SUBJECT: Missing Persons			
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	REVISED : 8-2-2024	Jamey Haltom	
	TOTAL PAGES: 18	Jamey Haltom, Chief of Police	

4.26.1 POLICY

The Department shall investigate reports of missing persons, regardless of whether the person is an adult or a child. Particular care shall be exercised in cases of persons who may be in danger, mentally or physically impaired, under a doctor's care or on life-sustaining medication. Additionally, the Department holds that every person reported as a missing person shall be considered "at risk" until credible information to the contrary is confirmed. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person, either an adult or a child.

4.26.2 PURPOSE

This policy shall establish the guidelines and responsibilities regarding the Department's response to reports of missing and/or abducted adults and children.

4.26.3 GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. A person is considered missing when his or her whereabouts is unknown and unexplained for a period of time that is considered unusual or suspicious in relation to that person's normal behavior patterns or routines.
- B. An adult who is reported missing but who appears to be physically and mentally healthy, left home voluntarily and there appears to be no evidence the person is in danger will not normally be considered a missing person. In these instances, the reporting officer shall explain to the complainant that the police have no authority to compel the adult to return home. In this case, an incident report shall be completed concerning the situation and a welfare check offered.
- C. The role of the responding officer is critical in identifying the circumstances surrounding missing persons and in identifying persons at risk. Officers shall conduct thorough investigations of missing persons, with particular care in instances:
 - 1. Involving missing children;
 - 2. Where there appears to be immediate danger or harm to missing persons including suicidal threats or when there is evidence of foul play;
 - 3. Involving people who through mental or physical impairment cannot care for themselves: and
 - 4. Involving elderly persons who are believed to be lost.

D. Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided. If a missing person either resides in, or was last seen in the City, a missing person's report shall be completed by the responding officer. When in doubt as to the last known location of the person, officers shall investigate to the fullest extent possible and make a report.

4.26.4 PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Department shall accept and process, without delay, any report of a missing person by any person at any time. The Department shall not refuse or otherwise fail to accept a missing person report for any reason except:
 - 1. The location of the person reported missing is known;
 - 2. The safe status of the person reported missing has been confirmed; or
 - 3. It has been confirmed that another law enforcement agency has already completed a report on the missing person incident.
- B. The dispatcher shall obtain initial information and dispatch an officer to the scene of the report.
- C. The dispatcher shall obtain sufficient information to alert other officers about the circumstances of the person's disappearance.
- D. In the event of a reported possible abduction, the dispatcher will obtain and broadcast all available information on the suspect, vehicle and direction of travel.
- E. The assigned officer will respond promptly to the scene of the report. Officers will obtain all of the pertinent information including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Full name and date of birth;
 - 2. Race and sex;
 - 3. Height and weight;
 - 4. Hair and eye color;
 - 5. Scars, marks, tattoos and location of each;
 - 6. Clothing description, if known;
 - 7. Other identifying characteristics;
 - 8. Last known contact time and location:
 - 9. A recent photo of the person;
 - 10. Recent behavior of the missing person;
 - 11. A description of the habits, routines, detailed history and personal interests of the person;
 - 12. Recent history of problems or trauma such as illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, history of mental illness, use of prescription drugs;

- 13. A list of any personal belongings, money and other valuables that might also be missing; and
- 14. Extent of any search conducted for the missing person.
- E. The assigned officer should use the missing person investigative checklist to assist in the investigation.
- F. As part of the preliminary investigation, the responding officer should, at a minimum:
 - 1. Contact friends or witnesses and check possible locations obtained through statements by the complainant or witnesses; and
 - 2. Promptly notify his or her immediate supervisor if information is obtained indicating the reported person is at risk. This supervisor shall then notify their chain of command.
 - 3. Provide the person making the report with contact information and information concerning the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or the National Center for Missing Persons.
 - a. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)
 - b. NamUS 1-855-626-7600
- G. The Field Operation Commander will make a judgment as to further staffing needs.
- H. As soon as practical, the responding officer will submit the known information to Topeka Police Records Department for the information to be entered into NCIC and the missing and unidentified person system of the KBI.
- I. After an investigator has been assigned to the case, the investigator shall contact the reporting party. During this follow-up interview, the investigator will ensure the reporting party has received contact information so they may report additional information or receive information concerning the status of the case. The assigned investigator shall establish a liaison with the victim's family and maintain routine ongoing contact with the missing person's closest relative(s) concerning the progress of the investigation.
- J. Ongoing investigations of missing persons may require specific additional actions when appropriate, such as:
 - 1. Contacting hospitals and/or coroner's offices;
 - 2. Providing identification and related information to other law enforcement agencies:
 - 3. Providing information to local news media;

- 4. Preparing a flyer/bulletin with a picture of the missing person and descriptive information; and
- 5. Obtaining dental chart records, DNA, and/or fingerprints.

4.26.5 SILVER ALERT

- A. The Silver Alert system may be used if law enforcement has reason to believe the person being reported missing meets the following three criteria:
 - 1. Law enforcement has reason to believe the person reported missing is either:
 - a. Suffering from dementia: or
 - b. Over age 65; and
 - The person has a reported medical or mental condition that may threaten, or greatly reduce, their ability to make sound reasonable decisions and/or may diminish their ability to survive without assistance; or
 - 2) The person has been determined to be a risk to harm their self.
 - 2. The person's whereabouts are unknown and he or she is missing under circumstances not conforming to their normal routine or habits and may be in need of assistance or intervention; and
 - a. Care should be taken to be reasonably certain the person reporting the missing person is not using the system to locate another for reasons other than to assure their safety. For example, some people may attempt to use the system to find an adult who has voluntarily and knowingly chosen to go elsewhere away from the complainant or a domestic abuser may use the system to attempt to find their spouse; and
 - 3. The investigating officer determines it is appropriate to request public assistance in locating the individual.
 - a. Officer(s) should be aware a missing adult has the right to self-determination and the missing person or their family may object to public release of medical or other personal information. The goal of law enforcement must be the safety of the missing person based on all known facts and existing circumstances and conditions.
- B. If it is determined that a Silver Alert be issued it is the responsibility of the Department to notify local media and other resources such as social media of the Silver Alert. The activation of a Silver Alert is a decision implemented by each local law enforcement agency and does not require KBI or Attorney General authorization first.
- C. In the event that a statewide search is necessary, KBI Communications shall be notified.
- D. If a Silver Alert is issued, even at a local level, the incident must be reported by law enforcement immediately to the Office of the Attorney General.

E. It is the responsibility of the initiating agency to deactivate a Kansas Silver Alert as soon as possible after the missing person is located. This will include contacting media and any other public outlet requested to assist and notification to the Office of the Attorney General.

4.26.6 MISSING CHILDREN

- A. There are four types of missing juvenile cases: the non-family abduction case, the family abduction case, the runaway, or the lost child case.
- B. Officers taking the initial missing children report shall obtain sufficient information from the person making the report to properly classify the incident and initiate an appropriate response. In addition to information listed for missing adults, the officer shall obtain:
 - 1. The apparent reason for the juvenile's disappearance;
 - 2. Whether the subject has been missing on prior occasions and where the subject was located;
 - 3. Whether the juvenile was recently involved in a crisis or traumatic situation, such as an altercation or domestic incident:
 - 4. Whether the missing juvenile is on medication, including the reason for the medication:
 - 5. Signs of behavioral problems; and
 - 6. The name and location of the school attended by the missing juvenile.
- C. Officers should be alert for information that may suggest an abusive home environment or a dysfunctional family situation.
- D. Officers shall seek permission to search the home or building where the child was last seen. An immediate, thorough search of the missing child's home will be conducted even if the child was reported missing from a different location. If the child is not located at the home or last seen location, a thorough search of the neighborhood shall be conducted. Searches shall include any closed or locked spaces or rooms such as vehicles, closets or chests, outbuildings such as sheds or garages, and any other places of concealment. Searching of neighbor's homes shall be done when permission has been granted.
- E. Missing persons under the age of 21 shall be entered into NCIC as soon as practical, however, it shall not exceed two hours.
- F. Reporting officers shall explain to the parent or legal guardian that if the juvenile is located outside the geographic boundaries of the City, he or she may be obligated depending on location to arrange and pay the costs of transporting the juvenile home. The reporting officer should obtain the signature of the parent or legal guardian to acknowledge his or her agreement with this requirement.

- G. If the reporting party reports that the runaway has returned, an officer shall verify the information by an in-person physical verification, and the officer's report shall be completed noting that the verification was done.
- H. Officers shall complete a KSOR on all children missing. Officers will also complete a "Request for Assistance and Authorization for Medical Treatment" form anytime a parent/guardian reports a juvenile as a "runaway" or ungovernable.

4.26.7 CHILD ABDUCTION

- A. All procedures noted above regarding missing children shall be followed.
- B. Additional Officer Responsibility
 - 1. Evaluate all information gathered noting any discrepancies or conflicting information. Attempt to immediately resolve differences.
 - 2. Based upon the information developed, make an initial assessment as to the type of incident: abduction, parental kidnapping, runaway, or possibly a false report to conceal some other type of incident (i.e. homicide, accidental death, or other problems).
 - 3. If not enough information is developed to formulate an assessment as to the type of incident, treat the disappearance as an abduction until information is developed to suggest otherwise.
 - 4. Update local and regional broadcasts and ensure information about the missing child is entered into the NCIC missing person files.
 - 5. Notify and request response of a supervisor upon initial determination of an abduction.
 - 6. Request additional personnel as needed to assist with the investigation including supervisory personnel and/or detectives.
 - 7. Establish a command center separate from the crime scene and/or victim's residence. Initiate the Incident Command System.
 - 8. Brief responding units with complete details as known and update dispatch as to new pertinent information.
 - 9. Officers shall complete a KSOR on all children that are missing.
- C. Patrol Supervisor/Detective Responsibilities:
 - Should utilize the supervisor/commander checklist or criminal investigator checklist included in this policy;
 - 2. Consult the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.
 - 3. Consult the AMBER Alert coordinator with the KBI to determine if the AMBER Alert procedure applies and initiate if authorized;
 - 4. Assign personnel to initiate a search including a neighborhood canvas;
 - 5. Assign personnel to establish and maintain liaison with victim's family and initiate a detailed account of the victim's lifestyle and personality to assist in

determining the nature of the disappearance, the risk level of the victim, and the type of person who could have committed the crime;

- 6. Ensure that documentation is kept in regards to all personnel on sites and their assignments;
- 7. Review all developed information;
- 8. Determine what additional resources are needed and assign personnel to contact and obtain resources;
- 9. Ensure all information on the victim is accurately entered and updated into the NCIC missing person files; and
- 10. The supervisor shall activate the Code Red program.

D. Liaison with the Victim's Family

- The responding law enforcement officials must keep in mind the emotional needs of the victim's family. A contact person will be appointed to establish and maintain appropriate liaison with the family (should not be the lead investigator).
- 2. Regularly update the family as to the status of the investigation within the boundaries of investigative integrity and legal proprieties.
- 3. Address the emotional aspects the family is experiencing, furnishing counseling if applicable and contact the Victim/Witness Assistance Coordinator.
- 4. Consent from the victim's family may be necessary for initiating some investigating techniques.

E. Neighborhood Investigations

The objective of a neighborhood investigation is to identify and interview, in person, all individuals within the abduction or last known sighting area during the "window of opportunity". Unless a neighborhood investigation is conducted immediately and thoroughly, valuable information that may assist in the resolution of the disappearance may be lost.

F. Media Strategies

- The media can provide valuable assistance in the resolution of a child abduction case. Positive relationships shall minimize criticism of investigative efforts, deter untimely interview with victim's family and/or witnesses and discourage the premature release of information.
- 2. Utilize the media as appropriate to immediately disseminate posters and descriptions of missing children.
- 3. Utilize Department social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor.
- 4. Coordinate all press releases through the PIO, when available.
- 5. Schedule regular briefings to deter attempts by the media to discover details that might obstruct investigative activities.

6. Release only details of the investigative activities that are deemed essential to the recovery of the child. Always consider the risk to the child created by releasing information.

G. Interagency and Intra-Agency Coordination

If appropriate, based on the totality of the circumstances, immediate notification should be made to surrounding or selected jurisdictions via radio, teletype or telephone. Existing interagency response protocols, community notification methods such as reverse 911 and/or AMBER Alert (missing child abduction) should be considered.

H. AMBER Alerts

- 1. The investigating officer in consultation with the supervisor shall determine if activation of the AMBER Alert system is appropriate.
- 2. The AMBER plan is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement and broadcasters to send out an emergency alert when a child has been abducted and it is believed the child's life is in grave danger.
- 3. The AMBER Alert is only activated by law enforcement and only for serious child abduction cases. It is not for runaways or custody disputes unless the circumstances are life threatening for the child. The following is required for activation:
 - a. There has been a child abduction:
 - b. The abducted child is 17 years of age or younger or an individual with a mental or physical disability;
 - c. There is reason to believe the victim is in imminent danger, serious bodily injury or death;
 - d. There is sufficient information to disseminate to the general public, which could assist in the safe recovery of the victim and/or the apprehension of a suspect.
- AMBER Alerts shall be approved by the Field Commander. Once approved the on scene supervisor should request an AMBER alert by calling the KBI hotline directly at 785-296-6237.
- 5. The initiating agency will be responsible for canceling the AMBER Alert as soon as circumstances dictate by notifying the SCECC.
- 6. When a case does not meet the AMBER Alert criteria supervisors and commanders should determine if the use of media and public notification resources would be helpful in locating the missing person. However, the term "AMBER Alert" must not be used by law enforcement or the media in requesting public assistance in locating a missing person unless the AMBER Alert criteria are met.

4.26.8 RECOVERY OF MISSING PERSONS

A. In General

- 1. Officers cannot force competent adults to return home.
- 2. Officers should advise the subject of the investigation and ask if the officer can tell the reporting person the subject's whereabouts.
- 3. Officers shall honor missing person requests to not have their whereabouts revealed. This is especially true when the missing person could be placed in imminent danger by releasing this information.
- 4. Officers should check located missing persons for outstanding warrants.
- 5. The reporting person shall be informed of the wellbeing of the missing person.
- Cancel the missing person notice by calling the Records BOLO extension immediately and sending a Supplement Report to Records. Indicate in the report that Records was notified of cancellation.

4.26.9 STATE INSTITUTION OR PRIVATE AGENCY WALKAWAYS

- A. SCECC shall issue an ATL upon their request.
- B. The institution may want to make a Missing Person Report.
- C. The officer shall make a report and forward a copy to Records.
- D. This ATL is local only unless a report is taken so a case number can be used for entry into NCIC/NCIS and the KBI missing and unidentified person system.
- E. The Veteran's Administration police do their own walkaways and NCIC entries.

4.26.10 UNIDENTIFED PERSON OR HUMAN REMAINS

- A. The Department shall receive reports of any unidentified persons or human remains. The Department shall enter the report immediately, and in no case later than 24 hours after receipt of the report, into the missing person system of NCIC and the missing and unidentified person system of the KBI.
- B. The Department shall make reasonable attempts to promptly identify such remains, including obtaining:
 - 1. Photographs of the remains, prior to an autopsy;
 - 2. Dental or skeletal x-rays;
 - 3. Photographs of items found with the human remains;
 - 4. Fingerprints of the remains, if possible;
 - 5. Samples of tissue suitable for DNA typing, if possible;
 - 6. Samples of whole bone or hair, or both, suitable for DNA typing; and
 - 7. Any other information that may support identification efforts.
- C. If the unidentified remains have not been identified by other means within 30 days, the Department shall make reasonable efforts to obtain prompt DNA

- analysis of biological samples by submitting the DNA biological samples to the KBI for analysis.
- D. No employee shall dispose of, or engage in actions that will materially affect, unidentified human remains before the coroner obtains samples suitable for DNA identification and archiving, photographs of the unidentified person or human remains and all other appropriate steps for identification have been exhausted.
- E. Cremation of unidentified human remains is prohibited by law.

TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Critical Missing Person Investigative Checklist

Officer/First Responder Checklist:

Activate body worn camera when approaching the scene to record vehicles, people, and anything else of note for later investigative review.
Interview spouse/parent(s)/guardian(s)/person who made the initial report.
Confirm the adult/child is in fact missing.
Contact a supervisor.
Verify the adult's/child's custody status.
Determine when, where, and by whom the missing adult/child was last seen.
Interview the individuals who last had contact with the adult/child.
Identify the adult/child's zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
Obtain and note permission to search home or building where incident took place.
Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the missing adult's/child's home, even if the adult/child was reported missing from a different location.
Based on the available information, make an initial determination of the type of incident; whether non-family abduction, parental abduction, runaway, lost, critical missing or otherwise missing.
Have juvenile/incident records searched for previous incidents related to the missing adult/child and prior law-enforcement activity in the area including prowlers, indecent exposure, and attempted abductions.
Obtain a detailed description of the missing adult/child, abductor, and any vehicles used.
Secure photographs/videotapes of the missing adult/child/abductor.
Is the missing adult/child in possession of a firearm or any other weapon?
What are the mental/physical/developmental characteristics of the adult/child?
Evaluate whether the circumstance of the adult's/child's disappearance meet AMBER Alert or SILVER Alert criteria and/or other immediate community-notification protocol. Discuss plan activation with supervisor.

Office	er/First Responder Checklist (continued):
	Relay detailed descriptive information to SCECC for broadcast updates.
	Determine need for additional personnel including investigative and supervisory staff.
	Brief and bring up-to-date all additional responding personnel.
	Identify and separately interview everyone at the scene. Make sure their interview and identifying information is properly recorded. To aid in this process, if possible, take pictures or record video images of everyone present. Body worn cameras may be helpful with this task.
	 Note name, address, home/business telephone numbers of each person. Determine each person's relationship to the missing adult/child. Note information each person may have about the adult's/child's disappearance.
	 Determine when/where each person last saw the adult/child. Ask each one, "What do you think happened to the adult/child?" Obtain names/addresses/telephone numbers of the adult's/child's friends/associates and other relatives and friends of the family.
	Continue to keep SCECC apprised of all appropriate developing information for broadcast updates.
	Seal/protect scene and area of the adult's/child's home, including the adult's/child's personal articles, such as hairbrush, diary, photographs, and items with the adult's/child's fingerprints/footprints/teeth impressions, so evidence is not destroyed during or after the initial search and to help ensure items which could help in the search for and/or to identify the adult/child are preserved. Determine if any of the adult's/child's personal items are missing. If possible, photograph/videotape these areas.
	Evaluate the contents and appearance of the adult/child's room/residence.
	Inquire if the adult/child has access to the Internet and evaluate its role in the disappearance.
	Provide contact information for:
	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or www.missingkids.com NamUs 1-855-626-7600 or www.namus.gov
	Ascertain if the adult/child has a cellular telephone or other electronic

communication device.

Officer/First Responder Checklist (continued):

Ask if the adult/child may have been experiencing psychiatric problems, suicide threats, relationship problems, drug/alcohol problems, school/work problems, or physical illness.
Extend search to surrounding areas including vehicles and other places of concealment.
Treat areas of interest as potential crime scenes.
Determine if surveillance or security cameras in the vicinity may have captured information about the adult/child's disappearance.
Interview other family members, friends/associates of the adult/child, and friends of the family to determine: When each last saw the adult/child; What they think happened to the adult/child.
Prepare reports/make all required notifications.
Provide contact information.

Supervisor and Commander Checklist:

Obtain briefing from the first responding officer and other personnel at the scene.				
Decide if circumstances of the adult's/child's disappearance meet the protocol in place for activation of an AMBER Alert, SILVER Alert and/or other immediate community-notification systems.				
Notify KBI if AMBER Alert or Attorney General's Office if SILVER Alert criteria are met. KBI hotline 785-296-8262. Attorney General 888-428-8436.				
Contact PIO for notifications to media.				
Determine if additional personnel are needed to assist in the investigation.				
Establish a command post away from the adult/child's residence.				
Ensure information regarding the missing adult/child is immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) Missing Person File and the missing and unidentified person system of the KBI.				
Ensure any information about a suspected abductor is entered into the NCIC Wanted Person File.				
Prepare flier/bulletin with the adult/child/abductor's photograph and descriptive information and distribute in appropriate geographic regions.				
Determine if additional assistance is necessary from:				
 National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. NamUS KBI. FBI. Specialized units. Confirm all the required resources, equipment, and assistance necessary to conduct an efficient investigation have been requested and expedite their availability. Ensure coordination/cooperation among all law-enforcement personnel involved in the investigation and search effort. Verify all required notifications have been made. Ensure all agency policies and procedures are being followed. Be available to make any decisions or determinations as they develop. Use media including radio, television, and newspapers to assist in the search throughout the duration of the case. 				

Criminal Investigator Checklist:

Obtain briefing from the first responding officer and other on-scene personnel.
Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information and other details developed during the preliminary investigation.
Initiate a neighborhood canvass.
Obtain a brief, recent history of family dynamics.
Review sex-offender registries to determine if individuals designated as sexual predators live, work, or might otherwise be associated with area of the adult/child's disappearance.
Investigate the reasons for any conflicting information offered by witnesses and other individuals.
Review and evaluate all available information and evidence collected.
Develop and execute an investigative plan.
Conduct a background check on all principal suspects and participants in the investigation.
Determine what additional resources and specialized services are required.
Ensure details of the case have been reported to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the NamUs.
Prepare and update bulletins for local law-enforcement agencies, KBI, the FBI, and other appropriate agencies.
Establish a telephone hotline for receipt of tips and leads. This needs to be a staffed phone line that is capable of handling several calls at once.
Establish a leads-management system to prioritize leads and help ensure each one is reviewed and followed up on.

TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Missing Person Investigative Information

A. Incident D	etails						
Exact Address:							
Reporting Party Name:							
Reporting Party							
Date and Time	Date and Time of Original Call:						
Classification o	f Original Call:						
Case/Incident N	Number:						
Articulation of r	nissing person circ	cumstance:					
FOB command	er notified of situat	tion:		Time:			
CIB commande	er notified of situati	on:		Time:			
Command Pos	t Location:						
B. Missing Pe	rson Information						
Name:		AKA:					
DOB:	Race:	Sex :	Ht:	Wt:	_		
Hair:	Eyes:	Facial Hair:					
Clothing:							
Last Seen At:_							
	Date:						

Name:		AKA: _		
DOB:	Race:	Sex :	Ht:	Wt:_
Hair:	Eyes:	Facial Hair:		
Commandin	ental Personnel g officers and/or supe		•	_
	estigation Bureau on s			
				_
	ions officer on scene			_
				_ _ _
Fire and EM	S on scene/respondir			_

Fire/EMS staging location:		<u></u>	
E. ICS Procedures in effect:			
Incident Commander:	Radio #:		
Exact location:			
F. Locations Searched			
1. Locations ocaronea			
G. Notes			
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