



# GOODYEAR POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure Manual

## POLICY 3.14 MISSING PERSONS

Effective:  
03/24/2023

Replaces:  
08/26/2022

Approved:  


### 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. This policy describes the procedure for acceptance, reporting, documenting and investigating missing persons. Federal law under 42 USC 5779(a) specifies certain requirements relating to missing persons.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

1. ABDUCTED CHILD - the unauthorized seizure of a minor under the age 18 from the custody of the child's natural parents or legally appointed guardians.
2. MISSING CHILD - A person under the age of 21 years whose location has not been determined and who has been reported as missing, abducted, lost or a runaway (ARS §15-829(D)(2) and (ARS § 36-339(D)(2)).
3. MISSING PERSON - A person 21 years old or older whose disappearance is possibly not voluntary.
4. OVERDUE PARTY - Persons known to be traveling within or through Arizona and have not reached their destination at the predetermined time.

### 3. REPORT ACCEPTANCE

1. All personnel shall accept any report of a missing person (as defined above), including runaways, without delay and shall give priority to the handling of these reports over the handling of reports relating to crimes involving property. Missing person reports shall be taken on missing persons regardless of jurisdiction. These reports shall be made in person and not by telephone, when possible.
2. Patrol personnel should handle the initial missing person report, and all such reports will be routed for Criminal Investigations Division review. Department personnel shall promptly assist any person who is attempting to make a report of a missing person or runaway. In cases involving a person missing under suspicious circumstances or a child under 14-years of age, the Criminal Investigations Division will begin an investigation after an initial search by patrol personnel.
3. The record of a missing person over the age of 21 may be entered into the Arizona Criminal Justice Information System (ACJIS) Missing Person File provided that signed documentation (Missing Person Report Form) has been obtained that supports the stated conditions under which the person was declared missing, as required by ACJIS Chapter 17, Section 2.2. A signed report by the investigating officer shall suffice in the absence of documentation of a parent, legal guardian, next-of-kin, physician or other authoritative source, including a friend or neighbor in unusual circumstances or when the documentation is not reasonably attainable.
4. In all cases involving a person missing under suspicious circumstances or a child under 14 years of age, the handling employee shall ensure that the Watch Commander and appropriate Criminal Investigations Division supervisor are notified. This Department shall not delay any reporting, investigation or action upon receipt of a report of a missing child under 14-years of age and shall evaluate all information and circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the child to determine whether immediate action is necessary.
5. When the totality of the circumstances indicates that the reported person is voluntarily absent, a missing person information report may be completed without a missing persons NCIC/ACIC entry. Consider completing an overdue party ACIC entry, if it meets the definition listed above.

#### 4. INITIAL RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION

1. Patrol personnel should be assigned to handle the initial missing person report and to conduct a preliminary investigation involving additional resources as necessary.
2. The handling officer shall immediately contact such persons and, using interpretive services as reasonably necessary, make inquiries concerning the missing person and make an assessment of reasonable steps to be taken to locate the person.
3. Initial investigation should include (if possible):
  - A. Interviewing the person(s) who made the initial report. If the missing person is a child, the child's parent or guardian.
  - B. Determining when, where and by whom the missing person was last seen.
  - C. Interviewing the individuals who last had contact with the person.
  - D. Obtaining a detailed description of the missing person, abductor, vehicles and other pertinent information.
  - E. Complete the Missing Person Report Form and Release for Medical Records Form, on all Missing Person / Runaway reports, and forward to Records to be scanned into the original report.
4. Entry
  - A. A copy of the Missing Person Report Form will promptly be forwarded to Telecommunications for ACJIS entry.
    1. The ACJIS entry will flag the missing person's name and any vehicles associated with that person.
  - B. When a missing person is under the age of 21, Telecommunications shall enter the subject into ACJIS/NCIC & the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS) within two hours after the initial call for service (42 USC §5779(a) and 34 USC § 41308; ARS 8-901).
  - C. When a juvenile is in the foster care system, the case officer shall notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at <https://cmfc.missingkids.org/ReportHere>, which can be accessed through the NCMEC "Tagged With" box.
  - D. The assigned Detective will verify and update the above entries within 30 days.
    1. This will be documented in either Activity Notes or through a supplemental report with further case information.
  - E. No entry will be removed from any database until the child is found or the case is resolved.

#### 5. INVESTIGATIVE DILIGENCE

1. If an initial investigation reveals that a person reasonably appears to be missing, further actions may be necessary. Determine from the information available whether a physical search is appropriate. In circumstances that appear to be an endangered missing person or missing children, each of the following actions should be performed:
  - A. Notify immediately such persons and make inquiries concerning the missing person as necessary.
  - B. Make an assessment of reasonable steps to be taken to locate the person.
  - C. If a search is warranted, conduct a search of the home, building or other area/location where the incident took place and conduct a search including all surrounding areas. Obtain consent or a search warrant if necessary.
  - D. If a search is not warranted or does not recover the missing person, additional investigation may be warranted:
    1. A neighborhood / vehicle canvas.
    2. Identification of persons at the scene and conducting separate interviews.

3. Documentation of actions, telephone communications and other activities.
4. Assigning an investigator or officer whose duties will include coordination of the investigation.
5. Involvement of media coverage through the Department PIO.
6. If the missing person is under 14-years of age or there is evidence the person is missing under suspicious circumstances the following should be initiated:
  1. Communications Section shall broadcast over the radio or send a mobile computer "be on the lookout" transmission without delay within this jurisdiction.
  2. Watch Commander shall enter the information in to Web Briefing notes.
  3. Criminal Investigations shall create a "BOLO" sheet for dissemination to local agencies.
2. In any case where a missing child or missing person has been missing for 30 days or more, the investigator handling the case may request the written consent of the next of kin or guardian to obtain certain identifying information about the missing person that the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) recommends be provided from the appropriate providers of medical care. After receiving the written consent, the investigator shall obtain the identifying information from the providers of medical care and forward that information and any other relevant information to NCIC for comparison with the identifying information that is on file concerning unidentified deceased persons.
3. The agency having jurisdiction over the missing person's residence normally will handle the case after the initial report is taken. However, Department members may assist in the investigation on a person who was last seen in this jurisdiction.
  - A. INVESTIGATIVE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
    1. Additional support, investigative and supervisory assistance should be requested as reasonably necessary. Any support assistance should be properly briefed and updated on the investigation status.
    2. The handling investigator is responsible for seeing that all appropriate law enforcement agencies in the state are promptly notified. If deemed appropriate, law enforcement agencies in adjacent states or jurisdictions should be provided with any information that may aid in the location and return of the missing or endangered person.
  - B. ENDANGERED PERSON ALERT SYSTEM
    1. The Department shall notify the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) to initiate the Endangered Person Alert System with local or statewide broadcasts if the following criteria are met:
      1. The missing person is 21 years old or older.
      2. The person is missing under unexplained, involuntary or suspicious circumstances.
      3. The person is believed to be in danger of death or serious injury because of health, a medically diagnosed mental or physical disability, hazardous environmental or weather conditions, being in the company of a potentially dangerous person or facing some other factor that may put him/her in peril.
      4. Information exists and the initial investigation indicates that the public could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.
    2. A photograph of the missing person and/or suspect should be sent via e-mail as soon as possible to DPS (dutyoffice@azdps.gov). Requests to initiate an endangered person alert can be made by calling the DPS Duty Office (602-223-2444).
    3. The Public Information Officer or a designee shall be notified to coordinate communications with the media. The Public Information Officer should be constantly

updated to utilize the media as much as possible and receive the maximum exposure for the case.

**C. INVESTIGATION DUTY OF A MISSING CHILD**

1. Upon receiving and verifying a report of a missing child, other than a child who has run away, the Goodyear Police Department shall immediately enter the information into the ACJIS and the NCIC missing person databases (ARS § 8-810(B)). The Department shall ensure that the state registrar in the state of the child's birth is given notification to flag the child as missing on his/her birth certificate (ARS § 36-339).
2. If a child is reported missing by his/her parent or guardian, the Department shall notify as soon as appropriate the school the child was attending or the county school superintendent if the child was being instructed at home to flag the child's records pursuant to ARS §15-829(A).
3. In conducting an investigation of a missing child, this department shall:
  1. Conduct a preliminary investigation and classify the cause of the disappearance of the child as "runaway," "abducted by parent," "abducted by a stranger" or "cause of disappearance unknown," and shall:
    - a. Relay applicable information to Telecommunications for entry into ACJIS Missing Persons File.
    - b. Immediately notify such persons and make such inquiries concerning the missing child as necessary.
    - c. Fully comply with the requirements of the National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990, Title XXXVII of Public Law 101647, 104 Stat. 4966.
    - d. Enter into NCIC's Missing Person File and the ACIC database as miscellaneous information any person reasonably believed to have unlawfully abducted or detained the missing child, or aided or abetted the unlawful abduction or detention.
  2. Immediately provide NCIC, for entry into its Wanted Person File, any warrant information for the arrest of a person suspected in the child's disappearance or concealment. This includes any identifying and descriptive information concerning:
    - a. The suspect.
    - b. As miscellaneous information, the missing child.
  3. Query the missing person in ACJIS/NCIC for possible match in the Missing Persons file.
  4. When a missing child is less than 16 years of age or has not been located within 30 days after a report is filed, the assigned investigator shall:
    - a. Review the case and send to the child's parent or guardian a request for certain identifying information regarding the child recommended by NCIC.
    - b. Upon receipt of identifying information, transmit all information to NCIC and ACIC.
  5. Upon notice by a parent or guardian that a child reported as missing has been found or returned, this department shall notify NCIC and ACIC.

**D. PUBLIC AND AMBER ALERTS**

1. The Chief of Police shall designate a Public Alert Reporting Officer who is responsible for:
  1. Remaining familiar with the protocols for activating, maintaining and cancelling all applicable public alerts.
  2. Activating, maintaining and cancelling all public alerts.
  3. Being the point of contact with the Arizona AMBER Alert Oversight Committee.

4. Ensuring the Department has AMBER Alert plan representatives who have completed appropriate training. Training may be provided by the Arizona Department of Public safety (DPS) or suggested by the Arizona AMBER Alert Oversight Committee.
2. The Arizona AMBER Alert is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and local broadcasters to rapidly disseminate an emergency alert to the public when a child is abducted or missing under emergency circumstances and the child may be in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
3. Certain criteria must exist before an AMBER Alert™ will be issued.
  1. An abduction of a child (under 18) has occurred.
  2. The abduction poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily injury or death to the child.
  3. The child is not a runaway and has not been abducted as a result of a child custody dispute, unless the dispute poses a credible or specific threat of serious bodily injury or death to the child.
  4. There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, abductor and the circumstances surrounding the abduction to indicate that an AMBER Alert will locate the child and/or suspect.
  5. There is information available to disseminate to the general public, which could assist in the safe recovery of the child and/or the apprehension of the suspect.

E. AMBER ALERT PROCEDURES

1. An employee who received a report of an abduction of a child should advise the Public Alert Reporting Officer or the authorized designee without delay. The Public Alert Reporting Officer will review the information to ensure that alert criteria are met and will be responsible for:
  1. Calling the AMBER Alert Hotline at the Arizona DPS Duty Office.
  2. Calling the appropriate AMBER Alert broadcast station and provide the necessary information to activate the EAS.
  3. Entering the appropriate information into the AMBER Alert System.
  4. The information entered in to the system may be updated by DPS or the Public Alert Reporting Officer.
  5. Promptly entering the missing child and crucial information surrounding the AMBER Alert and an AMBER Alert flag into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.
  6. Promptly forwarding the alert information to all Arizona law enforcement agencies through the Arizona Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (ALETS) or other appropriate database.
  7. Ensuring that the appropriate telephone numbers for contact and follow-up are entered, including:
    - a. A telephone number for the public to provide tips and information on the missing child.
    - b. A confidential number restricted to other law enforcement agencies and the media to contact the Public Information Officer for follow-up and updates as an alternative to the 9-1-1 system.
2. Obtaining a photograph of the missing person and/or suspect as soon as practicable and disseminating it to the appropriate entities.
3. The Public Information Officer should be constantly updated in order to utilize the media as much as possible and obtain the maximum exposure for the case.

4. Involved personnel will continually provide the Public Alert Reporting Officer or the authorized designee and the Public Information Officer with any updated information.

## **6. CHILD ABDUCTION RESPONSE TEAM (CART)**

1. CART members are authorized to investigate the abduction or endangerment of children in the State of Arizona upon the request of a sheriff, police chief, administrator of law enforcement agency, or the State Attorney or designee. The CART members will be comprised of various law enforcement and civilian employees and volunteers as part of a Mutual Aid Agreement between the participation agencies.
2. The occurrence of any of the following predicate incidents may initiate investigative and forensic involvement, assistance or coordination by the CART members:
  - A. The non-family abduction of a minor child (under the age of 18); or
  - B. The abduction of a minor child (under the age of 18) with endangerment circumstances. These circumstances must clearly be articulated to the CART Coordinator in order to activate the team members. The child's disappearance or abduction shall meet the endangerment criteria if the child's life or well-being is perceived to be at-risk (due to violence or health conditions), or if the identified parental abductor has a potential for violence or could endanger the child; or
  - C. Any other abduction or missing child investigation that requires immediate response in order to protect the wellbeing of the child. All incidents at this level shall require the approval of the CART Coordinator or his/her designee.
3. To initiate a request for assistance, the responding law enforcement agency Incident Commander will contact Dispatch and request a CART callout. Dispatch will immediately notify the CART Coordinator (note in some instances, this role may be conducted by the same person.) The On Scene CART Coordinator will contact the Incident Commander and they will jointly determine if the abduction circumstances warrant a CART response and the CART resources that need to be deployed.
  - A. The CART Coordinator will make the notification to CART members.
  - B. The On Scene CART Coordinator will meet with the CART members and review the response plan and deploy accordingly.
  - C. The Incident Commander and the On Scene CART Coordinator will jointly determine initial response needs, changes in response needs, and the duration of the CART response. The On Scene CART Coordinator will oversee CART.
  - D. The On Scene CART Coordinator will reserve the right to modify or terminate the CART response if the evolving situation is deemed to no longer warrant a CART response.
  - E. When the Dispatch receives a request from the Incident Commander for a CART callout, Dispatch will relay all necessary details to the CART Coordinator.
  - F. Additionally, the Communication Center will coordinate the Amber Alert request in accordance with this policy and procedures as it relates to the activation of an Amber Alert. All coordination will include the immediate contact of the appropriate level for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

## **7. REPORT HANDLING**

1. Missing person reports require special handling and timely notifications. At any time a missing person report is made the officer, if applicable, shall complete a medical records release form that will be provided to the reporting party. If the form is properly endorsed, the completed form shall be attached to the missing person report.
2. Any time dental or medical records are obtained, a copy of the records shall be sent to the Investigation Division of DPS and to ACIC by the handling officer or detective.

3. Information that is not immediately available, is obtained later or updated shall be documented in a supplemental report to the original, as required. Entry into the Attorney General's Clearinghouse database, ACIC and NCIC databases shall be conducted as soon as reasonably possible.
4. TRANSMITTING REPORTS TO OTHER JURISDICTIONS
  - A. When the Goodyear Police Department takes a missing person report on a person who lives outside of this jurisdiction, the assigned Detective shall promptly notify and forward a copy of the report to the agency having jurisdiction over the missing person's residence and the agency where the person was last seen. If the missing person is under 21 or there is evidence that the person may be at risk, the reports must also be forwarded within no more than 24 hours to the jurisdiction of the agency where the missing person was last seen.

## **8. MISSING PERSON LOCATED**

1. The investigation may be concluded when the missing person is located or when another agency accepts the case and formally assumes the investigative responsibilities.
  - A. Located missing persons shall be verified in person prior to removing from NCIC/ACIC.
  - B. If the missing person is located in another jurisdiction an agency assist will be requested to verify the recovery.
2. When this department discovers a missing person has been found, Telecommunications shall update the record in NCIC.
3. If a missing child under the age of 18 is located, the detective or officer must ensure that both the state registrar and county school superintendent are notified to remove the flag that the child is missing from the child's records (ARS § 36-339(B) and ARS § 15-829(C)).
4. If a missing person under the age of 21 is located, the detective or officer must ensure that the missing person is cleared as soon as recovery is confirmed.
5. The Criminal Investigations Division Lieutenant or designee shall ensure that the Endangered Person Alert System is cancelled by calling Arizona DPS emergency number (877-767-2385) and reporting the outcome of the case.