



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

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**Chapter:** Operations

**Section:** 406.13

**Subject:** Response to Selected Situations

**Topic:** Runaways and Follow up

**Accreditation:**

**Revised:**

**Reaffirmed:**

**Enacted:** 07/30/2015

**Last Review:** 07/24/2015

**Review:** 07/30/2016

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish basic policy and procedural guidelines regarding the proper handling of runaways and the subsequent follow-up investigation.

II. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to handle the report of a juvenile runaway with the primary concern being the child's safety and welfare.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Upon receiving a complaint of a runaway by the Emergency Communications Center, the nearest available patrol unit will be dispatched to take the report. In the case of multiple runaways from the same location, each juvenile will require a separate report.
- B. The reporting deputy shall have the complainant fill out a Virginia Missing Children Clearinghouse report. The name of the local school division that the child attends or the last one attended, if in Virginia, shall be included in the miscellaneous data segment of the form. If the child was born in Virginia, include the county/city code of birth in the appropriate box.
- C. The assigned deputy shall obtain a full description of the runaway, as well as all information necessary for entry into NCIC/VCIN and relay this information directly to ECC. The name of the school division attended shall be included in the information. ECC will immediately enter the information into NCIC/VCIN.
- D. All runaway reports will be taken with the fact in mind that the juvenile could have been the victim of foul play.
- E. The age of the subject, while not affecting any other policy in this order, shall always be taken into consideration by the reporting officer and his/her supervisor. (The younger the victim, the greater the chance of accidental injury or becoming lost and disoriented.)
- F. All possible leads shall be followed to ensure the well-being and safe return of the child.
  - 1. Friends of the child shall be interviewed.
  - 2. Any members of the family will be questioned as to their knowledge of the

child's location.

- G. On any report of a runaway who is under the age of 13 years old, the reporting deputy shall contact a squad supervisor as to whether a search should be instituted.
- H. When a report is taken on a child under the age of 13 years old, the shift supervisor shall notify the oncoming shift supervisor of the child's disappearance. The shift supervisor(s) shall maintain contact with the reporting party at a minimum of every two hours. If the child is missing for six hours, the shift supervisor will contact the Criminal Investigations Division supervisor and he/she shall make the determination as to what action should be taken.
1. The six hour time limit may be shortened based on the following factors:
    - a. Age of the victim
    - b. Weather conditions
    - c. Mental or medical condition of the victim
    - d. Time of day or night
    - e. Any other life threatening or unusual circumstances
- I. The reporting deputy shall pay particular attention to the environment that the child ran from and the concern and condition of the person(s) reporting the incident. (When the child is located, it may not be in the best interest of the child to return him/her to the same location.
- J. The history of the child, as to previous reports of runaway, may be taken into consideration by the reporting deputy but shall not omit the application of any other policy or procedure.
- K. All runaway reports will be turned over to the Criminal Investigations Division unless the victim is located prior to the deputy going off duty. In this instance, the reporting deputy will complete a supplemental IBR report closing the case. The Missing Children Information Clearinghouse form shall be forwarded to CID regardless of the case status.
- L. The assigned CID detective shall immediately, upon receipt, forward a copy of the Missing Children Clearinghouse form to the appropriate school division and the State Registrar of Vital Records.