

**GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to provide guidance for handling and reporting of missing adults, missing children, and unidentified persons. The general order also defines the LEIN responsibilities for complaints involving missing persons and the “Amber Alert of Michigan” procedures.

II. POLICY

WMU Public Safety takes the reporting of missing persons seriously. Often the most challenging task at hand upon receipt of a missing person complaint is determining whether the person was abducted. Was there an accident or are the allegations false? A crucial assessment of the initial facts may serve to eliminate some of the possibilities. Experience has demonstrated the importance of a well-planned and properly executed search effort. The department will accept missing person complaints received by telephone or in person without any waiting period. (4.5.4.a) (4.5.5.e)

III. DEFINITIONS (4.5.4.i)

Definitions related to this policy include:

- A. At risk – Includes persons who (MCL 28.258):
1. Are 17 years of age, or younger.
 2. Regardless of age, are believed or determined to be experiencing one or more of the following circumstances:
 - (a) Mentally, behaviorally, or physically disabled, or believed to be incapable of returning home without assistance.
 - (b) Drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life-threatening.
 - (c) In a life-threatening situation.
 - (d) In the company of others who could endanger his/her welfare or physical safety.
 - (e) Absent in a way that is inconsistent with established patterns of behavior and cannot be readily explained.
 - (f) Involved in a situation that would cause a reasonable person to conclude the person should be considered at risk.
 - (g) Disappeared under circumstances indicating that the disappearance is not voluntary.
 - (h) Missing as the result of a natural or intentionally caused catastrophe or extraordinary accident that causes the loss of human life.
 3. Qualify for a Mozelle Senior or Vulnerable Adult Medical Alert (MCL 28.712)
 - (a) At least 60 years of age and is believed to be incapable of returning to his or her residence without the assistance and is reported missing by a person familiar with that individual.

- (b) A person who is missing and suffering from senility or a physical or mental condition that subjects the person or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - (c) Vulnerable means a condition in which an adult is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or because of advance age.
4. Qualify for a state AMBER Alert pursuant to MCL 28.753.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Initial Description and Information (4.5.4.d)
1. The officer taking the report of a missing person will get as much information about the missing person as possible and the circumstances surrounding the incident. The following questions should be used as a guide.
 - (a) Is foul play possible?
 - (b) Is the person missing voluntarily?
 - (c) Where and when was the person last seen?
 2. If foul play or other circumstances (i.e. Alzheimer patient) are present, the officer shall notify Chief or Deputy Chief. The Chief or Deputy Chief shall be notified when a WMU student is reported missing. The supervisor or O.I.C on duty shall determine potential resources to aid in the investigation: (4.5.4.b, 4.5.4.h)
 - (a) Number of personnel to be utilized in the search or investigation.
 - (b) Area to be searched to verify disappearance, especially where individuals may hide, and nearby bodies of water.
 - (c) Exact place the victim was last seen and secure the scene until it can be searched and examined for possible evidence.
 - (d) Use of canine.
 - (e) Helicopter.
 - (f) Outside agency assistance (sheriff's office, social service agencies, media to include social media, etc.)
 3. The officer will get a description of the person that has at least the following information: (4.5.4.c)
 - (a) Sex.
 - (b) Date of Birth.
 - (c) Race.
 - (d) Height and weight.
 - (e) Clothing description.
 - (f) Any distinguishing scars, marks, or tattoos.
 - (g) Hair color and length.
 - (h) Glasses.
 - (i) Hat.
 - (j) Last known method of travel.
 - (k) Any known medical problems/medications.
 - (l) A current photo, if available.
 - (m) Any possible destinations.
 4. In the case of an at-risk missing person who qualifies for a Mozelle Alert, forward the information to (MCL 28.715) (4.5.4.i)
 - (a) Law enforcement agencies in the jurisdiction where the person resides and where the person was last seen.
 - (b) Any law enforcement agency that requests a copy of the report.

(c) Broadcasters in the area where the missing senior or vulnerable adult may be located. Information may also be forwarded to local newspapers distributed in the area where the person may be located.

5. In the case of an at-risk missing person or a person who has been missing for an extended time period, command may seek federal assistance from the FBI and U.S. Marshals Service. (4.5.4.i)
6. The detective or officer assigned to the investigation shall maintain a close liaison with state and local child welfare systems and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) if the missing person is under the age of 21 and shall promptly notify NCMEC when the person is missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution. (4.5.4.i)

B. Search Procedures (4.5.5.h)

1. Responding officers should initiate a search as applicable under the facts.
2. The on duty shift supervisory or O.I.C. should determine the need to deploy resources such as additional personnel, canine, outside agencies, helicopter, etc.
3. The shift supervisor may initiate a command post as needed.
4. The shift supervisor or OIC should ensure applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented.
5. If available, the detective assigned to the case shall obtain a photograph and fingerprint card of the missing person.
6. If available, a voluntarily provided biological sample of the missing person such as a toothbrush or hairbrush should be collected.
7. Officers should collect any documents that may assist in the investigation, such as court orders regarding custody.
8. When circumstances permit and if appropriate, the assigned detective should attempt to determine the missing person's location through his/her telecommunications carrier.
9. The assigned detective should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document these efforts every 30 days.

C. Dissemination of Information

1. The officer taking the report will advise the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority (KCCDA) of the missing person's description. This information will be provided to the next shift coming on duty.
2. The officer will notify the supervisor if any unusual circumstances exist, to include any special considerations regarding critically missing or at-risk persons. (4.5.5.a)

D. Law Enforcement Information System (LEIN) Entry (4.5.4.e)

1. Act 204, P.A. 1985 mandates that missing persons shall be entered immediately into LEIN by the agency receiving the report, after a preliminary investigation has been conducted, if any of the following exist:
 - (a) A person of any age who is missing and is under a proven physical or mental disability, or is senile, thereby subjecting him or her to personal and immediate danger. This category includes mental health escapees who are involuntarily committed, and missing persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

- (b) A missing person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.
 - (c) A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.
 - (d) A young adult less than 21 years (Suzanne's Law). Specifically, Suzanne's Law and the Adam Walsh Act require that a missing person under 21 be entered into LEIN/NCIC, regardless of an agency's local policy.
 - (e) While Michigan law defines a juvenile as being under the age of 18, Suzanne's Law requires the entry of all missing persons under the age of 21 into LEIN/NCIC, regardless of whether the person is voluntarily or involuntarily missing. The Adam Walsh Act further requires that all missing persons under the age of 21 be entered into LEIN/NCIC within two hours of the report being taken once the agency has the minimum information required to make the entry.
- 2. The entering agency must have documentation in its possession at the time of the entry supporting the stated conditions entered in the message key. The documentation must be from a source other than the investigating police agency; for example:
 - (a) A written statement from a physician or other authoritative source corroborating the missing person's physical or mental disability.
 - (b) A written statement from a parent, legal guardian, family member, or authoritative source advising that the missing person's disappearance was not voluntary, or that the circumstances indicate that their physical safety is in danger.
 - (c) Entering of a disaster/catastrophe victim can be entered by any agency involved in identifying victims of the disaster. No written documentation is required.
 - 3. Contact the appropriate agency if the report relates to a missing person report previously made to another agency and that agency is actively investigating the report. When this is not practicable, the information should be documented in a report for transmission to the appropriate agency. (4.5.5.b)
 - 4. If the case falls within the jurisdiction of another agency, a supervisor or O.I.C. should facilitate transfer of the case to the agency of jurisdiction. This includes the transfer of any and all copies of reports concerning the investigation. (4.5.5.b)

E. LEIN Removal (4.5.4.f)

- 1. The missing person will be removed from LEIN when the person is located.
- 2. The officer who receives the information that the person has been found, or locates the person, will complete a supplemental report and request KCCDA remove the person from LEIN.

F. Follow-up Investigation (4.5.4.g) (4.5.5.f)

- 1. A detective will be assigned to all cases of missing persons regardless of whether foul play is suspected.
- 2. If the person is missing for more than 30 days, the department must obtain dental records of the missing person to keep the LEIN entry from being purged. The records may be obtained from the reporting person.

G. Missing Children and Individuals Under 21 Years of Age

1. Missing juveniles will normally take the form of a juvenile runaway. The runaway complaint will be followed up by a detective.
2. A LEIN entry for a missing person shall still be entered.
3. Lost children
 - (a) Patrol officers will be immediately notified of a missing juvenile.
 - (b) The responding officer will obtain as much information about the child as possible.
 - (c) On-duty supervisor or O.I.C will be notified and, if possible, will respond to the location to assist the other officers and make decisions about manpower, such as: (4.5.4.h) (4.5.5.a)
 - (i) How many officers to use in the search and if additional officers need to be called in.
 - (ii) Whether or not to use a K9 for tracking.
 - (iii) When to use other resources to assist in the location of the lost child.
 - (d) The information obtained by the first officers will be disseminated to others involved in the search. (4.5.4.h)
4. Parental Kidnapping
 - (a) Obtain suspect and child/children description and other information
 - (b) Enter person's name into LEIN/NCIC.
5. AMBER Alert Program/Activation (4.5.5.c)

Amber Alert shall be activated when the investigation begins of an endangered missing child incident, as defined by the Michigan State Police AMBER Alert System. The Michigan Amber Alert Plan is a partnership between law enforcement and the media to help in the immediate dissemination of information to the public about an endangered missing child.

 - (a) The Michigan Amber Alert Plan should be considered by officers of this department when investigating incidents of missing children under the age of 17 when the disappearance places the missing child at imminent risk of great bodily harm or death. To request an amber alert, the Michigan State Police must first be contacted at (517) 241-8000.
 - (b) Michigan State Police Operations will advise whether all of the criteria have been met to issue an Amber Alert. If so, the alert information must be entered online at admin.amberalertmichigan.org. Access will be granted after the WMU PD username and password is entered. The username and password can be located on the 511.
 - (c) An officer requesting an Amber Alert activation must submit the request within the first three hours of the initial missing child investigation. Amber Alert activation requests can occur beyond the initial three hours if the investigating officer has developed significant and reliable information that the missing child is still within the immediate area or has obtained eyewitness information about the missing child's location, and that the Amber Alert activation will assist in the recovery of the missing child.
 - (d) Criteria for considering a child to be at imminent risk include: (4.5.4.c)
 - (i) The child suffers from a severe mental or physical disability that greatly impairs the child's ability to care for him or herself.
 - (ii) The child is a victim of a stranger or acquaintance kidnapping (MCL 750.349). Stranger kidnapping is defined as a child being taken against his or her will

- by a stranger. Acquaintance kidnapping is defined as a child being taken against his/her will by an acquaintance of the child or the child's family.
- (iii) The child is in the company of a person who has a confirmed criminal history of child abuse/neglect, sexual assault, domestic assault, or a crime involving the victimization of children, has made statements stating his or her intent to harm the missing child, or is suicidal.
 - (iv) The child has been abducted by a non-custodial parent whose parental rights have been terminated by a court.
 - (v) Amber Alert cannot be activated for a runaway child or a child who is a victim of parental abduction involved in a civil dispute.
- 6. Enforcement members who have utilized the Amber Alert system shall complete the after-action report and submit it to msp-missingpersons@michigan.gov.
 - 7. For incidents which do not meet the Amber Alert Plan protocol, the Endangered Missing Child Advisory form may be utilized.
 - 8. The reviewing shift supervisor shall confirm the necessary information was received from the reporting person and witnesses, and LEIN/NCIC entry are each accurate and complete.
 - 9. The reviewing shift supervisor shall then contact the Chief or Deputy Chief to make arrangements to cover the phone "tip" lines. The supervisor shall make a follow-up call to MSP Operation Center to ensure the Amber Alert request was received. MSP Operations will then distribute the Amber Alert information to all the radio and television stations in the appropriate region(s) and immediately notify Michigan's Missing Children Information Clearinghouse of the Amber Alert activation.
 - 10. If additional information is learned during the investigation, the case detective shall contact the MSP Operation Center with the updated information. Once the child is located, the case detective shall notify MSP Operation Center. The Amber Alert shall be cancelled in LEIN/NCIC and filed with the report. (4.5.4.e)

V. UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS PROCEDURES (4.5.6)

- A. Officers responding to calls where a person's identity cannot be established because of injury, illness, mental disease or defect will:
 - 1. Ensure that appropriate medical attention has been summoned.
 - 2. Record all identifying information into any related incident report; to include,
 - (a) Height or approximate height
 - (b) Weight or approximate weight
 - (c) Age or approximation if true age cannot be determined
 - (d) Hair color
 - (e) Eye color
 - (f) Complexion
 - (g) Scars, Marks, or Tattoos
 - (h) Deformities
 - (i) Clothing description (including glasses, hearing aids, etc.)
 - 3. Notify the on-duty supervisor and Chief or Deputy Chief of the unidentified person. If needed, a detective will be requested to respond and will assume the investigation.

- B. Officers responding to calls involving unidentified human remains will secure the area as a crime scene and notify the on-duty supervisor, who will respond to the scene. The Chief and/or Deputy Chief shall be notified immediately.
1. The initial officer will summon sufficient assistance to secure the scene and any evidence that may be present. This may require the assistance of outside law enforcement agencies.
 2. Responding officers will detain the reporting person or potential witnesses for criminal investigations.
 - (a) Witnesses will be separated and prevented from communicating with each other.
 - (b) Witnesses will be fully identified by name, address, telephone numbers, and date of birth.
 3. The initial officer shall record/note the arrival time of all persons who respond to and enter the crime scene area.
 4. Patrol personnel shall assist the detectives by maintaining security of the crime scene until the scene is released or until they are properly relieved by another officer.
 5. The on-duty supervisor or O.I.C. will request crime lab specialists from Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department, or the Michigan State Police.
 6. The on-duty supervisor or O.I.C will request the Medical Examiner's Office to respond to the scene.
 7. The assigned detective will:
 - (a) Investigate all unidentified remains as a homicide unless it is determined through the investigation or an autopsy that the deceased died of natural causes, accident, or suicide.
 - (b) Attempt to identify the deceased, using techniques appropriate to the condition of the remains, which may include forensic reconstruction.
 - (c) Continue investigation and/or identification efforts until all investigative leads are exhausted.

Issued Date: 05/14/13

Revised Date: 10/27/16, 10/14/2020,
12/7/2023

Issued by



Scott Merlo
Director of Public Safety