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# CHAMPAIGN POLICE DEPARTMENT

## POLICY and PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 41.7

SUBJECT: MISSING PERSONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/09

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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for handling missing adults and children, consistent with 50 ILCS 722, the Missing Persons Identification Act.

### POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the Champaign Police Department to thoroughly investigate and document all reports of missing persons. Each report shall be given full consideration and attention, with careful recording of all available information and prompt investigation into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance. Care shall be exercised in cases involving high-risk missing persons, missing children, and individuals who may be mentally or physically impaired or otherwise unable to care for themselves. All unidentified persons or human remains located within the City of Champaign shall be investigated to the fullest extent of the Department's ability to determine identity, cause, and circumstances consistent with applicable law.

### 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.

**Endangered Missing Person Advisory:** Pursuant to 20 ILCS 2605/2605-485, this program provides a regional system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person who is believed to be a high-risk missing person as defined in the Missing Persons Identification Act (50 ILCS 722/10). The Endangered Missing Person Advisory encompasses the Silver Search Program and applies to situations involving endangered or high-risk individuals that do not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert. Activation may

occur when a missing person's age, medical condition, cognitive impairment, or other circumstances indicate that they are in danger of serious harm or death.

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

**High-Risk Missing Person:** A person whose whereabouts are unknown and whose circumstances indicate they may be at risk of injury or death.

**Illinois State Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children (ISCMEC):** An office of the Illinois State Police that assists in AMBER Alert notifications and the distribution of missing person information and works in conjunction with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

**Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network (ISPERN):** Provides wide area radio dissemination of criminal or traffic offense information to multiple law enforcement agency mobile units, allowing for coordinated operations between these agencies.

**Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS):** A statewide computerized telecommunications system designed to provide services, information, and capabilities to the law enforcement and criminal justice community in the State of Illinois.

**Missing Adult:** A person who is 21 years of age or older whose absence is contrary to their normal patterns of behavior.

**Missing Child:** Any person under 21 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to their parents or legal guardian.

**National Crime Information Center (NCIC):** A computerized index of criminal justice information, such as criminal record history information, fugitives, stolen properties, and missing persons.

**National Missing Persons Identification System (NamUs):** A national clearinghouse for missing persons and unidentified decedent records. NamUs is a free online system that can be searched by medical examiners, coroners, law enforcement officials, and the general public to solve these cases.

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

**Runaway Child:** Any minor under 18 years of age who is absent from home without the consent of their parent, guardian, or custodian, or who is beyond the control of their parent, guardian, or custodian in circumstances that constitute a substantial or immediate danger to the minor's physical safety. This definition also includes a minor who, after being taken into limited custody for the period of time

provided in 705 ILCS 405/3-3 and offered interim crisis intervention services (where available), refuses to return home after the minor and their parent, guardian, or custodian cannot agree to an arrangement for an alternative voluntary residential placement or the continuation of such placement.

Silver Search Program: A statewide initiative designed to provide training, support, and technology to law enforcement, first responders, public guardians, and the public to aid in locating individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia who are reported missing. The program includes the law enforcement use of the Endangered Missing Person Advisory pursuant to 20 ILCS 2605/2605-485, which facilitates the rapid dissemination of information to assist in the safe recovery of endangered or cognitively impaired individuals.

#### POLICY:

##### **41.7.1 MISSING PERSON PROCEDURES**

- 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 the Department to investigate each reported case carefully without making assumptions about the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- B. All reports of a missing person shall be documented in a report and shall not be refused under any circumstance. The Department does not impose timelines or waiting periods as a basis for determining the status of a missing person. Missing person reports shall be accepted without delay and processed in full compliance with this policy and applicable state statute.
- C. As soon as an officer receives information about a missing person, they shall ensure that METCAD transmits the name, age, and description of the individual without unnecessary delay to all local agencies. Officers should remain alert to any unusual circumstances surrounding the disappearance that would require immediate action or the mobilization of additional resources.
- D. The officer shall ensure that all appropriate entries are 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 and reviewed prior to the end of their shift.
- E. An ISPERN broadcast should be made as soon as practical.
- F. All missing person reports must be given full consideration and attention by members of the Department, including the careful recording and investigation of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance.
- G. 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.

H. Jurisdictional conflicts shall be avoided when a person is reported missing. The priority shall be to ensure that a report is taken promptly, and an investigation is initiated without delay, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

1. If the missing person either resides in or was last seen within the City of Champaign, the Department shall immediately initiate the reporting and investigative process.
2. If the missing person resides in Champaign but was last seen in another jurisdiction, and the law enforcement agency covering that jurisdiction declines to take the missing person report, the Department shall initiate the reporting and investigative process.
3. If the missing person resides in another jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, the Department shall initiate the reporting process and promptly notify the agency having jurisdiction, which shall assume primary investigative responsibility.
4. Investigating officers shall make every reasonable effort to obtain the cooperation of the law enforcement agency covering the jurisdiction where the missing person was last seen. Nothing in this section precludes the transfer of primary investigative responsibility when warranted by new information developed during the investigation.

##### **41.7.2 REPORTING AND CLASSIFICATION**

- A. Reports of a missing person may be received in person, by telephone, or through electronic means, consistent with Department policy and reporting procedures. However, it is recommended that missing person reports be taken in person whenever possible to ensure accuracy, completeness, and the prompt initiation of investigative actions.
- B. The reporting officer shall interview the person who made the missing person report and any witnesses.
- C. The reporting officer is responsible for completing a report in the Public Safety Records Management System (PSRMS) and the Missing Person Intake Report form, the latter of which is available in the policy and procedure management software.
- D. The Missing Person Intake Report form contains information required by 50 ILCS 722/5, Section 5, Missing Person Reports. The information obtained will assist the reporting officer in determining the proper classification of the incident as defined in this policy, and are as such:
  1. Missing Adult
  2. Missing Child
  3. Runaway Child
  4. High Risk Missing Person

- E. 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.
  - F. Records for missing persons under the age of 21 must be entered into the appropriate Missing Person file category within two (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 audit staff to effectively evaluate compliance.
  - G. A copy of the completed Missing Person Intake Report form shall be provided to a Police Services Representative, and they will immediately input information into LEADS, NCIC, and any other resources as applicable
  - H. A supervisor shall review all missing person reports prior to the end of the reporting officer's shift to ensure appropriate classification and LEADS/NCIC entry.
  - I. Supervisors shall confirm that all required data elements (photographs, identifiers, contact information, etc.) have been entered accurately.
  - J. Missing person investigations not requiring an urgent response will be assigned by supervisors for follow-up.
- 7. The current psychological and physical condition of the missing person, and whether 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.
- B. Information pertaining to a missing adult.
    - 1. A thorough search shall be conducted of both the residence and the location where the missing adult was last seen. If the missing adult is not located at home or the last seen location, a thorough search of the geographical area shall be conducted.
      - a. Officers shall be aware of search and seizure guidelines and seek voluntary compliance whenever possible, and should consult with a supervisor if they have any questions about the legality of a search.
      - b. In cases where foul play is suspected, the missing adult's home, areas where the missing adult was last seen, or may have concealed themselves, shall be considered a possible crime scene to prevent contamination or destruction of potential evidence.
    - 2. If the missing person is associated with a vehicle(s), the officer shall conduct an Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) search.
    - 3. The officer should also search the Public Safety Camera system, depending on the circumstances and the last known location of the missing person.
    - 4. If the missing person's cellular telephone information is available, officers should consider requesting a cell phone location ("cell ping") through the appropriate investigative or supervisory channels to assist in determining the person's whereabouts. Such requests shall comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws, including provisions related to exigent circumstances and consent.
    - 5. Supervisors shall coordinate for Department resources or multi-jurisdictional resource requests, including the use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (drones) and K-9s, when such resources are deemed necessary.

#### 41.7.3 INITIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The reporting officer must gather as much pertinent information as possible to correctly classify a missing person report and initiate a proper response. This includes requesting the following information:
  - 1. Name, age, and physical description of the subject and the relationship of the reporting party to the missing person.
  - 2. The most recent available photograph of the missing person. When possible, the reporting officer should document the date the photograph was taken, as older photographs may explain variations in the missing person's current appearance. This information should be documented in the PSRMS report.
  - 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 missing person.
  - 5. Whether or not the person 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 missing person has been recently involved 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.
- C. Information pertaining to a missing child.
  - 1. In the event of a missing child, a supervisor shall respond to the incident and coordinate a search for the child. All available Department resources shall be devoted to the search, including those noted above.
    - a. The search shall include, but not be limited to, the child's home, homes of friends or family of the missing child, the child's school, or other recreational facilities frequented by the child, and any other areas frequented by the child.

- b. Officers shall be cognizant of search and seizure guidelines and seek voluntariness whenever possible. Officers should consult with a supervisor if they have any questions about the legality of a search.
  - c. The missing child's home shall be treated as a crime scene. The officer shall attempt to obtain consent to search the child's home. If consent is obtained, the home shall be thoroughly searched for the child and evidence of foul play.
  - d. The search for children should include places where children could be trapped, asleep, or hiding, such as a closet, under furniture, attics, crawlspaces, sheds, or other closed or locked spaces. Special attention should also be given to enclosures.
  - e. During the search, the officer shall attempt to determine if items belonging to the child are missing, particularly money, electronic devices, valuables, or travel items.
2. Officers involved in missing children investigations should not rule out any suspects until the investigation is complete.
  3. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children can be contacted for investigative guidance and assistance at "800-THE-LOST" (800-843-5678) or [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

**41.7.4 HIGH-RISK MISSING PERSONS**

- A. Pursuant to 50 ILCS 722/10(A)(1), the criteria below should be considered for the classification of a high-risk missing person, as disappearance poses an elevated threat to their safety based on any one or more of the following circumstances:
  1. The person is missing as a result of a stranger abduction.
  2. The person is missing under suspicious circumstances.
  3. The person is missing under unknown circumstances.
  4. The person is missing under known dangerous circumstances.
  5. The person is missing for more than 60 days.
  6. The person has already been designated as a high-risk missing person by another law enforcement agency.
  7. There is evidence that the person is at risk because:
    - a. The person is in need of medical attention, including but not limited to persons with dementia-like symptoms or prescription medication.

- b. The person does not have a pattern of running away or disappearing.
  - c. The person may have been abducted by a non-custodial parent.
  - d. The person is mentally impaired, including but not limited to a person having a developmental disability or intellectual disability.
  - e. The person is under the age of 21.
  - f. The person has been the subject of past threats or acts of violence.
  - g. The person has eloped from a nursing home.
8. The person is a veteran or active-duty member of the United States Armed Forces, the National Guard, or any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces who is believed to have a physical or mental health condition that is related to their service.
  9. Any other factor that may, in the judgment of the law enforcement official, indicate that the missing person may be at risk.
- B. Upon classification as a High-Risk Missing Person, the following actions shall be taken:
    1. Immediate notification of an on-duty supervisor and the Operational Support Division.
    2. Immediate LEADS/NCIC entry under the 'Missing-Endangered' category.
    3. Immediate consideration of AMBER or Silver Alert activation, as appropriate.
    4. Initiation of canvases, interviews, and evidence collection without delay.
    5. If unresolved within 60 days, mandatory generation of a NamUs report and submission of biological, dental, and radiographic records per 50 ILCS 722/5(d)(2).
    6. Continuous follow-up and documentation until the person is located, alive, or deceased.
  - C. High-Risk Missing Person determinations shall be documented in a PSRMS report narrative and reviewed by a supervisor prior to the end of the reporting officer's shift.

**41.7.5 AMBER ALERT NOTIFICATION PLAN**

- A. Based on the results of the initial investigation of a missing child, the officer shall confer with a supervisor to determine whether the circumstances meet the criteria for activation of an AMBER Alert.
- B. The investigating officer shall be responsible for processing information for AMBER Alert.

- C. All AMBER Alert Notification Plan forms are available through the Illinois State Police website at [www.isp.state.il.us](http://www.isp.state.il.us), and in the policy and procedure management software.
  - D. An AMBER Alert shall be activated on a confirmed child abduction, provided that all of the following criteria are met:
    - 1. Law enforcement must confirm a child has been abducted.
    - 2. The child must be under the age of 16 or have a documented mental or physical disability.
    - 3. Law enforcement must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
    - 4. There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.
  - E. 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 the AMBER Alert Notification Plan forms and fax them to the Illinois State Police Springfield Communication Center at (217) 781-7191. The facsimile message must include detailed information that could be helpful to the public in identifying the child.
    - 3. Contact the Illinois State Police Springfield Communication Center by telephone at (217) 786-6677 to confirm their receipt of the facsimile.
    - 4. If available, photographs of the child, suspect, and any related vehicle(s) should be forwarded electronically with a copy of all abduction details/summaries to the Illinois State Police Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children Manager ([isp.missing@illinois.gov](mailto:isp.missing@illinois.gov)) and the Springfield Communication Center ([scc@isp.state.il.us](mailto:scc@isp.state.il.us)).
  - F. If the child is located, the AMBER Alert Cancellation form shall be faxed to the Illinois State Police Springfield Communication Center at (217) 786-6677.
  - G. After eight (8) hours of an abduction, any updates and/or cancellations should be made directly to the Illinois State Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children Manager at (800) 843-5763.
- 2. The person is believed to be in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, environment, weather conditions, or in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or some other factor that may expose the person to possible harm or injury.
  - 3. Public information is available that could assist in the safe recovery of the person.
  - 4. The circumstances do not fit the criteria of an AMBER Alert. Refer to the section of the policy that addresses a missing child for more information on AMBER Alert.
- B. The Endangered Missing Person Advisory forms are available in the policy and procedure management software. The officer shall ensure a photograph of the missing person is attached to the advisory.
    - 1. The completed Endangered Missing Person Advisory forms and a photograph, if available, shall be provided to a Police Services Representative. The officer shall ensure a copy of the PSRMS report is also provided.
    - 2. The Police Services Representative shall forward the Endangered Missing Person Advisory forms and photograph to the Illinois State Police Springfield Communications Center via email at [isp.scc@illinois.gov](mailto:isp.scc@illinois.gov). The telephone and facsimile numbers are located on the forms, if needed. A follow-up should be conducted to confirm receipt of the documents.
    - 3. The Police Services Representative shall also disseminate the missing person information via LEADS, NCIC, and other resources as applicable.

#### **41.7.7 FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION**

- A. Follow-up investigations of missing persons should include, but not be limited to:
    - 1. Re-interviewing the reporting person(s).
    - 2. Confirming and updating all missing person computer entries.
    - 3. Requesting dental records and fingerprints, when available.
    - 4. Contacting area hospitals and the coroner's office, as appropriate, for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
    - 5. 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.
    - 6. 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.
- A. When an incident does not meet the criteria for an Amber Alert, the supervisor shall determine if it qualifies for a Missing Endangered Person Advisory. Use of this advisory includes persons with dementia or Alzheimer's, which may be referred to as the State of Illinois Silver Search Program. This advisory is initiated by law enforcement utilizing the following criteria:
    - 1. The person is missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.

7. As necessary, providing necessary information and updates to all Divisions of the Department, the Illinois State Police missing persons' registry, neighboring police agencies, and, when parental or stranger-to-stranger abduction is suspected, the appropriate Federal agency having jurisdiction.
  8. Review sex offender lists, violent offender lists, or recently paroled offender lists.
- B. Decisions to use local or social media to help locate missing persons shall be made with the approval of the Operational Support Command.
  - C. The lead investigator shall maintain routine ongoing contact with the missing person's closest relative concerning the 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.
  - D. If the person remains missing after 30 days, but not more than 60 days, the department shall generate a report within the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) and shall attempt to obtain:
    1. DNA reference samples from family members or from the missing person, along with any documentation needed.
      - a. DNA samples from family members shall be submitted to a CODIS-accredited laboratory within 90 days of the report. If the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) reporting requirements are met, the case shall also be entered into the FBI's ViCAP system.
    2. Authorization to release dental or skeletal ex-rays of the missing person.
    3. Additional photographs of the missing person.
    4. Fingerprints.
  - E. As required by 50 ILCS 722/5(d)(5), a missing person case shall not be closed until the individual is located, alive or deceased. Cases may not be closed due to exhaustion of leads or termination of the person's anticipated lifespan. LEADS/NCIC entries shall remain active indefinitely until cleared or canceled by the originating agency.

#### **41.7.8 RUNAWAY CHILD**

- A. It is the policy of the 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 the Department as soon as possible, and an immediate entry shall be 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 their age or level of development.
  3. The missing child is developmentally delayed, cognitively impaired, or has a documented disability.
  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 on 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 missing child's established patterns of behavior, and the deviations cannot be readily explained.
  9. Other circumstances are present that would cause an objectively reasonable person to conclude that the missing child should be considered at risk.
- C. A supervisor should contact an Operational Support supervisor if assistance or advice is immediately needed. 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. The information shall also be disseminated via a shift summary.
  - 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 Department's jurisdiction, then the appropriate jurisdiction shall be notified.
  - F. When there is reason to believe that a missing child's disappearance may involve neglect, abuse, or custodial interference, the officer shall make a mandated report to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in accordance with 325 ILCS 5/4.

#### **41.7.9 UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS**

- A. Officers who are assigned to the report of unidentified remains of a person shall:
  1. Complete a PSRMS report based on the information and circumstances known.
  2. Compile all descriptive information to be submitted to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.

3. Ensure the information is entered into LEADS.
  4. Make a reasonable attempt to identify the person using any available resources, not limited to: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, coroner or medical examiner, missing persons/children poster distributed by other agencies, etc.
  5. Ensure fingerprints from the unidentified remains, including partial prints, are submitted to the Illinois State Police or other resources as appropriate.
  6. Ensure a request is made to the Illinois State Police for the creation of an NCIC Unidentified Person record within five days of the discovery of the remains.
  7. Ensure the entry number provided by the NCIC is documented in the case report.
  8. Upon identification of the remains, ensure notification to the NCIC.
- B. In the event identification is made, notification to the person's family will be done in accordance with Policy 55.1, Victim/Witness Assistance.
  - C. Jurisdiction for human remains determined to be older than 100 years shall be transferred to the Department of Natural Resources for further investigation under the Archaeological and Paleontological Resources Protection Act.

#### **41.7.10 PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND MEDIA COORDINATION**

- A. In high-risk or endangered missing person cases, the Assistant to the Police Chief for Community Services (PIO) may be authorized by a supervisor or command to release information to the public through approved media and social-media platforms to assist in locating the missing person.
- B. All public communications shall be coordinated through the PIO to ensure accuracy, protect privacy, and maintain consistency with investigative objectives.

#### **41.7.11 RECOVERY PROCEDURES**

- A. Upon locating a missing person, the reporting officer or lead detective shall immediately verify the person's welfare and identity.
- B. LEADS and NCIC entries shall be cancelled promptly, with documentation of the date, time, and officer or detective completing the cancellation.
- C. Any related alerts (AMBER, Silver, or other) shall be promptly terminated in coordination with the Illinois State Police.
- D. The officer or detective shall notify the reporting party or next of kin, and where applicable, provide a referral to appropriate support or victim services in accordance with Policy 55.1, Victim/Witness Assistance.

- E. If the person was located in another jurisdiction, the investigating officer shall ensure a coordinated transfer of information with that agency.

#### **41.7.12 TRAINING AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS**

- A. All sworn Department personnel and Police Services Unit staff shall receive annual refresher training on missing person procedures, LEADS/NCIC entry standards, and relevant statutory changes.
- B. The Department shall conduct an annual internal audit of missing person entries and cancellations to ensure compliance with LEADS/NCIC and Illinois State Police guidelines, and the results shall be documented and reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Operational Support.
- C. Records of audits and training related to missing person procedures shall be maintained for a minimum of five years in accordance with LEADS audit standards.

#### **ISSUING AUTHORITY:**

*Timothy T. Tyler*

Timothy T. Tyler  
Police Chief  
Champaign Police Department