

	Greenville, SC Police Department		
	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b>		
<b>Subject</b> Missing Persons-	<b>Number</b> 242A8	<b>Type</b> Operational	
<b>Effective Date</b> 2/2/2024	<b>Amends/ Rescinds</b> 242A7	<b>Pages</b> 1 of 10	<b>Re-evaluation</b> Annual-September
<b>References</b> CALEA 41.2.5; 41.2.6; 44.2.2			<b>Notes</b> Added Missing Person Checklist to definitions. Update wording in Section 5.1.9.

## 1.0 POLICY

The Greenville Police Department considers the disappearance of a child to be an investigative priority whether it is a result of unknown circumstances, a runaway incident or a non-family abduction. While each of these incidents has the potential for harm, the non-family abduction is the one that experience has shown will most likely result in the injury, sexual assault and/or death of the child. In the case of a non-family abduction, or any missing-critical incident, the Greenville Police Department will place the highest priority on responding to and investigating the incident. Department response will utilize available resources to respond in a manner to maximize the chance for the safe return of the child or missing person. For any missing person incident, the following broad steps should be taken:

- A report will be filed even if there is a question as to jurisdiction if it is reported to the department.
- Determine the status of the missing person and if the person qualifies as “missing critical”;
- Notify Communications who will make necessary notifications and broadcasts;
- Request additional resources as needed depending upon the circumstances of the incident;
- Ensure that all information is entered, and updated, in regional and national databases such as NCIC;
- Activate the AMBER Alert System if appropriate.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

**AMBER Alert System:** A statewide system for public notification in cases of abducted children or adults under special circumstances. The system uses a combination of public broadcast, traffic alert signs, and other forms of public notification to make the public aware of an abducted child and suspect description.

**Endangered Person Notification System (EPNS):** The purpose of the Endangered Person Notification System is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or some other cognitive impairment.

**Family Abduction:** A non-custodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court ordered custody arrangement.

**Lost or Otherwise Missing:** A child who becomes separated from parents or caretakers under circumstances not indicating the likelihood of an abduction or voluntary absence.

**Missing-Critical:** See definition provided in section 3.3.

**Missing Person Checklist:** An automated checklist used to enter, remove or update information for NCIC Entry of Missing Persons.

**NCIC:** National Crime Information Center. A computerized database managed by the FBI for law enforcement information.

**NCIC Worksheet:** A form used to enter, remove or update information in the NCIC system.

**Non-Family Abduction:** A child is taken by an unknown individual, through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.

**Runaway:** Most often a teenager, who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.

**Thrown Away:** A child whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child who has run away, or who has been abandoned or deserted.



### 3.0 REPORTING/CLASSIFICATION OF MISSING PERSONS

3.1 There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person. Missing person reports will be taken in-person or by telephone in conformance with the criteria of this policy and the criticality of the incident.

3.2 A person may be declared "missing" when his/her whereabouts is unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the subject's behavior patterns, plans or routines.

3.3 An individual may be considered "missing-critical" who meets the following criteria and who, among other possible circumstances:

- May be the subject of foul play;
- Because of age (young or old), may be unable to properly safeguard or care for him/herself;
- Suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated or unattended;
- Is a patient of a mental institution and is considered potentially dangerous to him/herself or others;
- Has demonstrated the potential for suicide;
- May have been involved in a boating, swimming or other sporting accident or natural disaster.

3.4 Reports of juveniles who have voluntarily left home (i.e., "runaways") should be classified as such only after thorough investigation.

3.5 Based on 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.

3.6 Initial Report Taking:

3.6.1 The initial report taker must gather as much pertinent information as possible in order to properly classify a missing person report and initiate proper response. This includes the following information:



- Name, age and physical description of the subject and relationship of the reporting party to the missing person;
  - Time and place of last known location and the identity of anyone accompanying the subject;
  - The extent of any search for the subject;
  - Whether the subject has been missing on prior occasions and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits or plans;
  - Whether the individual has been involved recently in domestic incidents; suffered emotional trauma or life crises; demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior; is dependent on drugs or alcohol or has a history of mental illness;
  - The current physical condition of the subject and whether the person is currently on prescription medication.
- 3.6.2 If the missing person is a child, inquiry should also determine if the child;
- Is or may be with any adult who could cause him/her harm;
  - May have been the subject of a parental abduction;
  - Has previously run away from home, has threatened to do so or has a history of explainable or unexplainable absences for extended periods of time.
- 3.6.3 The FBI has established a two (2) hour time frame to enter missing persons into NCIC from the time enough information is obtained to complete an initial NCIC entry. This can be from the initial call into Communications or once officers arrive at the location.
- 3.6.4 The Operations supervisor and the Investigations duty supervisor or the detective that is on-call will be notified immediately upon classification of a report as "missing-critical."
- 3.6.5 In addition to the procedures outlined in this policy the Greenville Police Department will utilize the "Child Abduction Response



Plan” provided by the FBI as an aid in child abduction and human trafficking cases.

#### 4.0 **AMBER ALERT**

4.1 Criteria for activation of the AMBER Alert System: The AMBER Alert System will be activated as soon as an abduction is reported and there is a determination that all of the following criteria have been met:

4.1.1 The child is seventeen (17) years of age or younger and there is reasonable belief that the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death. If the person is eighteen (18) years of age or older and there is reasonable belief that the person is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death because the person possesses a physical or mental disability;

4.1.2 There is reasonable belief that the child has been abducted;

4.1.3 All other possibilities for the victim’s disappearance have been reasonably excluded;

4.1.4 There is sufficient information to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the victim, suspect, and/or vehicle used in the abduction.

4.2 Activation of the AMBER Alert System: The following procedures must be followed to activate the AMBER Alert System:

4.2.1 The Greenville Police Department has designated the following ranking officers, at a minimum, as authorized contacts for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) AMBER Alert System:

- Division Commanders
- Criminal Investigations Supervisors
- Lieutenants

4.2.2 When the designated officer has confirmed that criteria for activation of the AMBER Alert System have been met he/she will contact SLED Headquarters at the South Carolina Clearinghouse at (800) 322-4453 to report the abduction.



- 4.2.3 The designated officer must then fax the completed South Carolina AMBER Alert Notification Form and a photograph to (803) 896-7041.
- 4.2.4 The Chief of SLED or designee will disseminate the information over the AMBER Alert System to law enforcement agencies, media, Department of Transportation for activation of the traffic advisory signs, etc. This will include public notification every fifteen minutes for three hours.
- 4.2.5 Eight (8) hours after initial activation any updates or cancellations should be made directly to the South Carolina Clearinghouse.
- 4.2.6 Once the child has been located or upon closure of the abduction case a completed AMBER Alert Notification Plan Cancellation Form should be faxed to SLED. SLED will then make the appropriate notifications.
- 4.2.7 After Action Review: Upon conclusion of an AMBER Alert (within one week) the standing South Carolina AMBER Alert Review Committee, composed of the AMBER Alert participants, will review the effectiveness of the alert to determine if any changes are needed to the system.

## 5.0 INVESTIGATION

- 5.1 The preliminary investigation is intended to gather additional information and to take those steps that will aid in the search for and location of a missing person. This includes gathering the following types of information and materials:
  - 5.1.1 Complete description of the subject and a recent photograph. This will be emailed to the [LEC@greenville.sc.gov](mailto:LEC@greenville.sc.gov) as soon as possible to help other responders attempt to locate.
  - 5.1.2 Details of any physical or emotional problems identified in the items listed in section 3.3 of this policy.
  - 5.1.3 Identity of the last person(s) to have seen the subject as well as friends, relatives, coworkers or associates who were or may have been in contact with the subject prior to disappearance.



- 5.1.4 Plans, habits, routines and personal interests of the subject including places frequented or locations of particular personal significance.
- 5.1.5 Indications of missing personal belongings, particularly money and other valuables.
- 5.1.6 Any suggestions of foul play or accident.
- 5.1.7 In the case of missing children, officers will be particularly cognizant of information that may suggest the potential for parental abduction or the possibility of stranger abduction, as well as:
- The presence of behavioral problems;
  - Past instances of running away;
  - Signs of an abusive home environment or dysfunctional family situation;
  - Whether the child is believed to be with adults who may pose a danger; and
  - The name and location of the school attended by the child and any persons who may be responsible for private transportation to and from the location.
- 5.1.8 When possible, officers should gain permission to search a missing child's home and school locker, as appropriate.
- 5.1.9 Upon verification of a missing person, the police employee taking the report will immediately make arrangements for the entry of the data about the missing person or missing child into the national missing persons file in accordance with criteria set forth by the FBI/NCIC.

Reporting personnel will fill out a Missing Persons Checklist to be used for the entry of the person into the NCIC once complete and accurate information has been obtained. The Missing Persons Checklist is sent through automated email to Communications for entry.



The NCIC worksheet will only be used as a backup. When it is used it will need to be forwarded to Communications immediately for entry.

5.1.10 In the case of persons designated as "missing- critical," a supervisory officer may direct that;

- The communications personnel broadcast to all persons on duty all information necessary to identify the missing person, and
- Request that the shift commander authorize mobilization of resources necessary for an area search.

5.2 Ongoing investigations of missing persons will be conducted by Investigative Services Personnel and should include, but should not be limited to the following actions and activities:

- 5.2.1 Request release of dental records and any fingerprints available.
- 5.2.2 Contact hospitals and the coroner's office as appropriate for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
- 5.2.3 Thoroughly check the location at which the missing person was last seen and conduct interviews as appropriate with persons who were with the individual or who may work in or frequent the area.
- 5.2.4 Conduct interviews with any additional family, friends, work associates, schoolmates and teachers as well as school counselors and social case workers, as appropriate, to explore the potential for foul play, voluntary flight, or, in the case of juveniles, parental kidnapping or running away.
- 5.2.5 Provide identification and related information to all elements of this agency, the state police missing persons' authority, neighboring police agencies and, if parental or stranger-to-stranger abduction is suspected, the FBI.
- 5.2.6 Decisions to use local media to help locate missing persons will be made with the approval of the duty commander and the missing person's family.
- 5.2.7 The lead investigator will maintain routine on-going contact with the missing person's closest relative concerning progress of the





investigation. These and other relevant individuals will be informed that they must notify the lead investigator as soon as any contact is made with the missing person.

## 6.0 RECOVERY OF MISSING PERSONS AND CASE CLOSURE

6.1 Competent adults, having left home for personal reasons, cannot be forced to return home. Officers locating such individuals will:

6.1.1 Advise them that they are the subject of a missing person investigation;

6.1.2 Ask if they desire the reporting party or next-of-kin to be notified of their whereabouts; and

6.1.3 Make provisions to transmit this information to the reporting party or next-of-kin if permitted by the missing person.

6.2 In all cases, reporting parties will be informed of the well-being of located missing persons. Unless criminal matters necessitate other action, desires of missing persons not to reveal their whereabouts will be honored.

6.3 Missing persons will be questioned to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and whether criminal activity was involved.

6.4 In cases involving juveniles, officers will ensure that;

6.4.1 The juvenile receives medical attention, if necessary, in a timely manner;

6.4.2 Initial questioning of the youth identifies the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance, any individuals who may be criminally responsible and/ or whether an abusive or negligent home environment was a contributory factor, and;

6.4.3 That parents, guardians and/or the person reporting the missing youth are notified in a timely manner.

6.5 Upon location of a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified or updated. A supplemental report will be filed relative to the cancellation; the NCIC worksheet for cancellation must be filed and given to Communications to change the NCIC notice.



- 6.6 Where indicated, follow-up action will include filing of an abuse and neglect report with DSS (Department of Social Services).
- 6.7 The case report will include a complete report on the whereabouts, actions and activities of children while missing.
- 6.8 Where indicated, criminal charges will be filed with the solicitor's office.
- 7.0 Additional South Carolina Alerts

- 7.1 The Blue Alert Program, established within SLED, has created a mechanism to rapidly communicate extremely important information to the general public and law enforcement to aid in the identifying, locating and capturing of the offender(s). Through voluntary partnerships with the South Carolina broadcasters, South Carolina Department of Transportation, and other organizations, the Blue Alert Program may increase the chances of rapidly capturing the offender(s) or locating the abducted person, which can result in a higher level of public safety.

In a Blue Alert event, if the offender(s) is seen or if anyone has knowledge of identity of the offender(s), the public is warned to take caution and to immediately call 911 to provide information to the investigating law enforcement agency.

- 7.2 The Endangered Person Notification System (EPNS) provides a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or some other cognitive impairment. If the Missing Person Information Center (MPIC) at SLED received a report that involves a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or some other cognitive impairment, for the protection of the person from potential abuse or other physical harm, neglect or exploitation, the center shall issue a notification providing for the appropriate dissemination of information regarding the person. *The request has to be from a law enforcement agency.*

There must be sufficient information to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the missing person: such as photographs and confirmed vehicle/tag information. With this information, SLED will activate the use of the statewide dynamic message signs to aid in location efforts of the missing person.

DocuSigned by:

*J. H. Thompson*

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J. H. Thompson, Chief of Police

2/2/2024

Date



*The Greenville, SC Police Department- An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency*