

Greer Police Department

General Order 550.1 Missing Persons – Adults/Children

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY STATEMENT
- II. DEFINITIONS
- III. INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-
MISSING ADULTS
- IV. FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-
MISSING ADULTS
- V. INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-
MISSING CHILDREN
- VI. ACTIVATION OF A CHILD IS MISSING
PROGRAMS
- VII. ACTIVATION OF AMBER ALERT
- VIII. FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-
MISSING CHILDREN
- IX. CLOSURE/CANCELLATION-ADULTS/CHILDREN

By Order of: *Matt Hamby*
Chief of Police

March 21, 2023

CALEA 41.2.5; 41.2.6

I. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. It shall be the policy of this agency to thoroughly investigate all reports of missing persons. Additionally this agency holds that every person reported as missing will be considered **at risk** until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.
- B. Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided when a person is reported missing. If a missing person either resides in, or was last seen in this jurisdiction, this agency will immediately initiate the required reporting process. If a missing person legally resides in this jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, but the law-enforcement agency covering that jurisdiction chooses not to take a missing-person report, this agency will assume reporting and investigative responsibility.
- C. Questions concerning parental custody occasionally arise in relation to missing-child reports. It shall be the policy of this agency to accept the report of a missing child even if custody has not been formally established. Reporting parties shall be encouraged to obtain legal custody as soon as possible; however, since the safety of the missing child (ren) is paramount, members of this agency will open a case when it can be shown that the child is missing, without explanation, from his or her usual place of residence.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. The term **missing adult** refers to a person who is
 - 1. 18 years of age or older and
 - 2. Whose absence is contrary to his or her normal patterns of behavior and may be due to one or more of the unusual circumstances listed in Paragraph C of this section
- B. The term **missing child** refers to a person who is
 - 1. Younger than 18 years of age and
 - 2. Whose whereabouts are unknown to his or her parent, guardian, or responsible party
- C. Family Abduction- a non-custodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court ordered custody arrangement.
- D. Non-Family Abduction- A child who is taken by an unknown individual, through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.
- E. Runaway- Most often a teenager, who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.
- F. Thrownaway- A child whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child who has runaway, or who has been abandoned or deserted.
- G. A missing adult or child will be considered **“at-risk”** when one or more **unusual circumstances** are present. The term **unusual circumstances** refers to:
 - 1 A missing child 13 years of age or younger.

2. A child or an adult who is missing and believed to be one or more of the items noted below.
 - a. Out of the zone of safety for his or her age and physical and mental condition. The zone of safety will vary depending on age. In the case of an infant, for example, the zone of safety will include the immediate presence of an adult custodian or the crib, stroller, or carriage in which the infant was placed. For a school-aged child the zone of safety might be the immediate neighborhood or route taken between home and school. In the case of an elderly person of diminished physical and/or mental health, the zone of safety might include the close proximity and availability of a caregiver familiar with that individual's condition and needs.
 - b. Mentally diminished. If the person is developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed, or the victim of disease, he or she may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address. The disability places the person in danger of exploitation or other harm.
 - c. Drug dependent. In the case of a child, the term "drug dependent" shall refer to dependence on either prescription or illicit substances, since any drug dependency puts a child at substantially increased risk. In the case of an adult, the term "drug dependent" shall refer to a dependence on legally prescribed medicines vital to the adult's continued physical well-being.
 - d. A potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.
 - e. In a life-threatening situation and/or has demonstrated a potential for suicide.
 - f. Absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing. While some persons may incorrectly assume that 24 hours must pass before law enforcement will accept a missing-person case, a delay in reporting might also indicate the existence of neglect or abuse within the family.
 - g. Believed to be with persons who could endanger his or her welfare.
 - h. Is absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior.
3. Incidents involving any of the above criteria require immediate notification of the on-duty supervisor. The supervisor shall then contact the LOD and take the necessary steps to begin an immediate search. If applicable, the inclusion of other agencies such as local fire departments and adjoining sheriff's offices and the resources that they may provide will occur. The PIO will be consulted to determine the need for media involvement.

III. INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-MISSING ADULTS

- A. When a patrol officer is dispatched to a missing adult call, the officer will:
 1. Make personal contact with the complainant.
 2. Conduct a preliminary investigation. Identify the circumstances of the disappearance.

3. Place a BOLO in the following circumstances on the Greer Channel and with both Spartanburg and Greenville Counties unless there is reliable information that the missing person is no longer in the Upstate:
 - a. The missing adult is senile;
 - b. The missing adult is mentally deficient;
 - c. The missing adult is physically handicapped;
 - d. The missing adult is suicidal;
 - e. Foul play is expected.
4. If a missing adult falls into any of the above listed circumstances, the Shift Supervisor will contact the Patrol Commander or Lieutenant on Duty regarding the search response.
5. Advise the complainant that the case will be assigned to the Criminal Investigation Division. Further advise the complainant that:
 - a. They will be contacted by the investigator assigned to the case;
 - b. They should contact the Communications Section if the missing person returns before they are contacted by an investigator.
6. Confer with the Patrol Squad Supervisor regarding sending a teletype if appropriate.
7. Write the initial report including, but not limited to:
 - a. Full description-attach a photograph (full face) when available.
 - b. Associates, places frequented, threats of violence, etc.
 - c. Whether a radio BOLO was placed.
 - d. The unit number of the dispatcher who made the SLED/NCIC entry.
 - e. Name of investigator notified when appropriate.
 - f. A statement regarding whether or not an NCIC entry was made.
8. Determine if a SLED/NCIC entry should be made. Such entry can only be made if the missing person falls into one or more of the following categories:
 - a. **Disability-** a person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - b. **Endangered-** a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.

- c. **Involuntary-** a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary, i.e., abduction or kidnapping.
- d. **Juvenile-** a person who is missing and declared not to be emancipated as defined by the laws of his/her state of residence and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in any of the above categories.
- e. **Catastrophe Victim-** a person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.

NCIC regulations mandate that a signed statement be provided to the police department taking the report to aid in the protection of the missing person's right to privacy. The requirements of the signed statement are accomplished by the information supplied to law enforcement by the complainant. The original report will be supplied to communications for NCIC entry.

If the missing person does not fit into any of the entry categories, no NCIC entry will be made. A statement in the report will indicate that no entry was made (for example- "The subject does not meet the entry criteria for NCIC, therefore, no computer entry was made").

IV. FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-MISSING ADULTS

- A. The CID Commander or his designee will review the report and assign the case for follow-up investigation in compliance with the provisions of General Order 530.1, Criminal Investigations.
- B. The investigator assigned to the case will re-evaluate the NCIC entry criteria and determine whether or not an entry is appropriate. The investigator will complete and submit the NCIC Worksheet, if applicable.
- C. The investigator assigned to the case will contact the complainant for additional information and continue to contact them with updates throughout the investigation.

V. INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-MISSING CHILDREN

When a child is reported missing, it is essential that law enforcement have a deliberate, quick response that, when necessary, rapidly allows an AMBER Alert and/or other high public notice such as "A Child is Missing", and an involvement plan to become operational. To reach this level of response, all reports of anyone under the age of eighteen (18) years missing from home, including runaway, abandoned, abducted or other missing status, will be entitled "Missing Child" and will follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

- A. Patrol Division Responsibility
 - 1. On receipt of a report regarding a missing child, the officer shall make immediate personal contact with the complainant and determine if:
 - a. The missing child has not been the subject of a prior missing person (runaway) report.
 - b. The missing child suffers from a mental or physical handicap or illness.

- c. The disappearance of the missing child is of a suspicious or dangerous nature.
 - d. The person filing the report of a missing child has reason to believe that the missing child may have been abducted.
 - e. The missing child has ever previously been the subject of a child abuse report filed with any law enforcement agency.
2. Upon conclusion by the officer that any of the above conditions exists, the officer shall immediately contact his/her Supervisor who will initiate appropriate intensive search procedures.
- a. Such procedures shall include but not be limited to:
 - (1) Thorough check of home, including any vehicles and outbuildings within the curtilage;
 - (2) Check youth congregating locations;
 - (3) Contact friends and/or relatives.
 - (4) The Squad Supervisor will advise the Patrol Commander or Lieutenant on Duty of the circumstances and the search process.
 - (5) See also section II. 3 of this General Order for search response.
 - b. Before tour of duty is completed:
 - (1) Provide NCIC and SLED information to Communications (complainant needs not complete the Missing Persons Attestment Statement as the missing person is a juvenile).
 - (2) Complete all reports and initiate appropriate teletype for missing children believed to be in a specific location outside the City of Greer. Furnish copy of report to Communications Section.
 - d. Enlist the aid of surrounding law enforcement agencies, as determined by the Patrol Shift Supervisor.
 - e. Advise the complainant that:
 - (1) The case will be assigned to an investigator from the Criminal Investigation Division.
 - (2) The Communications Section should be contacted if the missing child should return home before the complainant is contacted by an investigator.

B. Communications Section Responsibility

- 1. Determine who is missing. Name and relationship of the caller to missing party.
- 2. When person was last seen.
- 3. Brief description of missing party.

4. Description of abductors/suspect vehicles, if applicable.
5. Location where missing party was last seen.
6. Complete callback information.
7. Radio broadcast information if applicable.
8. Enter SLED/NCIC information as soon as possible.
9. Assist with the notification of assisting agencies, if applicable.

C. Records Section Responsibility

Information relevant to missing children reported to the Greer Police Department will be forwarded each week by the Records Clerk to the Missing Person Information Center at SLED.

VI. ACTIVATION OF A CHILD IS MISSING PROGRAM

A. A Child is Missing is a program that generates automatic telephone calls to local residents and business upon the request of the Police Department when a child, elderly person, Alzheimer's patient or a disabled person believed to be in danger is reported and the following criteria is met.

1. When a missing child is:
 - a. Under the age of 17
 - b. Reporting person is parent, guardian or teacher of child
 - c. All runaway children
 - d. Stranger abductions (along with Amber Alert when qualified)
2. Elderly Person/Alzheimer's Patient
 - a. Over the age of 65 and being missing is out of character for person
 - b. All Alzheimer's patients regardless of age
 - c. Walk away from nursing facility
3. Disabled Person
 - a. No age limit on disabled person
 - b. Disabled is defined as:
 1. Person has a physical or mental impairment that severely limits self care, or
 2. Person is disoriented or unable to respond to simple questions regarding personal information such as name and address, or
 3. Person is dependent of life sustaining medication, or

4. The approving Supervisor may take into account other circumstances that may influence using ACIM even if the person is a habitual runaway or walk away. Examples of these circumstances are: suspected foul play, imminent severe weather, etc.

B. Using ACIM

1. As ACIM contacts all phones automatically in the area surrounding the last known location of the missing person, the following guidelines will be used.
 - a. Between the hours of 06:00 and 23:00 the on duty Supervisor will request Communications call ACIM.
 - b. Between the hours of 23:00 and 06:00, the on duty Supervisor will contact the Lieutenant on Duty for a determination if ACIM should be contacted immediately.
2. When the decision has been made to activate ACIM, the on duty Supervisor will request contact be made by Communications. Communications will be the contact number for the public to call with information. The number for ACIM is 1-888-875-2246 or page the operator at 1-954-492-4778.

C. Investigating information received for ACIM

1. Information received from a citizen concerning the missing person or a possible sighting of the missing will be relayed to the Supervisor. If a sighting of the missing person is confirmed, but the person cannot be located, the Supervisor may want to consider the using ACIM again. The second telephone alert would use the most recent known location in the notification of the residents. The same report may be used for repeat alerts on the same case number, a notation for each subsequent use will include date, and time and location the missing person was last seen.
10. If the missing person is found, the Supervisor will advise Communications to notify ACIM. ACIM will be faxed a copy of all required reports by the OSD Lieutenant.

VII. ACTIVATION OF AMBER ALERT

The South Carolina AMBER Alert system has been created to quickly disseminate information on a missing and believed abducted person. Immediately upon receiving information that the child may have been abducted, the following criteria will be assessed.

- A. Only AMBER Alert designated officers may activate the AMBER Alert. Designated officers are those at the rank of Division Commander and above. The Chief of Police will be notified that the Amber Alert system is being activated through the proper chain of Command. The PIO will also be notified as to the activation. The required criteria for activating the system are:
 1. It is believed that the child has been abducted, that is, taken from their environment unlawfully, without authority of law, and without permission from the child's parent or legal guardian.
 2. The child is sixteen years or younger and it is believed that the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death; or if the individual is seventeen years old or

older and it is believed the individual is at greater risk for immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death because the individual possesses a proven physical or mental disability.

3. All other possibilities for the victim's disappearance have been reasonably excluded.
 4. There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the victim, suspect or vehicle used in the abduction.
- B. Upon verification that all the necessary criteria has been met, the on duty Supervisor will contact the Operational Support Commander, or the Lieutenant on Duty (LOD) in his absence with the information.
 - C. The Operational Support Commander or LOD will contact SLED to activate the Alert and forward the AMBER Alert Notification Form and a photograph of the victim to them. The form and photograph may be faxed to 803-896-7041.
 - D. If more information becomes available, the Operational Support Commander or LOD will forward the information to SLED on the SC AMBER Alert Update Form.
 - E. If the victim is located, the Operational Support Commander or LOD will forward a SC Amber Alert Cancellation Form to SLED immediately. All applicable Amber Alert forms referenced in C, D, and E of this section are found under Greer PD Forms in PowerDMS as well as the n-drive.

VIII. FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES-MISSING CHILDREN

- A. Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Responsibility
 1. Check reports daily to ascertain what missing children reports have been filed.
 2. Immediately contact complainant to:
 - a. Introduce self as investigating officer.
 - b. Ascertain the development of leads since original report was taken.
 3. Assume primary responsibility for search from Patrol Division personnel.
 4. Notify the appropriate local Department of Social Services and, to the extent possible, obtain any information that may assist in the location of the missing child.
 5. Explore all investigative leads regarding the location of the missing child.

IX. CLOSURE/CANCELLATION- ADULTS/CHILDREN

- A. Missing persons reports can only be closed by a sworn officer.
- B. The officer closing the case will:
 1. Verify the return and the identity of the missing person. (If the missing person is found in another jurisdiction, the officer can have the police department in that jurisdiction make the verification.)

2. Write a supplemental report including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Location where the subject was found;
 - b. Subject's physical and mental condition;
 - c. How identity was verified;
 - d. Synopsis of any criminal charges contemplated.
3. Cancel any teletypes, BOLO's or NCIC entries. Only the Operational Support Commander or LOD can cancel an AMBER Alert.
4. Notify the appropriate CID investigator.
5. Advise the original complainant of the relevant details of the case and the subject's location. Officers are cautioned in this regard that every case presents different problems and that discretion will be exercised where appropriate in furnishing information.
 - a. If it develops that the missing person has been the subject of foul play or has been located either deceased or in severely deteriorated physical or mental condition, personal contact will be made with the complainant.
 - b. In cases involving missing juveniles located outside the City of Greer, NCIC/SLED entries can only be cancelled upon their return to this jurisdiction. To accomplish this, officers will instruct the guardian to contact the Criminal Investigation Division when they return so the computer entries can be cancelled. Exceptions can be made when the juvenile's location and condition are verified by another police agency and the legal guardian grants permission for the child to remain at that location.
 - c. In all other cases, telephone contact will suffice.
6. Return any photographs in police possession to the owner.
7. If a missing child returns home and no foul play is suspected, the missing child can be cancelled as stated above in this section and only the appropriate supplement report is required. In the event the missing child is determined to be a runaway, the officer taking the child into custody will write the appropriate supplemental and related reports.