



# Seattle Police Department Policy Manual



## 15.130 – Missing Persons

Original Effective Date: 09/01/2019

**Revised Effective Date: 11/01/2022**

### 15.130-POL

#### 1. There Is No Waiting Period to Take a Missing Person Report

#### 2. Officers Will Determine if a Missing Person Report is Appropriate

Officers will document missing person incidents when:

- The subject was last known to be in Seattle.
- An un-emancipated juvenile is reported missing.
- A person of any age is missing for any amount of time, and there is a reasonable concern for his or her safety.

Officers will not take a missing person report to assist:

- Litigants in civil cases,
- Process servers,
- Bill collectors,
- In compiling family histories, or
- In locating heirs.

#### 3. Officers Will Complete Reports for Missing Persons

Officers will complete the following when documenting a missing person:

- **Missing Person Report** in Mark43 (not the Incident/Offense Report) including full name, sex, race, date of birth, height, weight, hair color, and eye color.
- **[Missing Person Supplement](#)** (form 5.1.2)
  - The preferred method is to use a printed supplement and write in the information while with the reporting party. This form

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includes a place for a family member or next of kin to sign to authorize the release of dental and medical information.

- Officers may submit the form by scanning and attaching a PDF supplement to the Mark43 report or sending the paper copy to the Data Center.
- The form is available electronically in the Mark43 Missing Person Report for times when obtaining the signature is not possible.
- [Alert Data Entry Form](#) (PDF) from Communications for AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, Endangered/Missing Person Alerts, or Missing Indigenous Persons Alert, if applicable.

(See 15.130-PRO-2 Initiating an AMBER Alert or EMPA)

If more than one person is missing in the same event, officers will draw additional report numbers so that each missing person is reported under a unique number.

## **4. Officers Will Obtain Digital Photographs of Missing Persons, if Possible**

Officers provide digital photographs of missing persons to the Missing Persons Unit in one of the following ways:

- Attached to the report,
- The Missing Persons Unit email at [spdmpu@seattle.gov](mailto:spdmpu@seattle.gov),
- Axon Capture for upload into Evidence.com, or
- Axon Citizen link provided to the complainant.

Officers may also instruct the complainant to send digital photographs of the missing adult to [spdmpu@seattle.gov](mailto:spdmpu@seattle.gov) with the name of the missing adult and the associated report number.

If there is no digital picture, officers may send hard copy photographs to the Missing Persons Unit.

## **5. A Lieutenant Approves an AMBER Alert**

A lieutenant approves an AMBER Alert to locate an abducted child when the following criteria are met.

- The victim is under the age of 18 years of age.

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- The victim is not a voluntary runaway (previous history of runaway reports is not a sole factor for exclusion).
- There appears to be a risk of injury or death to the victim, in the opinion of the investigating agency.
- There must be sufficient descriptive information available to the public that would help locate the child, suspect and/or suspect's vehicle.
- The missing child must be reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency and a Missing Person Report is completed.

(See 15.130-PRO-2 Initiating an AMBER Alert or EMPA)

After verification of the child's recovery, a lieutenant approves cancellation of the AMBER Alert. If practical, the lieutenant will convene a debrief session with involved personnel.

The lieutenant will complete an [After-Action Report](#) (AAR) and send a copy to the Violent Crimes Section Captain. The captain will maintain the original copy of the AAR and send a copy to the precinct of occurrence (see manual section [14.010 – After-Action Reports](#)).

## **6. A Lieutenant Approves an Endangered/Missing Person Alert (EMPA)**

A lieutenant approves the use of an EMPA when a person is missing under the following circumstances:

- Unexplained, involuntary, or suspicious circumstances; and the person is believed to be in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability [as defined in [RCW 71A.10.020\(6\)](#)], or is a vulnerable adult [as defined in [RCW 74.34.020\(21\)](#)], is missing during adverse weather conditions and/or is believed to be unable to return to safety without assistance.
- Voluntary circumstances, only if a person, due to mental disability [as defined in [RCW 71A.10.020\(6\)](#)] is in danger because of age or health, during adverse environment or weather conditions and/or is believed to be unable to return to safety without assistance.
- There is enough descriptive information that could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person, including associated vehicle information, if any.
- The missing person has been identified as an Indigenous person of any age who is missing and in danger because of age, physical

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or mental health, severe weather conditions and not able to return safely without assistance ([RCW 13.60.010](#)).

The EMPA is considered a "Silver Alert" if the missing person is 60 years of age or older, suffering from a form of dementia, and is not able to return to safety without assistance.

The EMPA is considered a "Missing Indigenous Persons Alert" if the missing person is identified as Indigenous (American Indian/Alaska Native).

(See 15.130-PRO-2 Initiating an AMBER Alert or EMPA)

## **7. Officers Will Notify Data Center of the Submitted Missing Person Report**

Officers will notify Data Center when the Missing Person Report has been submitted in Mark43. Officers will make the notification by:

- Sending a CAD Message to "DATAT" with the report number (preferred), or
- Email to [SPD\\_Data\\_Center@seattle.gov](mailto:SPD_Data_Center@seattle.gov) with the report number.

Data Center will then enter the missing person into WACIC/NCIC.

Federal law requires that information on a missing person under the age of 21 must be entered into WACIC and NCIC within two hours of the initial report.

## **8. Officers Will Remove Located Missing Persons**

If a missing person is located, officers will:

- Verify the identity of the missing person
- Confirm the hit through Data to have the entry removed
- Complete a supplemental report labeled "Located Person/Juvenile" under the original report number
- If the located subject was reported missing from another jurisdiction, the officer will complete an Incident/Offense report titled "Assist Other Agency."

## **9. The Missing Persons Unit Will Conduct the Follow-Up Investigations for Missing Persons Reports**

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## 15.130-PRO-1 Responding to a Missing Child

### Communications

1. **Broadcasts** detailed information of a missing child and assigns a primary officer.

### Officer

2. **Responds** promptly to the location of the missing child and **activates** in-car video during approach.
3. **Interviews** reporting party and verifies the child is missing and the child's custody status.
4. **Notifies** sergeant of initial details and **requests** additional resources if necessary.

### Sergeant

5. **Assesses** the need for incident command and initiates as needed.
6. **Coordinates** patrol response.

### Officer

7. **Obtains** detailed description of the missing child, abductor, or vehicles, etc. and continually relays detailed descriptive information to Communications for broadcast.
8. **Determines** who last saw the child, and when and where they were last seen.
9. **Interviews** person(s) who last had contact with the child separately and asks: "What do you think happened to the child?", documents their response.
10. **Identifies** child's "zone of safety" (area that the child feels safe or comfortable in) for his or her age/developmental stage.
11. **Identifies** everyone who is at the scene.
12. **Determines** if the incident involves a family or non-family abduction, endangered runaway, lost, injured, or otherwise missing child.

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## Sergeant

13. **Determines** with the officer if an AMBER Alert or EMPA will be needed. If so, see PRO-2 Initiating an AMBER Alert or EMPA.

## Officer

14. **Requests** consent to search the home and surrounding out-buildings and structures on the property.
  - a. **Obtains** the property owner's signature on a Consent to Search form.
  - b. **Treats** the area as a possible crime scene.
15. **Obtains** digital photograph(s) of the missing child.
16. **Attaches** the photograph(s) to the Mark43 Report, or
  - a. **Emails** the digital photograph(s) to the Missing Persons Unit at [spdmpu@seattle.gov](mailto:spdmpu@seattle.gov), or
  - b. **Instructs** the complainant to send digital photographs of the missing child to [spdmpu@seattle.gov](mailto:spdmpu@seattle.gov) with the name of the missing child and the associated report number, or
  - c. **Sends** hard copy photograph(s) to the Missing Persons Unit, if not digital.
17. **Provides** the complainant with the Missing Persons card and **advises** them to follow-up with the Missing Persons Unit should they locate the missing child.
18. **Advises** Data Center via CAD message or [email](#) when the Missing Person Report is submitted in Mark43, including the report number.

## 15.130-PRO-2 Initiating an AMBER Alert or EMPA

### Officer

1. **Responds** and gathers preliminary information to determine whether an AMBER Alert or EMPA is appropriate.
2. **Relays** preliminary information to a sergeant.

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## Sergeant

3. **Notifies** an on-duty lieutenant if an AMBER Alert or EMPA is needed.

## Lieutenant

4. **Approves** AMBER Alert or EMPA if the criteria are met and **initiates** ICS.

## Sergeant

5. **Notifies** the Homicide Unit if a child is abducted by an unknown suspect and the Domestic Violence Unit if a child is abducted by a known family member.
6. **Notifies** the Public Affairs Unit of the AMBER Alert or EMPA.
7. **Instructs** the officer to complete the Alert Data Entry form from Communications, the Missing Person Report, and the Missing Person Supplement.
8. **Contacts** Communications by telephone to request initiation of an AMBER Alert or EMPA.

## Communications

9. **Receives** authorization and request via telephone to initiate the AMBER Alert or EMPA process.
10. **Emails** the Alert Data Entry form to the officer to be completed electronically.

## Officer

11. **Completes** the Alert Data Entry form electronically.
12. **Emails** the Alert Data Entry form and digital photo if available to [spddispatch@seattle.gov](mailto:spddispatch@seattle.gov).

## Communications

13. **Receives** Alert Data Entry Form and digital photo, if available, from officer via email.
14. **Emails** the completed Alert Data Entry Form immediately to [AMBERAlertRequest@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:AMBERAlertRequest@wsp.wa.gov).

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- For EMPAs, associated vehicle information is necessary. Make any additional auxiliary notification entities as necessary.

15. **Broadcasts** the AMBER Alert or EMPA information citywide and over the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) talk-group.

16. **Notifies** patrol units citywide via CAD MDTALL Message and/or BOLO of the related call with full description and details from the Alert Data Entry form.

17. **Sends** an SPDALL email including the necessary information.

18. **Sends** a Group1 Notification via the Alert Seattle Application as applicable.

## Officer

19. **Completes** a Missing Person Report and Missing Person Supplement.

20. **Advices** Data Center via CAD message or email when the Missing Person Report is submitted in Mark43, including the report number.

## Data Center

21. **Enters** the missing person into WACIC/NCIC.