

# **MISSING PERSON AND CHILD ABDUCTION INVESTIGATIONS**

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures and guidelines for the handling of reported missing or lost person/juvenile, and child abduction investigations.

## **DISCUSSION**

Santa Fe Police Personnel shall use its resources, acting within the scope of their authority to locate, and/or rescue any reported missing or lost person/juvenile, or abducted child.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

It is the policy of the Santa Fe Police Department to investigate and document all missing person/juvenile, and child abduction reports.

## **MISSING CHILD/CHILD ABDUCTION INVESTIGATIONS**

47.1.01: Missing Child/Child investigations apply when:

- A. The child is younger than 18 years of age who is not emancipated, and;
- B. Whose whereabouts are unknown to a parent, guardian, or responsible party.

47.1.02: Factors that should be considered when investigating a missing child/child abduction report include, but are not limited to:

- A. If the child is 13 years of age or younger.
- B. If the child is out of the zone of safety for his/her age and developmental stage.
- C. If the mental capacity of the child is diminished.
- D. If the child is on prescribed medication and/or is drug dependent on illicit substances.
- E. If the child is a potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.
- F. If the situation can be considered life threatening in any way.
- G. If the incident occurred near a busy thoroughfare.
- H. The length of time since the juvenile was last seen.
- I. If the child is believed to be with adults who could endanger his/her welfare.

- J. If the child is absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior.
- K. If the child's disappearance involves circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to believe that the child should be considered at risk.

47.1.03: Resources that can be utilized for Missing Child/Child Abduction cases include but are not limited to:

- A. Amber Alert - Law Enforcement Emergency Alert System.
- B. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- C. K-9 Unit (ours and/or other agency's).
- D. New Mexico State Police (NMSP).
- E. Santa Fe County Sheriff's Department.
- F. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).
- G. Air support (State Police or other agency).

#### **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING MISSING CHILD/CHILD ABDUCTION CASES**

47.1.04: Patrol personnel will normally be responsible for initial reports on missing and runaway juveniles. Proper investigation of these reports requires that several steps be taken. The responding officer shall complete the following prior to arriving at the scene:

- A. Determine if circumstances of the report meet the requirements of a missing child, as set forth in "47.1.01" above.
- B. Notify the on-duty field supervisor.
- C. Ensure that Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) transmits the appropriate initial information.
- D. Request RECC search dispatch records for prior cases involving the child.

47.1.05: Upon arriving at the scene, the responding officer shall:

- A. Interview the parent(s)/guardian(s) making the report.
- B. Obtain a physical description, last known clothing description, and recent photograph of the child.
- C. Advise RECC of the pertinent information received including; the description, last known location of the child, and location(s) the child may possibly go to, and request RECC broadcast on all radio frequencies.
- D. Request additional officers to secure any scene(s) that may be of evidentiary value if the location is other than the home or location the officer was dispatched.
- E. Interview potential witnesses at the scene, including children.

- F. Ensure the on-duty supervisor is apprised of pertinent information.
- G. Stay on the scene to ensure the integrity of all potential evidence and obtain any new information when available.
- H. Perform a Driver Vehicle Search (DVS) and Computerized Criminal History (CCH)/Interstate Identification Index (III) inquiries to obtain personal descriptors and numeric identifiers to pack the record.
- I. Ensure RECC has entered the missing child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.
- J. Complete an offense incident report as soon as practical.
- K. Complete the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Missing Persons Clearinghouse (MPCH) report form, Birth Certificate Flag Request Form, Endangered Person Advisory Report Form (if applicable), and DPS Dental Records Release Form and attach the signed copies to the offense/incident report. These forms must also be sent to DPS MPCH and/or NMSP. The above-mentioned forms may be signed by any of the following methods:
  - 1. Digitized signatures.
  - 2. Manual signatures scanned into the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS).
  - 3. The case officer's typed name into the report in the ERMS.
- L. Complete the following forms and send them to the on-duty supervisor:
  - 1. Missing Person "Be On the Lookout" (BOLO) flier.
  - 2. Press release document.
- M. Ensure body worn camera footage is tagged into evidence, along with any other items of evidentiary value.
- N. Ensure follow-up is completed to obtain medical and dental information for the missing child to be added to the report or indicate that attempts were made to gather the information within 60 days from the date of NCIC entry.

47.1.06: The on-duty Supervisor shall:

- A. Obtain a briefing from the responding officer.
- B. Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed.
- C. Organize and coordinate an immediate search of the area surrounding the missing child's home and/or place where the child was last seen.
- D. Determine if an Amber Alert Broadcast or Endangered Person Advisory are appropriate and should be activated.
- E. Notify the Chief's office and Public Information Officer (PIO).

- F. Establish a command post, if needed.
- G. Contact the Special Victims Unit (SVU) Supervisor and brief them of the incident and request their presence if the case is verified as child abduction.
- H. Ensure that NCIC and the MPCH have been notified by the responding officer as soon as possible with the child's information documented on the proper form(s).
- I. Monitor media relations (incoming and outgoing information).
- J. Ensure that all responding personnel complete supplemental reports.
- K. Forward the report(s) to the SVU Supervisor.

47.1.07: After an initial investigation, if the child is not located, the SVU Supervisor or on-call commander shall be contacted and advised of the situation in the following cases:

- A. In the event the missing child is 13 years of age or younger.
- B. In the event suspicious circumstances exist surrounding the child's disappearance.

47.1.08: SVU Supervisor will respond if the case is verified as a child abduction, and shall:

- A. After being briefed, assess the incident.
- B. Determine level of response.
- C. If the situation warrants, assign the Special Victims Unit responsibility.
- D. Ensure that reasonable requests from the case agent are carried out to their completion.
- E. Be responsible for command post operations, if implemented.
- F. Act as liaison between investigators and other police personnel.
- G. Request additional resources as needed.
- H. Keep the Department PIO informed of all aspects of the investigation that are releasable to the media.

47.1.9: Case Agent and Assistant Case Agent shall:

- A. Obtain briefing from personnel at the scene.
- B. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information.
- C. Ensure that proper personnel are in place to carry out a proper and thorough investigation.
- D. Keep accurate records of all investigative steps taken.
- E. Immediately assign personnel to begin a canvass of the neighborhood and initiate a major crime packet if reasonable suspicion exists that a child abduction may have taken place.

- F. Obtain a brief history of family dynamics.
- G. Utilize information gathered from the major crime packet and included canvass forms if applicable.
- H. Assign personnel to interview other family members, friends, and associates.
- I. Obtain records from Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD).
- J. Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services.
- K. Update descriptive information.
- L. Conduct follow-up interviews with reporting parent(s)/guardian(s) and all possible witnesses and suspects.
- M. Prepare necessary reports and complete appropriate forms.
- N. Assume responsibility for all phases of the investigation, with the exception of processing the scene and the collection of evidence.
- O. Notify the FBI if deemed appropriate.

47.1.10: Field Investigators or Crime Scene Technicians shall:

- A. Take preliminary photographs of the scene and search for evidence, as appropriate.
- B. Be responsible for collecting evidence at the scene and tagging it into evidence.

47.1.11: Use of Volunteers:

- A. Volunteers will be used only when absolutely necessary.
- B. If volunteers are used, they must be under direct supervision of police personnel.
- C. No person will be allowed to volunteer without first being identified.
- D. The person's information will be recorded and given to the record keeper.

<b>ACTIVATION OF AMBER ALERT</b>
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47.1.12: Criteria for Amber Alert activation:

- A. A child under the age of 18 has been abducted;
- B. The child is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death; and.
- C. There is specific information available about the child or the child's abductor that may assist in an expedient and successful end to the abduction..

47.1.13: Authorized Requestors:

- A. Operations Deputy Chief of Police
- B. Designated PIO
- C. Criminal Investigations Commander

- D. Special Victims Unit Supervisor/Commander
- E. Field Supervisor/Commander

47.1.14 Procedures for Activating an Amber Alert:

- A. An authorized requestor will contact NMSP and request to speak to their “on call” PIO. NMSP PIO will determine if the reported missing child qualifies for an Amber Alert notification and they will issue the alert statewide.
- B. The responding officer will complete the DPS MPCH form, DPS Endangered Person Advisory Report Form, DPS Amber Alert Report Form, and DPS Dental Records Release Form. The responding officer will ensure the forms are properly signed and they will provide the forms to the authorized requestor who will submit the forms to NMSP and the DPS MPCH appropriately. The signed forms will also be attached to the responding officer’s report.
- C. No one other than authorized requestors may activate the Amber Alert. Violation of this procedure can result in the Santa Fe Police Department's authorization to participate being withdrawn.
- D. Upon the completion of a child abduction investigation, the Chief of Police may direct that either a debriefing be held or an After-Action Report be prepared for an administrative review.

<b>ADULT MISSING PERSON REPORTS AND INVESTIGATION</b>
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47.1.15: This section applies to persons who are declared emancipated as defined by State statute and does not apply to juveniles.

47.1.16: While conducting preliminary or follow-up investigations regarding missing persons, personnel may encounter several situations that would require the missing adult to be entered into NCIC. For entry of a missing person into NCIC there must be reasonable grounds to believe that the disappearance was not voluntary, that the person's physical safety is in danger, that the person has a physical disability, or that the person has a mental disability. The investigating officer shall be responsible for properly documenting and submitting any information with his/her report in accordance with the following guidelines.

47.1.17: Guidelines for documentation of adult entries are as follows:

- A. When evidence suggests that a missing person's physical safety is in danger or that the person's disappearance is not voluntary, a verbal statement captured by a Body Worn Camera, from a parent, legal guardian, next of kin, or other authoritative source is required. The statement must include the circumstances relating to the person's disappearance.
- B. If the missing person has a physical and/or mental disability, a written statement verifying the missing person's condition is preferred but not required from a physician or other authoritative source, (e.g., parent, next of kin, etc.).

47.1.18: When a field patrol officer takes an adult missing persons report, it will be the responsibility of the responding officer to properly determine the circumstances (voluntary/involuntary, etc.) under which the person is missing and to include all pertinent facts surrounding the case in a complete report.

47.1.19: Upon arriving at the scene, the responding officer shall:

- A. Notify the on-duty field supervisor.
- B. Ensure that Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) transmits the appropriate initial information.
- C. Request RECC search dispatch records for prior cases involving the missing person.
- D. Interview the person(s) making the report.
- E. Obtain a physical description, last known clothing description, and recent photograph of the missing person.
- F. Advise RECC of the pertinent information received including; the description, last known location of the person, and location(s) the person may possibly go, and have RECC broadcast on all radio frequencies.
- G. Request additional officers to secure any scene(s) that may be of evidentiary value if the location is other than the home or location the officer was dispatched.
- H. Perform a DVS and CCH/III inquiries to obtain personal descriptors and numeric identifiers to pack the record.
- I. Interview potential witnesses at the scene, including children.
- J. Complete a canvass of the area and thoroughly document the results in the offense/incident report.
- K. Ensure the on-duty supervisor is apprised of pertinent information.
- L. Stay on the scene to ensure the integrity of all potential evidence and obtain any new information when available.
- M. Ensure RECC has entered the missing person into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.
- N. Complete an offense/incident report as soon as practical.
- O. Complete the DPS MPCH report form, DPS Endangered Person Advisory Report Form (if applicable), and DPS Dental Records Release Form and attach the signed copies to the offense/incident report. These forms must also be sent to DPS MPCH and/or NMSP. The above mentioned forms may be signed by any of the following methods:
  1. Digitized signatures.

2. Manual signatures scanned into the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS).
  3. The case officer's typed name into the report in the ERMS.
- P. Complete the following forms and send them to the on-duty supervisor:
1. Missing Person BOLO flier.
  2. Press release document.
- Q. Ensure body worn camera footage is tagged into evidence, along with any other items of evidentiary value.
- R. Ensure follow-up is completed to obtain medical and dental information for the missing child to be added to the report or indicate that attempts were made to gather the information within 60 days from the date of NCIC entry.

47.1.20: If the missing adult is not located by the end of the officer's shift, the officer will forward a copy of the report to the Violent Crimes Unit for follow-up investigation.

- A. If the adult disappeared under suspicious or questionable circumstances, the Violent Crimes Unit Supervisor shall be immediately notified by the on-duty supervisor to allow dispatch of the on-call detective when necessary for immediate follow-up.

47.1.21: If the missing adult has not been located by the end of the responding officer's shift, the on-duty supervisor will provide a general "pass down" of the information related to the missing person to the incoming shift and they will request RECC to disseminate the BOLO to all other local law enforcement agencies.

47.1.22: The Detective from the Violent Crimes Unit will have the final responsibility for the investigation of all adult missing persons reports in which the missing person has not been located by the end of the initiating officer's shift.

<b>ACTIVATION OF ENDANGERED PERSON ADVISORY</b>
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47.1.23: An Endangered Person Advisory may be activated if a person is reported as a missing person whose whereabouts are unknown to the person's custodian(s) or immediate family member(s) and also meets one or all of the following criteria:

- A. Is in imminent danger of causing harm to the person's self;
- B. Is in imminent danger of causing harm to another;
- C. Is in imminent danger of being harmed by another or who has been harmed by another;
- D. Has been a victim of a crime as provided in the Crimes Against Household Members Act [30-3-10 through 30-3-18 NMSA 1978] or in Section 30-3A-3 or 30-3A-3.1 NMSA 1978, or their equivalents in any other jurisdiction;



- E. Is or was protected by an order of protection pursuant to the Family Violence Protection Act [Chapter 40, Article 13 NMSA 1978];
- F. Has Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or another degenerative brain disorder or a brain injury; or
- G. Has a developmental disability as defined in Subsection A of Section 28-16A-6 NMSA 1978 and that person’s health or safety is at risk.

47.1.24: Procedures for Activating an Endangered Person Advisory:

- A. The on-duty field supervisor will contact NMSP and request to speak to their “on call” PIO. NMSP PIO will determine if the reported missing person qualifies for an Endangered Person Advisory, and they will issue the advisory statewide.
- B. The responding officer will complete the DPS MPCH form, DPS Endangered Person Advisory Report Form, Birth Certificate Flag Request Form (if applicable), and DPS Dental Records Release Form. The responding officer will ensure the forms are properly signed and they will submit the forms to NMSP and the DPS MPCH appropriately. The signed forms will also be attached to the responding officer’s report and forwarded to RECC for entry into the NCIC database.

**ACTIVATION OF BRITTANY ALERT**

47.1.25: A Brittany Alert may be activated if a person is reported as an endangered missing person whose whereabouts are unknown to the person’s custodian(s) or immediate family member(s) and also meets all of the following criteria:

- A. There must be clear indication the person has a developmental disability as described below:
  - 1. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, including the result from trauma to the brain, or combination of mental and physical impairments.
  - 2. Is manifested before the person reaches the age of 22 years old.
  - 3. Is expected to continue indefinitely.
  - 4. Results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity:
    - a. Self-care.
    - b. Receptive and expressive language.
    - c. Learning.
    - d. Mobility.
    - e. Self-direction.
    - f. Capacity for independent living.

g. Economic self-sufficiency.

5. Reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary or generic care treatment or other support and services that are of life-long or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

B. The person's health or safety is at risk.

47.1.26: Procedures for Activating a Brittany Alert:

A. The on-duty field supervisor will contact NMSP and request to speak to their "on call" PIO. NMSP PIO will determine if the reported missing person qualifies for a Brittany Alert notification, and they will issue the alert statewide.

B. The responding officer will complete the DPS MPCH form, DPS Brittany Alert Report Form, and DPS Dental Records Release Form. The responding officer will ensure the forms are properly signed and they will provide the forms to the on-duty field supervisor who will submit the forms to NMSP and the DPS MPCH appropriately. The signed forms will also be attached to the responding officer's report.

#### **ACTIVATION OF SILVER ALERT**

47.1.27: A Silver Alert may be activated if a person is reported as an endangered missing person whose whereabouts are unknown to the person's custodian(s) or immediate family member(s) and also meets the following criteria:

A. The person must be 50 years of age or older or;

B. There must be clear indication that the person suffers from Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia, regardless of their age.

1. A medical diagnosis is preferred but is not required by state statute.

47.1.28: Procedures for Activating a Silver Alert:

A. The on-duty field supervisor will contact NMSP and request to speak to their "on call" PIO. NMSP PIO will determine if the reported missing person qualifies for a Silver Alert notification, and they will issue the alert statewide.

B. The responding officer will complete the DPS MPCH form, DPS Silver Alert Report Form, and DPS Dental Records Release Form. The responding officer will ensure the forms are properly signed and they will provide the forms to the on-duty field supervisor who will submit the forms to NMSP and the DPS MPCH appropriately. The signed forms will also be attached to the responding officer's report.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR RECC**

47.1.29: Upon being dispatched, the responding Officer shall ensure that RECC completes the following:

- A. Obtain sufficient information to prepare a BOLO for the missing person.
- B. Forward or disseminate the BOLO containing the description of the missing person to all units and ensure that the BOLO is repeated to all incoming shifts.
- C. Enter the person into NCIC as outlined below:
  - 1. Immediately upon receiving a report of a missing person under the age of 21.
  - 2. Immediately upon receiving a report of a missing person who is determined to be endangered regardless of age.
  - 3. All other persons reported to RECC as missing will be entered into NCIC within 2 hours, unless the on-duty patrol supervisor reclassifies the call to a welfare check upon review of the information provided to RECC.
    - a. The 2 hour clock begins upon the time RECC receives a report of a missing person.
  - 4. Persons reported to RECC as missing where there is insufficient information to enter into NCIC will be entered into NCIC immediately upon receipt of the minimum amount of information required for entry (not to exceed 3 days) of all adults not determined to be endangered.
- D. Notify the on-duty patrol supervisor when foul play is suspected or other exigent circumstances exist (i.e. kidnapping, mental illness, etc.).

<b>SEARCH &amp; RESCUE</b>
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47.1.30: Upon notification that an individual(s) is missing and believed to be lost, or trapped, in the City of Santa Fe, the Department member receiving such information shall immediately advise the on-duty patrol supervisor of the situation. The on-duty patrol supervisor shall immediately initiate search and rescue operations if the individual is believed to be in, or immediately adjacent to, a residential area. The Department's All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), or any other specialty resources, may be deployed in the search and rescue operation at the discretion of the on-duty patrol supervisor if the individual is believed to be in a non-residential area.

47.1.31: If the individual is believed to be in a remote, or difficult to access area of the City of Santa Fe and not immediately located, the on-duty patrol supervisor shall initiate notification of the situation up the chain of command to the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

<b>NEW MEXICO STATE POLICE SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVATION</b>
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47.1.32: At the discretion of the Chief of Police, or designee, the NMSP Search and Rescue (SAR) Team in Santa Fe may be contacted through their communications center for their assistance.

- A. A Command Post shall be established and SAR operations should be continued until the arrival of the NMSP SAR Team.

- B. The on-duty commander will brief the SAR Team Leader on the situation and actions taken. The on-duty commander will assist and coordinate search and rescue operations with the SAR Team.
- C. As needed, City of Santa Fe resources, such as Fire and EMS personnel and equipment, may be requested to assist.
- D. Upon the completion of a search and rescue operation, the Chief of Police may direct that either a debriefing be held or an After-Action Report be prepared for an administrative review.

**REMOVAL OF LOCATED MISSING PERSONS FROM NCIC AND MPCH**

47.1.33: Patrol personnel or the assigned Detective will normally be responsible for taking reports of located missing persons. When the responding officer receives the report, they will physically verify the missing person has been located and assess the safety of the missing person.

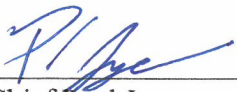
47.1.34: The responding officer will complete a follow-up investigation and document their findings within a supplemental report. The responding officer or detective will also complete one or all of the following forms (if applicable), attach the forms to their report, and submit the forms to the appropriate agency (NMSP and DPS):

- A. Located Missing Child Notification, Birth Certificate Flag Cancellation Request Form.

47.1.35: The responding officer will also ensure RECC removes the missing person from the NCIC database. The responding officer will submit their report to RECC for the removal of the located missing person.

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Approved:   
Chief Paul Joye

Date: 9/30/24