



# GENERAL ORDER

DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT  
DURHAM, NC

NUMBER:

4056 R-11

## MISSING & FOUND PERSONS

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### INTRODUCTION

The Durham Police Department actively investigates all missing person cases in accordance with N.C.G.S. § [143B-1760](#) – [§143B-1773](#).

### DEFINITIONS

**Missing Child** – A juvenile as defined by N.C.G.S. § [7B-101\(14\)](#) whose location has not been determined, who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency, and whose parent's, spouse's, guardian's, or legal custodian's temporary or permanent residence is in North Carolina or is believed to be in North Carolina.

**Missing Person** – Any individual who is 18 years of age or older, whose temporary or permanent residence is in North Carolina, or is believed to be in North Carolina, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.

**NamUs** – The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System created by the United States Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice.

**North Carolina Amber Alert** – A system established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding abducted children.

**Ashanti Alert**-a system established within the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons to provide rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public about adults, over age 18, that are suspected to have been abducted and there is both abductor and vehicle information available.

**North Carolina Center for Missing Persons (the "Center")** – The Center is established within the State Highway Patrol for the purpose of serving as a central repository for information regarding missing persons and missing children, with special emphasis on missing children.

**North Carolina Missing Endangered Alert** – A system established through the NC Center for Missing Persons designed to quickly notify the public about missing people, age 64 or younger, who are believed to be suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or other cognitive impairment that causes an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties that makes them unable to meet their own needs or to seek help without assistance and that is not a risk to the general public.

**North Carolina Silver Alert** - A system established through the NC Center for Missing Persons designed to quickly notify the public about missing people, age 65 or older, who are believed to be suffering from dementia,

Alzheimer's disease, or other cognitive impairment that causes an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties that makes them unable to meet their own needs or to seek help without assistance.

**North Carolina Missing-Weather Alert** – A system established through the NC Center for Missing Persons designed for the rapid dissemination of information about a person or child that is missing during times of extreme heat or cold and is not in a vehicle, or immediately following a significant weather event.

## GENERAL MISSING PERSON CALL PROCEDURES

A *Missing Person Report* will be completed for any person (adult or juvenile) reported missing to the Durham Police Department (DPD) who became or is believed to have become missing in the City of Durham, or whose temporary or permanent residence is in the City of Durham or whose parent(s), spouse, guardian, or legal custodian's temporary or permanent residence is the City of Durham or one who is believed to be in the City of Durham, but whose exact location has not been determined.

Complaints of missing persons will originally be assigned to patrol officers unless compelling circumstances indicate that the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) should handle the case initially.

## INITIAL RESPONSE TO ALL MISSING PERSON CALLS

The initial responding officer as part of the preliminary investigation will complete a *Missing Person module of the Incident Report*. The preliminary investigation shall include, at a minimum:

- Determining whether or not the missing person meets the criteria for an Amber, Ashanti, Missing Endangered, Silver, or Missing-Weather Alert. If the initial responding officer determines that one of these criteria are met, then this officer will contact their supervisor and relay this information. If the supervisor also determines that these criteria are met, then he or she shall contact the Watch Commander, who shall make the decision as to whether or not to activate the North Carolina Amber, Ashanti, Missing Endangered, Silver or Missing-Weather Alert systems. (NOTE: The Watch Commander and all CID Supervisors are designated by the Chief as having this authority);
- Notifying all on-duty patrol units within the department of the person's name, physical description, clothing description, health/general condition, point last seen, and possible vehicles involved if any, and/or other specific information that might assist in locating the person. This information will be disseminated at the earliest possible moment, via radio and/or computer message.
- Initiate a statewide "be on the lookout" (B.O.L.O) bulletin to all law enforcement agencies.
- Attempting to obtain a photograph of the missing person;
- Informing the reporting person to call the Durham Police Department as soon as possible should the missing person return or additional information comes to their attention;
- Contacting persons developed from interviews who may possibly know the whereabouts of the individual;
- Visiting possible locations or having other units visit specified areas identified by the complainant;
- Promptly notifying their immediate supervisor when a reported missing person is a juvenile, an individual who is mentally and/or physically challenged, an elderly individual who is unable to care for themselves, an individual who is believed to be despondent or when the time of day, temperature, and/or length of time before notification of police mandates immediate action be taken;
- If a child is missing, attempt to notify the child's parents or legal guardian;
- In compliance with N.C.G.S. § [143B-1765](#), immediately make arrangements for the entry of data about

the missing person or missing child into the national missing persons file in accordance with criteria set forth by the FBI/NCIC. Transmit a copy of the report to the NC Center for Missing Persons. Entry must occur within two hours for persons under 21 years of age once the minimum mandatory data for entry is obtained by the officer.

## **THE NORTH CAROLINA AMBER ALERT CRITERIA**

Section [143B-1771](#) of the North Carolina General Statutes requires that, in order to activate an AMBER Alert, ALL of the following conditions must apply:

- The child is 17 years of age or younger;
- The child is believed:
  - To have been abducted, and
  - To be in danger of injury or death;
- The abduction is known or suspected to be by a parent of the child and the child is suspected to be in danger of injury or death;
- The child is not believed to be a runaway or voluntarily missing; and
- The abduction has been reported to and is being investigated by a law enforcement agency.

In order to activate the North Carolina Amber Alert system, the missing person must be promptly reported to the Durham Police Department, and the following information about the missing person should be provided:

- Name and nicknames;
- Age;
- Complete physical description;
- Complete clothing description;
- The location where the missing person was last seen, including the time, date, and direction of travel, if any;
- Any other relevant circumstances surrounding the incident, such as a suspect vehicle and direction of travel for a possible abductor.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN ACTIVATING THE NORTH CAROLINA AMBER ALERT SYSTEM**

Responding Officer Responsibilities:

Prior to notifying and requesting an AMBER Alert activation by the Center for Missing Persons, the initial responding officer of the originating agency will:

- Determine that the statutory criteria have been met, and if so, notify their supervisor who will then notify the Watch Commander;
- Obtain approval from the chief, or designee, to request activation of an AMBER Alert;
- Have the DCI/Warrant Control Unit enter the case into NCIC and format an Amber Alert through DCI;
- Continue an ongoing investigation and search;
- Compile for dissemination using the AMBER Alert Entry Form (Attachment 1) the identity and description of the child and abductor (photos if available), time and location of abduction and direction

of travel, and other relevant data;

- Obtain a signed Amber Alert Release Form (Attachment 2) from the missing child's parent or guardian, if possible.

#### Watch Commander Responsibilities:

If a missing child report meets the Amber Alert criteria established in G.S. §[143B-1771](#), as outlined above, as soon as practicable after receipt of the report, the Watch Commander will:

- Notify the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons by telephone at 1-800-522-5437 or (919) 733-3914; DOT signs for activation are in DOT Division 5 if requested;
- Submit an Amber Alert request at <https://nccmp.ncdps.gov/Alerts/Request/2> using the DCI/Warrant Control e-mail ([DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov](mailto:DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov)) for use in entering and removing the child from NCIC;
- Transmit to the Center a recent and true photographic image of the victim and, if possible, the abductor.
- Establish a 24-hour phone number. This may be Communications, the Watch Commander's cellular telephone, or other appropriate number;
- Notify The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1-800-THE-LOST).
- During business hours, notify the appropriate CID supervisor and the Commander of the Public Affairs Unit. After hours, notify the on-call CID supervisor and the on-call Public Affairs member.
- When notified that a missing child has been located, ensure the Public Affairs Unit is notified.

#### CID Supervisor Responsibilities:

Upon receiving an activation notification for an Amber Alert from the Watch Commander, the CID supervisor will ensure that the following duties are carried out, and will make the appropriate case assignment:

- Notify CID staff of the abduction and direct the appropriate CID response;
- Establish a command post, as needed;
- Verify that the Durham Police Department Public Affairs Unit has been contacted;
- Assign an investigator to field incoming information generated by the media alert.

#### Public Affairs Unit Responsibilities:

Upon receiving an activation notification for an Amber Alert from the Watch Commander, the assigned Public Affairs Unit member will ensure that the following duties are carried out:

- Verify information with CID (if on scene) or Uniform Patrol for a press release to include a photo of the missing person, if available;
- Send press release to the media with a photo of the missing person, if available. The press release will NOT include confidential medical information;
- Utilize social media platforms to release information on the missing person that was relayed in the press release including an image of the missing person, if available;
- Send media updated press release/social media when notified that a missing person has been located.

## **ASHANTI ALERT CRITERIA**

An Ashanti Alert may be issued when all of the following criteria are met:

- an adult over the age of 18 is missing;
- the individual is suspected to have been abducted;
- there is both abductor and vehicle information available; and
- no more than 72 hours have passed since the person went missing.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN ACTIVATING THE ASHANTI ALERT SYSTEM**

Responding Officer Responsibilities:

Prior to notifying and requesting an Ashanti Alert activation by the Center for Missing Persons, the initial responding officer of the originating agency will:

- Determine that the statutory criteria have been met and, if so, notify their supervisor who will then notify the Watch Commander;
- Obtain approval from the chief, or designee, to request activation of an Ashanti Alert;
- If the request is approved, have the DCI/Warrant Control Unit enter the case into NCIC and format an Ashanti Alert through DCI;
- Continue ongoing investigation and search;
- Compile for dissemination the identity and description of the missing person and abductor (photos if available), time and location of abduction and direction of travel, vehicle information, and other relevant data;

Watch Commander responsibilities:

- After determining the case meets the qualifying criteria, the Watch Commander will notify the NC Center for Missing Persons at 1-800-522-5437 or 919-733-3557 to discuss the situation with the Center staff before completing the Ashanti request;
- Submit an Ashanti request at <https://nccmp.ncdps.gov/Alerts/Request/4> using the DCI/Warrant Control e-mail ([DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov](mailto:DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov)) for use in entering and removing the person from NCIC;
- If the Ashanti request is approved the Watch Commander will ensure that the missing person is entered into the National Criminal Information Center System;
- Establish a 24-hour phone number. This may be Communications, the Watch Commander's cellular telephone, or other appropriate number;
- Transmit to the Center a recent and true photographic image of the victim and, if possible, the abductor.
- Initiate a statewide "be on the lookout" bulletin for all appropriate law enforcement agencies;

- Provide a 24-hour phone number to receive calls during the investigation;
- Once the missing person has been located, the Watch Commander will complete the cancellation on the Center's website;
- During business hours, notify the appropriate CID supervisor and the Commander of the Public Affairs Unit. After hours, notify the on-call CID supervisor and the on-call Public Affairs member;
- When notified that a missing person has been located, ensure the Public Affairs Unit is notified.

#### CID Supervisor Responsibilities

Upon receiving notification of an active Ashanti Alert from the Watch Commander, the CID supervisor will ensure that the following duties are carried out, and will make the appropriate case assignment:

- Notify CID staff of the abduction and direct the appropriate CID response;
- Establish a command post, as needed;
- Verify that the Durham Police Department Public Affairs Unit has been contacted;
- Assign an investigator to field incoming information generated by the media alert.

#### Public Affairs Unit Responsibilities:

Upon receiving notification of an active Ashanti Alert from the Watch Commander, the assigned Public Affairs Unit member will ensure that the following duties are carried out:

- Verify information with CID (if on scene) or Uniform Patrol for a press release to include a photo of the missing person, if available;
- Send press release to the media with a photo of the missing person, if available. The press release will NOT include confidential medical information;
- Utilize social media platforms to release information on the missing person that was relayed in the press release including an image of the missing person, if available;
- Submit updated press release/social media when notified that a missing person has been located.

### **NORTH CAROLINA MISSING ENDANGERED AND SILVER ALERTS CRITERIA**

A Missing Endangered Alert may be issued if all of the following criteria are met:

- the missing person is age 64 or younger;
- the missing person is believed to be suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's Disease or a cognitive impairment that causes an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties that makes them unable to meet their own needs or to seek help without assistance;
- the missing person is not a risk to the general public; and
- no more than 72 hours have passed since the person or child went missing.

A Silver Alert may be issued if all of the following criteria are met:

- the missing person is age 65 or older;
- the missing person is believed to be suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's Disease or a cognitive impairment that causes irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties that makes them unable to meet

- their own needs or to seek help without assistance; and
- no more than 72 hours have passed since the person went missing.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN ACTIVATING A MISSING ENDANGERED OR SILVER ALERT**

### **Responding Officer Responsibilities:**

Prior to notifying and requesting a Missing Endangered or Silver Alert activation by the Center for Missing Persons, the initial responding officer of the originating agency will:

- Determine that the statutory criteria have been met and, if so, notify their supervisor who will then notify the Watch Commander;
- Obtain approval from the chief, or designee, to request activation of a Missing Endangered or Silver Alert;
- If the request is approved, have the DCI/Warrant Control Unit enter the case into NCIC and format a Missing Endangered or Silver Alert, as appropriate, through DCI;
- Continue ongoing investigation and search;
- Compile for dissemination the identity and description of the missing person and/or child (photos if available), time and location last seen, direction of travel, and other relevant data;

### **Watch Commander Responsibilities:**

- Notify the NC Center for Missing Persons at 1-800-522-5437 or 919-733-3557;
- Advise the Center that the appropriate DOT signs for activation are in DOT Division 5 if requested;
- Submit an Missing Endangered or Silver Alert request at <https://nccmp.ncdps.gov/Alerts/Request/5> using the DCI/Warrant Control e-mail ([DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov](mailto:DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov)) for use in entering and removing the person/child from NCIC;
- Enter the information into NCIC;
- Initiate a statewide “be on the lookout” (B.O.L.O) bulletin to all law enforcement agencies;
- Establish a 24-hour phone number. This may be Communications, the Watch Commander’s cellular telephone, or other appropriate number;
- Transmit to the Center a recent and true photographic image of the missing person or child.
- As applicable, call “A Child is Missing Alert” at 1-888-875-2246 to notify residents and businesses in the area if the person has walked away from a facility/program;
- Notify the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678, if the person is under 21;
- If the missing person or child is located, notify the Center and fax to them the Missing Endangered or Silver Alert Deactivation form (Attachment 5);
- During business hours, notify the appropriate CID supervisor and the Commander of the Public Affairs Unit. After hours, notify the on-call CID supervisor and the on-call Public Affairs member;
- When notified that a missing person or child has been located, ensure the Public Affairs Unit is notified.

### CID Supervisor Responsibilities:

Upon receiving an activation notification for a North Carolina Missing Endangered or Silver Alert from the Watch Commander, the CID supervisor will ensure that the following duties are carried out, and will make the appropriate case assignment:

- Notify CID staff and direct the appropriate CID response;
- Establish a command post, as needed;
- Verify that the Durham Police Department Public Affairs Unit has been contacted;
- Assign an investigator to field incoming information generated by the media alert.

### Public Affairs Unit Responsibilities:

Upon receiving an activation notification for a North Carolina Missing Endangered or Silver Alert from the Watch Commander, the assigned Public Affairs Unit member will ensure that the following duties are carried out:

- Verify information with CID (if on scene) or Uniform Patrol for a press release to include a photo of the missing person, if available;
- Send press release out to the media with a photo of the missing person, if available. The press release will NOT include confidential medical information;
- Utilize social media platforms to release information on the missing person that was relayed in the press release including an image of the missing person, if available;
- Submit updated press release/social media when notified that a missing person has been located;

## **NORTH CAROLINA MISSING-WEATHER ALERT CRITERIA**

A North Carolina Missing-Weather Alert may be issued if all of the following criteria are met:

- a person or child is missing during times of extreme heat or cold and is not in a vehicle; or
- a person or child went missing immediately following a significant weather event; and
- no more than 72 hours have passed since the person went missing.

### Responding Officer Responsibilities:

Prior to notifying and requesting a Missing-Weather Alert activation by the Center for Missing Persons, the initial responding officer of the originating agency will:

- Determine that the statutory criteria have been met and, if so, notify their supervisor who will then notify the Watch Commander;
- Obtain approval from the chief, or designee, to request activation of a Missing-Weather Alert;
- If the request is approved, have the DCI/Warrant Control Unit enter the case into NCIC and format a Missing-Weather Alert through DCI;
- Continue ongoing investigation and search;
- Compile for dissemination the identity and description of the missing person and/or child (photos if available), time and location last seen, direction of travel, and other relevant data;

### Watch Commander Responsibilities:



- Notify the NC Center for Missing Persons at 1-800-522-5437 or 919-733-3557;
- Advise the Center that the appropriate DOT signs for activation are in DOT Division 5 if requested;
- Submit a Missing-Weather Alert request at <https://nccmp.ncdps.gov/Alerts/Request/5> using the DCI/Warrant Control e-mail ([DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov](mailto:DCI.Warrant@durhamnc.gov)) for use in entering and removing the person/child from NCIC;
- Enter the information into NCIC;
- Initiate a statewide “be on the lookout” (B.O.L.O) bulletin to all law enforcement agencies;
- Establish a 24-hour phone number. This may be Communications, the Watch Commander’s cellular telephone, or other appropriate number;
- Transmit to the Center a recent and true photographic image of the missing person or child.
- Notify the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678, if the person is under 21;
- If the missing person or child is located, notify the Center and fax to them the Missing-Weather Alert Deactivation form (Attachment );
- During business hours, notify the appropriate CID supervisor and the Commander of the Public Affairs Unit. After hours, notify the on-call CID supervisor and the on-call Public Affairs member;
- When notified that a missing person or child has been located, ensure the Public Affairs Unit is notified.

#### CID Supervisor Responsibilities:

Upon receiving an activation notification for a North Carolina Missing-Weather Alert from the Watch Commander, the CID supervisor will ensure that the following duties are carried out, and will make the appropriate case assignment:

- Notify CID staff and direct the appropriate CID response;
- Establish a command post, as needed;
- Verify that the Durham Police Department Public Affairs Unit has been contacted;
- Assign an investigator to field incoming information generated by the media alert.

#### Public Affairs Unit Responsibilities:

Upon receiving an activation notification for a North Carolina Missing-Weather Alert from the Watch Commander, the assigned Public Affairs Unit member will ensure that the following duties are carried out:

- Verify information with CID (if on scene) or Uniform Patrol for a press release to include a photo of the missing person, if available;
- Send press release out to the media with a photo of the missing person, if available. The press release will NOT include confidential medical information;
- Utilize social media platforms to release information on the missing person that was relayed in the press release including an image of the missing person, if available;
- Submit updated press release/social media when notified that a missing person has been located;

## RECORDS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Warrant Control/DCI Unit shall enter or remove the missing person or child into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) missing persons file following all regulations and procedures established by this system. Missing Persons are to be entered into NCIC under the following circumstances:

- A person of any age who is under a proven physical or mental disability or other cognitive impairment;
- In any situation when circumstances indicate the absence is not voluntary;
- A person of any age is missing after a catastrophe;
- A person of any age is in the company of another person under circumstances indicating his/her physical safety is in jeopardy;
- **All missing juveniles shall be entered into NCIC/DCI.**

The Warrant Control/DCI Unit shall send an attempt to locate message to all agencies within a fifty-mile radius of Durham, to include the North Carolina Highway Patrol (terminal XCA). The Warrant Control/DCI Unit shall then transmit a copy of this message to the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons.

## **SEARCH OPERATIONS**

### **Supervisor's Responsibilities**

The responding officer's supervisor will notify the Watch Commander when a missing person is a juvenile, an individual who is mentally and/or physically challenged, an elderly individual who is unable to care for himself/herself, a person who is believed to be despondent, or when the time of day, temperature, and/or length of time before notification of police mandates immediate action be taken.

### **Watch Commander Responsibilities**

Except to the extent otherwise required by this or other applicable policies, the Watch Commander will make an independent judgment as to further manpower needs, special equipment, search patterns, notification of Durham County Emergency Management, the Durham County Search and Rescue Team, and/or additional personnel from the Durham Police Department or other agencies.

The Watch Commander, unless relieved by higher authority or by his/her own decision, or when relinquishing command to another agency (i.e. Durham County Emergency Management or Durham County Search and Rescue Team), will be responsible for the search operation and the coordination of all personnel and agencies involved, and will determine when to terminate the operation.

## **FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION**

All complaints of missing persons will be referred to the Criminal Investigations Division for follow-up investigation when all attempts to locate the individual, as previously outlined, have failed or other compelling circumstances exist. Assigned investigators will be responsible for following up on missing or runaway juveniles. If the circumstances surrounding a missing juvenile are suspicious in nature or it is determined that the juvenile is subject to a known risk of serious injury or death, follow-up responsibilities may be transferred to the Homicide/Violent Crimes Unit. The Homicide/Violent Crimes Unit is responsible for the follow-up regarding adult missing persons.

Once the case has been assigned to an investigator, he or she shall contact the reporting person as soon as possible. The investigator will ensure that the reporting person is given telephone numbers and other contact information so that they may report additional information or receive information concerning the status of the

case.

In compliance with N.C.G.S. § [143B-1015 \(c\)](#), the assigned investigator will ensure that information is entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) regarding a missing person or child who has been missing for more than 90 days and regarding an unidentified person who has not been identified for more than 90 days.

## FOUND PERSONS

An officer or investigator who locates an individual who has been reported missing shall:

- Attempt to locate and contact the reporting person or a responsible person (such as a relative) to whom the found person may be released;
- If the individual has been entered into NCIC/DCI, ensure the found individual is removed in accordance with regulations and procedures established by these respective systems;
- Notify the Public Affairs Unit;
- If circumstances cause the officer or investigator to believe that releasing the person would not be in the person's best interest, return the person to his/her home, transport to a medical facility, or contact the Department of Social Services, as reasonably appropriate.

In the case of a found juvenile, the responding officer will take a juvenile into protective custody and notify their immediate supervisor when any of the following circumstances are believed to exist:

- The youth is mentally incapacitated and not able to care for him/herself;
- The youth is dependent on medications or other drugs and may be in physical danger if not detained;
- The youth appears to be a victim of foul play, violence, or abuse;
- The youth is in an environment "dangerous" to the youth based on the age and development of the child.

If an officer is notified that a missing person or child who has been entered into NCIC/DCI has been located, the following will be done:

- The responding officer will not request removal from NCIC/DCI until a law enforcement officer has made face-to-face contact with the missing/located person. A supplemental report will be submitted in accordance with [G.O. 4028 Report Writing](#) documenting:
  - When and where the person was originally located;
  - Location where face-to-face contact was made by the officer (if different from where the person was originally reported to have been located);
  - Any observations about the missing/located person's condition; and
  - The NIC number provided by DCI.
- When face-to-face contact cannot be achieved, a Watch Commander or above may authorize the removal of the missing/located person from NCIC/DCI. A supplemental report will be submitted in accordance with [G.O. 4028 Report Writing](#) documenting the efforts made by the officer to make contact with the person.
- Notify the Public Affairs Unit.



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PATRICE V. ANDREWS  
CHIEF OF POLICE