teachers, school counselors, and/or social case workers to explore the potential for foul play, voluntary flight, or, in the case of minors, parental kidnapping or runaway.
  6. Providing necessary and related information to all Divisions of the Department, the state police missing persons' registry, neighboring police agencies and, when parental or stranger-to-

stranger abduction is suspected, the appropriate Federal agency having jurisdiction.

- B. Decisions to use local media to help locate missing persons shall be made with the approval of the Investigations Commander.
- C. The lead investigator shall maintain routine ongoing contact with the missing person's closest relative concerning progress of the investigation. This relative and other relevant individuals shall be informed that they must notify the lead investigator as soon as any contact is made with the missing person.

#### **41.7.5 AMBER ALERT NOTIFICATION**

- A. Activation of the AMBER Alert Notification Plan shall be authorized by an on-duty patrol supervisor.
- B. The investigating officer shall be responsible for processing current information for AMBER Alert Notification, including the AMBER Alert Notification Plan. Amber Alert forms are available through the ISP website at [www.isp.state.il.us](http://www.isp.state.il.us).
- C. The AMBER Alert Notification Plan shall be activated on confirmed child abduction provided that all of the following criteria are met:
  - 1. The case involves a child (or children) under the age of 16 or who has a proven mental or physical disability, and;
  - 2. It is believed that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
  - 3. There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect vehicle to believe that an immediate broadcast will aid in efforts to locate the child.
- D. The procedure for an AMBER alert is as follows:
  - 1. Have the legal guardian of the missing child complete the AMBER Information Release and Liability Waiver forms.
  - 2. Complete and Fax the AMBER alert notification packet, including a photograph if available, to the ISP Springfield Area Communications (SAC) at 217-786-7191.
  - 3. Contact the ISP Springfield Area Communications (SAC) by telephone at 217-786-6677 to confirm receipt of the fax.
  - 4. If available, electronically scan and send a copy of a photograph to the Illinois State Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children.
- E. If the child has been located, the AMBER Alert Cancellation form shall be faxed to the ISP Springfield Area Communications (SAC).
- F. After 8 hours of the abduction, any updates/cancellations should be made directly to the Illinois State Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children Manager at (800) 843-5763

- G. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) can be contacted for assistance at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

#### **41.7.6 RUNAWAY CHILD**

- A. It is the policy of this Department to complete a runaway report without delay any time a parent or guardian reports a minor missing. A missing person's documentation form shall be completed and then signed by the reporting party. The runaway report shall be delivered to headquarters as soon as possible and an immediate entry made into LEADS and NCIC. Photographs shall be attached to the original report whenever possible.
- B. When any of the following circumstances exist, a supervisor shall be notified:
  - 1. The missing child is under 13 years of age.
  - 2. The missing child is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his age or level of development.
  - 3. The missing child is mentally incapacitated.
  - 4. The missing child is drug dependent, including both prescribed medication and illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life-threatening.
  - 5. The child has been missing for more than 24 hours.
  - 6. Based upon available information, it is believed that the child is in a life-threatening situation.
  - 7. It is believed that the missing child is in the company of adults who could endanger the welfare of the child.
  - 8. The absence is inconsistent with the child's established patterns of behavior and the deviations can not be readily explained.
  - 9. Other circumstances are present which would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the child should be considered at risk.
- C. A supervisor should call an Investigations supervisor if assistance or advice is immediately needed, and if the child is not found during the shift in which they were reported missing then all pertinent information shall be passed along to an oncoming shift supervisor.
- D. Whenever appropriate, officers should request permission to search a missing child's home, bedroom, school locker, and, in all cases, the location where the missing person was last observed.
- E. If information exists as to the possible location of a runaway, an officer or investigator shall be sent as soon as possible to check the location. If the location is outside the jurisdiction of the Champaign Police Department, then the appropriate jurisdiction shall be notified.

ISSUING AUTHORITY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony D. Cobb', written in a cursive style.

Anthony D. Cobb  
Chief of Police  
Champaign Police Department