

## **21.00.160 MISSING PERSONS (CALEA 41.2.5)**

The Department will immediately respond to and investigate all cases of reported missing persons. Reports of Runaway Juveniles will be immediately investigated as missing persons until information indicates otherwise. The report of any missing person under 21 must be entered into WACIC/NCIC within two hours of the receipt of the minimum mandatory fields. This is required by the Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act 2006, Title 42, US Code, Chapter 72, Section 5779 & 5780.

### **Collecting Information**

Missing Person Reports, including runaways, will be taken in person. If possible, arrangements should be made to meet the reporting party at the site of disappearance. The reporting party must sign the Missing Person Report. Phone call reports may only be taken if the reporting party is calling from another jurisdiction.

The responding officer will gather the information needed to complete the Missing Person Incident Report and to enable a WACIC/NCIC entry. This includes the subject's description and identifiers and circumstances surrounding the disappearance. Within two hours of obtaining the mandatory reporting information about a missing person under 21, the responding officer must notify NORCOM to enter Missing Person Report into WACIC and NCIC. The officer will then complete the written report and submit it through normal channels for complete document entry into the Records Management System. The report should include the provided information and that NORCOM has been requested to enter the appropriate information into WACIC/NCIC.

If the officer develops information on the location of the subject all reasonable efforts must be made to locate the individual. Depending on the missing person's age or mental capacity, the search may utilize the use of specialized K9 units, aerial searches, ground searches, neighborhood canvassing, or use of the reverse 911 system (with approval from a Captain or above) and/or the news media.

### **Notifying the Supervisor**

Upon gathering preliminary information, the officer must notify an On-Duty Supervisor of the incident. For missing persons under 21, the Supervisor will confirm that the mandatory reporting fields were provided to NORCOM for entry into WACIC/NCIC within the mandatory two-hour period. The Supervisor will contact an Investigations Supervisor, if necessary, and shall notify the On-Duty Watch Commander. The Watch Commander will oversee all investigations of a suspicious nature, a missing young or vulnerable child, or a vulnerable adult.

The Watch Commander or designee may contact the Department's PIO to create a press release and coordinate the release of information and a photo of the missing person to the media. The information on the missing person, as well as a picture, if available, will be made available to Patrol.

### **AMBER Alert Procedure**

The Amber Alert System can be activated in cases of abducted children. Officers must respond to the scene and determine whether the missing child fits the criteria for an Amber Alert activation. If the circumstances surrounding the missing person meet the criteria for activation of the Amber Alert System, the responding officer will immediately notify the on-duty supervisor who will then notify the on-duty/on-call watch commander and request authorization for activation.

Once authorization has been obtained from the watch commander, the scene supervisor or designee will fax the Amber Alert Data Entry Form to NORCOM. NORCOM will coordinate with the Washington State Patrol to activate the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan.

The PIO will coordinate with the media to broadcast any additional information.

## **AMBER Alert Criteria**

In order for an incident to qualify as an AMBER alert, officers should consider all of the facts and circumstances and determine if all elements listed below are satisfied:

1. The child is under eighteen (18) years of age, is known to be abducted, and is not a runaway or throw away from home.
2. The abducted child is believed to be in danger of death or serious bodily injury.
3. The AMBER Alert activation should occur within 4 hours of the event qualifying under the criteria as an AMBER Alert, unless circumstances or the timeliness of the information warrant otherwise.
4. There must be enough descriptive information available to believe that an AMBER Alert activation will assist in the recovery of the child.
5. The incident must be reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.

## **Entering Missing Person Information into WACIC/NCIC**

A Missing Person Report is entered into WACIC/NCIC if it meets the following criteria:

- Disabled (D): Under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal and immediate danger
- Endangered (E): Under circumstances indicating their physical safety may be in danger
- Involuntary (I): Under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, i.e., abduction or kidnapping
- Juvenile (J): Any juvenile still under parent or court control. Note that a missing person who is between 18 and 21 is reported as Other if they do not meet any of the more specific categories.
- Catastrophe/Disaster Victim (V): Any person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe or victim of a disaster.
- Other: (O) A missing person between the ages of 18 and 21 or any other missing person for whom there is a reasonable concern for his/her safety even though the person does not meet the criteria for entry in any other category.

The Missing Person Report will be cleared from the WACIC/NCIC computer when:

- The missing person has been located
- The person is no longer considered missing

## **Follow-up**

Follow-up contact with the reporting person is assigned to the Investigations Section. The report will be routed to an Investigations Supervisor who will assign the case to a Detective.

## **State Patrol Missing Person Report**

If the person is not located within thirty days or at any time criminal activity is suspected, the Investigating Detective will:

1. File a missing persons report with the Washington State Patrol Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit;
2. Initiate the collection of DNA samples from the known missing person and their family members for nuclear and mitochondrial DNA testing along with the necessary consent forms; and
3. Ask the missing person's family or next of kin to give written consent to contact the dentist or dentists of the missing person and request the person's dental records.