



Herndon Police Department GENERAL ORDERS

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I. POLICY

The department will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of missing persons (child or adult), determine classifying conditions, and initiate all required notifications and alerts. Reports of missing persons will be received without a required waiting period.

II. TERMINOLOGY

- Missing Child - under 21 years old, whose temporary or permanent residence is in or believed to be in Virginia, whose whereabouts are unknown to any parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis of the child and has been reported as missing to law enforcement. The circumstances of the missing child must be categorized under one of the following conditions to indicate the urgency, threat, and to justify an alert: **<41.2.6a>**
 - Disability - missing with proven physical/mental disability thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal or immediate danger.
 - Endangered - missing under circumstances that indicate physical safety is in danger.
 - Involuntary - missing under circumstances that indicate it was not voluntary.
 - Juvenile – missing child between the ages of 12-18 that does not meet the condition of disability, endangered, or involuntary.
 - Missing Young Adult – missing person, at least 18 years old but under 21, that does not meet the condition of disability, endangered, or involuntary.
- Missing Person (Adult) – over 21 years old, whose residence is in or believed to be in Virginia, whose whereabouts are unknown. The circumstances of the missing adult must be categorized under one of the following conditions to indicate the urgency, threat, and to justify an alert: **<41.2.5g>**
 - Disability - missing with proven physical/mental disability or senility thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal or immediate danger.
 - Endangered - missing under circumstances that indicate physical safety is in danger.
 - Involuntary - missing under circumstances that indicate it was not voluntary.
 - Catastrophe Victim – missing after a catastrophe.



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- Other – missing under circumstances where there is a reasonable concern for safety.
- Critically Missing Adult – a missing adult over 18 years old, including those with mental illness, a developmental or an intellectual disability, whose disappearance indicates a credible threat to their health and safety.

III. OVERVIEW

- A. The department will respond to missing person reports without delay, document the facts and circumstances, initiate an investigation, and attempt to locate the missing person. Urgent consideration will be given to reports where circumstances indicate that the missing person is in imminent danger or at risk. The department will endeavor to effectively ensure the following for missing person reports: **<41.2.6a>**

1. Receive missing person reports in-person, by phone, or other legitimate means.
2. Promptly respond to initiate a preliminary investigation and document the physical description, risk factors, and other pertinent information.
3. Conduct a competent search utilizing methods and available means to locate the missing person.
4. Maintain contact with family members or other points of contact throughout the investigation.
5. Fully utilize all agencies, information systems, or alerts to locate the missing person.

B. Missing Children **<41.2.6a>**

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-1718, **within two hours of receiving a report**, missing children must be entered into VCIN/NCIC, an SP 183 transmitted to the Virginia State Police Missing Children Information Clearinghouse, other area law-enforcement agencies notified, and an investigation of the case initiated.



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C. Missing Adults

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-1718.1,2, **within two hours of receiving a report**, critically missing adults and missing senior adults, who meet one of the defined categories of disability, endangered, or involuntary, must be entered into VCIN/NCIC, an SP 67 transmitted to the Virginia State Police Missing Person Information Clearinghouse, other area law-enforcement agencies notified, and an investigation of the case initiated.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES <41.2.6e>

Communications personnel, upon receiving a report of a missing person, shall:

1. Obtain basic facts, description, and any other pertinent details or applicable circumstances that could place the missing person in danger (such as medical conditions, disabilities, suspicious circumstances, abduction, etc.). <41.2.5a>
2. Expeditiously dispatch an officer to respond to the reporting person to initiate a preliminary investigation.
3. Confirm and disseminate description and known details of the missing person to patrol units and other local agencies - basic information should include the person's height, weight, complexion, hair color, clothing, location where person was last seen, and other known risk factors associated with the disappearance. <41.2.5b>
4. Enter the missing person into VCIN/NCIC, based on the information documented by the officer on the SP-183 (child) or SP-67 (adult). **Missing person reports must be entered into VCIN/NCIC, and the appropriate clearinghouse form (SP 183 or SP 67) submitted to the clearinghouse at the Virginia State Police within two hours of the initial report.** <41.2.5c, 41.2.6c>
5. If an alert (AMBER Alert, Autism Alert, Blue Alert, CODI Alert, Critically Missing Adult Alert, Senior Alert) is necessary, transmit the specific alert forms to the Virginia State Police. Alerts cannot be activated by the Virginia State Police without completion of the VCIN/NCIC entry, the submission of the



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clearinghouse form, and the specific alert request forms.

6. If an alert is accepted by the Virginia State Police, modify the VCIN/NCIC entry to reflect the update. Notify surrounding police jurisdictions as appropriate and anticipate increased calls from the public.
7. Upon closure, remove from VCIN/NCIC along with applicable alerts as appropriate. All lookouts, teletypes, or electronic messages shall be cancelled.
<41.2.5c>

B. RESPONDING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES **<41.2.6e>**

1. Interview the person making the initial report, identify the circumstances of the disappearance, and determine if the missing person is in immediate danger or at risk.
2. If the missing person (child or adult) meets the risk criteria of disability, endangered, or involuntary, update the Squad Supervisor as soon as possible.
<41.2.6b>
3. Obtain a detailed description of the missing person and other critical information by completing mandatory data elements provided on Form SP-183 *Virginia Missing Children Information Clearinghouse Report* for children, or Form SP-67 *Virginia Missing Person Information Clearinghouse Report* for adults. Ensure that the clearinghouse form is signed by an appropriate person (required for VCIN/NCIC entry). Obtain a photograph and any other available information that could help identify the missing person.
4. Confirm basic information such as description and circumstances of the missing person to Communications to disseminate to patrol units and other local agencies.
 - a. 5. Conduct a search, as circumstances dictate, which may include: Physical search and/or a neighborhood canvas.
 - b. Calls to institutions (schools, hospitals, detention centers, medical examiner, etc.)
 - c. Coordinate a forensic search of phone and social media.



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- d. Calls to family members, friends, coworkers, etc. **<41.2.5f>**
5. Ensure that missing persons are entered into VCIN/NCIC as soon as possible. This can be accomplished by providing required basic entry information to Communications via the MCT, radio, or telephone, completing Form SP-183 or SP-67 and ensuring it is transmitted to Virginia State Police **within the two-hour limit as required by law**. Alerts, if applicable, cannot be activated by the Virginia State Police without completion of these entries.
6. If the missing person meets the criteria for an alert, complete the alert request forms and notify the Squad Supervisor within the two-hour limit. Alert Plans with request forms are stored on the J:Drive under Herndon Police Directives/Missing Persons Guides.
7. Notify the youth resource officer and the principal of the school where the missing child is enrolled within 24 hours, or the next business day, pursuant to Code of Virginia § 52-31.1, if the missing person investigation is still active. The youth resource officer should work with school officials to obtain additional information (last known addresses, legal custodians, etc.) that may be helpful in the investigation. If the missing school-age person is not enrolled at a school within Herndon, the school official and/or the SRO at the last school attended should be notified.
8. Coordinate timely information and updates with the Squad Supervisor to monitor case status, as follows: **<41.2.6f>**
 - a. If the circumstances of a disappearance indicate an imminent danger and can be classified under disability, endangerment, or an involuntary condition, the case must be promptly assigned to Criminal Investigations.
 - b. If the missing person is not located, (child or adult) and missing for more than 2 days, the case must be reassigned to Criminal Investigations. *Officers must be mindful of this timeframe and ensure appropriate action as it may conflict with shift schedules and days off.*
9. It is the investigating officer's responsibility to ensure that missing persons are immediately removed from VCIN/NCIC after they have been located. Officers locating a missing person shall notify the reporting person and make all other appropriate notifications (Command, CIS, PIO, schools, etc.) All lookouts, teletypes, or electronic messages shall be cancelled.



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C. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES <41.2.6e>

1. Obtain briefing and information from the responding officer and Communications personnel.
2. Ensure responding officer duties are accomplished, and appropriate forms are completed within the prescribed timeframes.
3. Notify Criminal Investigations if the missing person can be classified under a disability, endangerment, or an involuntary condition. Make other notifications as appropriate.
4. If the missing person meets the criteria for an alert, follow the process to submit a request for a specific public alert and notify command staff.
5. Ensure that all necessary resources, equipment, and assistance are available to conduct an efficient investigation. Coordinate a systematic search of the last known location and include specialized resources if available.
6. Determine if outside resources are needed. (State Police, FBI, Specialized Units, other jurisdictions, etc.) Ensure coordination/cooperation among all personnel and outside agencies as appropriate.

D. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES<41.2.6e,f>

1. Missing persons determined to be in imminent danger or persons still missing for more than two days of the initial responding officer's report shall be assigned to Criminal Investigations for investigation. The assigned detective will become the new investigative contact.
2. Obtain a briefing from the responding officer and other on-scene personnel and contact the reporting person. Verify the accuracy of information developed from the responding officer during the preliminary investigation and gather additional information as needed.
3. Contact the reporting person to update them with the new assigned detective, status of the investigation, and any follow-up information requests.



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4. Obtain all pertinent and critical information to conduct an investigative follow-up. All investigative leads shall be pursued, and ongoing communication with the reporting person maintained until the investigation is concluded or the missing person is located. **<41.2.5e,f>**
5. Review and evaluate all available information and evidence collected.
6. Notify the FBI in a timely manner if a child, 12 or younger, has disappeared under mysterious circumstances and is determined to have been abducted. The FBI can assist in the investigation.
7. No later than 60 days after the original entry of the record into VCIN/NCIC or other local systems, verify and update such records with any additional information. The update should include, when available, specific identifying characteristics such as scars, marks and tattoos, fingerprints, known medications, or other helpful information.

V. ALERTS **<41.2.5d, 41.2.6d>**

Virginia State Police is responsible for activating missing person alerts based on specific criteria. Requesting activation of an alert encourages the broader public's assistance in locating missing persons deemed at risk. The following highlights the criteria for the available alerts through the Virginia State Police; however, process guides can be referenced on the J:Drive/Herndon Police Directives/Missing Persons Guides for detailed instructions and forms.

A. Autism Alert

1. Criteria:

- Applies to any missing person, any age, whose whereabouts are unknown.
- Diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.
- Disappearance poses a credible threat to their health and safety.

2. Conditions: Meets the DISABILITY condition on the SP-183 or SP-67.

3. Requirements: Must be entered into VCIN/NCIC missing person files and pertinent information submitted with the request for a *Missing Person with Autism Alert* through the Virginia State Police.



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B. AMBER Alert

1. Criteria:

- Applies to a child 17 years of age or younger, currently enrolled in a secondary school in Virginia.
- Child is believed to be abducted and in imminent danger or at risk of serious harm.
- Sufficient information is available to disseminate to the public to assist in locating the child, the suspect, and/or the suspect's vehicle.

2. Conditions: Meets the ENDANGERED or INVOLUNTARY conditions on the SP-183.

3. Requirements: Must be entered into VCIN/NCIC missing person files and pertinent information submitted with the request for an *AMBER Alert* through the Virginia State Police. If all criteria are not met, an *Endangered Missing Child Media Alert* may be issued instead.

C. CODI Alert

1. Criteria:

- Applies to children 17 years of age or younger, currently enrolled in a secondary school in Virginia, whose whereabouts are unknown.
- Disappearance is under suspicious circumstances or poses a credible threat to their safety and health.
- Circumstances as determined by law enforcement and deemed appropriate by the Virginia State Police.

2. The missing child alert does not meet a specific condition on the SP-183 but is believed that safety and health is threatened.

3. Requirements: Must be entered into VCIN/NCIC missing person files and pertinent information submitted with the request for a *CODI Alert* through the Virginia State Police.



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D. Senior Alert

1. Criteria:

- Applies to an adult 60 years of age or older, whose whereabouts are unknown.
- Suffers from cognitive impairment, including a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia, unable to care for themselves, and at risk for their health and safety.
- Sufficient information regarding the missing senior adult is available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the adult or their vehicle.

2. Conditions: The missing person meets the DISABILITY condition on the SP-67.

3. Requirements: Must be entered into VCIN/NCIC missing person files and pertinent information submitted with the request for a *Senior Alert* through the Virginia State Police. If all criteria are not met, a *Senior Alert* will not be activated, but the information can still be provided to the media.

E. Critically Missing Adult Alert

1. Criteria:

- Applies to adults 18 years of age or older whose whereabouts are unknown.
- Has a developmental disability, intellectual disability, or mental illness and the disappearance poses a credible threat to their health and safety.

2. Conditions: The missing person would meet the DISABILITY condition on the SP-67.

3. Requirements: Must be entered into VCIN/NCIC missing person files and pertinent information submitted with the request for a *Critically Missing Adult Alert* through the Virginia State Police. If all criteria are not met, a *Critically Missing Adult Alert* will not be activated, but the information can still be provided to the media.



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F. Blue Alert

1. Criteria: Applies to an officer who has been killed or seriously injured and the suspect has **not** been apprehended and poses a serious threat to the public, OR an officer is missing in the line of duty under circumstances that warrant concern for the officer's safety.
2. Requirements: Pertinent information submitted with the request for a *Blue Alert* through the Virginia State Police.