

## MISSING PERSONS – PROJECT LIFESAVER

### PREAMBLE:

The Omaha Police Department (OPD) partners with the Autism Action Partnership and Project Lifesaver to help locate persons who are prone to wandering more effectively. Project Lifesaver participants are entered into a registry system (Wanderflag) that provides photos and other details about the registered participant and they are issued a Transmitter that can be utilized to aid in search and location efforts.

### POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) to immediately and intensively investigate missing person cases. OPD partners with the Autism Action Partnership and Project Lifesaver to enhance capabilities in the search and location of registered Project Lifesaving program participants.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Electronic Search Specialist (ESS):** Officers who have been certified to use Project Lifesaver equipment to electronically track persons with autism and/or other cognitive conditions who have wandered from home.

**Project Lifesaver:** Project Lifesaver is a program of proactive involvement and specialized operations that provides a system of response to incidents involving missing persons with autism and related conditions who have wandered and are considered missing.

**Receiver:** The Receiver is the Project Lifesaver device used to track the Transmitter worn by registered program participants.

**Transmitter:** A personalized, battery-operated band worn on the wrist or ankle that emits a tracking signal (chirp) every two (2) seconds and has its own unique frequency.

**Wanderflag:** A registry of identification information managed by the Autism Action Partnership/Project Lifesaver. ALL Project Lifesaver clients will have a Wanderflag entry.

### PROCEDURE:

#### I. General

- A. Persons may enroll in the Project Lifesaver program by contacting the Autism Action Partnership (AAP) and/or Project Lifesaver program.
- B. The OPD Project Lifesaver Coordinator or their designee is responsible for collecting client data from AAP.
  1. AAP is responsible for the maintenance of a current Project Lifesaver participant list and forwarding updated lists to OPD's Project Lifesaver Coordinator (PLC).
  2. OPD does not issue Project Lifesaver Transmitters or other equipment. AAP issues the Project Lifesaver equipment to program participants and provides training and equipment maintenance procedures to caregivers.
- C. Procedures in this policy are intended to enhance, not replace, those in the OPD "[Missing Persons – Adults](#)" and "[Juveniles – Missing Persons](#)" policies.

#### II. Search Procedures

- A. When 911 Dispatch receives a call for a missing person who has a Project Lifesaver Transmitter, 911 Dispatchers will obtain the following information:
  - 1. The location where the missing person was last seen.
  - 2. How long the person has been missing.
  - 3. The missing person's Transmitter frequency number.
- B. An officer and a sergeant will be dispatched to the call location.
- C. The initial responding officer on scene will complete a radio broadcast for the missing person and will stay with the reporting party while the search is actively conducted and/or until released by the Missing Person Squad sergeant or designee.
- D. The on-scene sergeant will request at least two trained (2), preferably three (3), trained Electronic Search Specialists (ESS), to respond to the scene.
  - 1. If no ESS are currently on duty, the on-scene sergeant will contact CVSA on "B" and "C" shift for assistance locating an ESS (See PPM [Appendix A](#) for the phone number).
  - 2. On "A" shift, the on-scene sergeant will contact the OPD Field Investigations "A" Shift Squad (See PPM [Appendix A](#) for the phone number) for assistance locating an ESS.
  - 3. If an ESS cannot be located, CVSA or the OPD Field Investigations "A" Shift Squad will contact the Missing Person Squad Sergeant who will call-in the appropriate number of ESS to conduct the search (See PPM [Appendix A](#) for the phone number).
- E. The first ESS that agrees to respond to the scene shall:
  - 1. Coordinate as needed to transport Project Lifesaver Receiver equipment to the scene.  
**NOTE:** Project Lifesaver Receivers are located at OPD precincts, OPD Central Headquarters, Project Harmony, and may be available in other locations in the future.
  - 2. Brief the on-scene sergeant and other ESS as they arrive on scene.
- F. When the missing person is located, officers will determine if medical treatment is necessary and will ensure the missing person is reunited with the reporting party.

### III. Reporting

- A. An OPD Missing Person Report will be completed for ALL Project Lifesaver missing parties, in addition to other reports required per OPD policies and procedures (see the OPD "[Missing Persons – Adults](#)" and "[Juveniles – Missing Persons](#)" policies, esp.).
- B. In ALL Project Lifesaver missing person incidents an OPD Missing Person Cancellation Form ([OPD Form 208A](#)) shall be completed, to include cases in which the missing person returns before the search begins.
- C. The lead ESS will send an email summary of the incident to the Missing Person Squad sergeant.
- D. The Missing Person Squad sergeant will complete the Project Lifesaver after action report for each missing person incident involving a registered Project Lifesaver participant.

#### **IV. OPD Project Lifesaver Coordinator (PLC) Responsibilities**

- A. The Project Lifesaver Coordinator (PLC) shall:
  - 1. Complete a documented monthly test of the Project Lifesaver equipment to ensure it is working and batteries are charged.
  - 2. Maintain Project Lifesaver-related records including but not limited to, Project Lifesaver after action reports, ESS training documentation, ESS re-certification and maintenance records, etc.
  - 3. Ensure ESS re-certify every two (2) years.
  - 4. Conduct quarterly training with certified ESS to maintain proficiency and certifications.

#### **REFERENCES:**

##### **I. Previous OPD Orders**

- A. Previous OPD General Orders include #48-19.

##### **II. Accreditation Standards**

- A. CALEA Accreditation standard 41.2.6 is relevant to this policy.