

TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



TITLE: Adult Missing Persons		Number: 608	
Effective Date: January 31, 2012		Review Date:	
New	Amends	Rescinds	General Order 608, dated October 31 2011
Authority: Chief Ronald A. Ricucci		CALEA STANDARDS 41.2.5, 41.2.6	Total Pages 8

01 Purpose: To provide guidelines and procedures for reporting and investigating all missing persons.

02 Policy: The Department will promptly and diligently investigate all reports of missing persons, whether they are adults or children. (For specific policies and procedures applicable to the investigation of missing children, see General Order 803 - Missing Children.)

03 Definitions:

A. A missing adult is any person: (1) eighteen years of age or older; (2) missing from his/her home or geographic location; (3) whose whereabouts are unknown; and (4) whose absence is for reasons or causes unknown.

B. A missing child is a person: (1) under the age of eighteen years; (2) who is the subject of a missing person report filed with a law enforcement agency in his/her state of residence; and (3) whose whereabouts are unknown.

C. A missing emancipated person is an individual: (1) under the age of eighteen years; (2) legally declared emancipated (released from parental care) by the laws of his/her state of residence; (3) who is the subject of a missing person report filed with a law enforcement agency in his/her state of residence; (4) whose whereabouts are unknown; and (5) about whom the agency has signed documentation in its possession supporting the stated conditions under which he/she has been declared missing.

04 Legal Caveats: In accordance with § 3-601 of the Public Safety Article, Maryland Code:

A. There neither is, nor will there be established, a mandatory waiting period before taking a missing person report.

B. Departmental personnel shall make every effort to inform the family of a missing person and the general public that the Department does not impose a mandatory waiting period before taking a missing person report.

C. Departmental personnel shall accept without delay a report of a missing person: (1) provided in person; and/or (2) provided by phone or other electronic means if the reporting person consents to completing the report in person as soon as possible.

05 Missing Adult Investigative Procedures:

A. Receipt of an Adult Missing Person Report: Communications personnel receiving a complaint/report of a missing adult are responsible for:

1. Determining if the circumstances of the report meet the definition of a missing adult as noted in Section 03 of this Order. By questioning the caller about the circumstances, the on-duty Communications Dispatcher can make a preliminary assessment of the level of risk to the missing person. If an abduction is alleged, an effort should be made to obtain sufficient information from the reporting party to make a radio broadcast alert to on-duty officers. Information should include descriptive particulars as well as the location where last seen. A radio broadcast should relate any information known about a possible abductor, with special emphasis on a description of the suspect and vehicle used as well as direction of travel.

2. Promptly dispatching an officer to the scene of the report.

3. Notifying the on-duty Shift Supervisor of the report of a missing person.

B. Initial Investigation: Upon dispatch to the scene of a missing person report, the responding officer will:

1. Interview the complainant/reporting person and any other known and available witnesses, family, friends, and neighbors to establish the missing person's last known location, what is known about why the person may be missing, possible whereabouts and/or destinations of the person, and possible associates of the missing person.

2. Inquire about, and record, each item of information necessary to fill out a State of Maryland Missing Person Report Form and TPPD Form #300-54, Missing Person File Check List, to consolidate all information and obtain NCIC-entry authorization, if necessary. The signature of the complainant or responsible adult reporting person will be affixed to the Maryland Missing Person Report Form to serve as authorization for NCIC entry. Minimum information to be recorded or addressed for NCIC entry shall include:

- * TPPD case#, ORI, OCA
- * Full name and any aliases
- * Date and place of birth
- * Descriptive data (sex, race, height, weight, eye color, hair color, circumcision, scars, marks and tattoos, skin tone, jewelry, clothing)
- * Identifying #s (SSN, FBI, driver's license, etc.)
- * Availability of records (dental, blood type, body x-rays, fingerprint, footprint, DNA)
- * Vehicle identifying and descriptive information
- * Date of last contact
- * Medical information
- * Emancipation
- * Category (disability, involuntary, disaster victim, endangered, juvenile, other)

3. Brief other assisting units as to circumstances of, and possible reason for, the disappearance and possible areas to search.

4. Request dispatcher to broadcast a description of the missing person, if necessary.

5. Complete a Teletype Request Form, TPPD Form #300-55, to cause Communications Dispatch to send a teletype to other jurisdictions, if appropriate.

6. Fax a copy of the State of Maryland Missing Person Report Form to the Maryland Center for Missing Persons (Fax No. 410-290-1831).

7. Consult with shift supervisor to determine if immediate follow-up will be required.
8. Submit initial police report and Command Summary of the case.

C. On-duty Shift Supervisor's responsibilities:

1. Determine if the missing person meets the criteria for an NCIC entry, as denoted in Section 06 of this Order. If so, the person will be considered a "Critically Missing Person – Adult" and the on-call CID investigator will be notified.

2. In the case of a critically missing adult who is an elderly person possibly suffering from Alzheimer's Disease or dementia, or who may be mentally or physically challenged or disabled, or who is a college student, the alert system of "A Child Is Missing Program" will also be contacted at 1-888-875-2246 and provided the critically missing person's description, last known whereabouts, and any other information that might facilitate locating efforts. (**Note:** The high tech capabilities of the Program are not limited to missing children.) The call, answered 24/7/365 by an Information and Mapping Technician, will cause rapid placement of phone calls with an alert message to be placed between 7:00 am and 10:30 pm (EST) to residents and businesses in the area where the person went missing. The alert message will also include a TPPD phone number for use by anyone with information relating to the critically missing person. The on-duty Operations shift supervisor will also ensure the initial Missing Person Report (TPPD Form 300-54) contains documentation of the date and time that "A Child Is Missing" was notified, whether or not the alert system was activated, and any results therefrom.

3. Ensure intensive search and/or investigative actions (see Section 07 herein) are commenced if circumstances warrant such actions. In this event the supervisor will notify the on-call Duty Command Officer.

4. Evaluate the need to notify the media.

5. Ensure the initial police report and Command Summary are submitted prior to the end of the investigating officer's shift, so that CIS can assume the investigation and have access to all available information.

D. Criminal Investigations Responsibilities: The on-call CIS investigator that is notified of a critically missing person, or the Commander of Investigative Services upon receipt of a report of a missing person, will ensure that:

1. Follow-up contact is made with the complainant/reporting person.

2. Any additional information about the missing person's possible whereabouts or the circumstances of his/her disappearance are investigated.

3. A re-evaluation of the need for media notification is made.

E. City Resident Missing Outside the City: When a report is received concerning a City resident who is believed to be missing in another jurisdiction (e.g., elsewhere in Montgomery County, in another Maryland county, or in another State) under circumstances that would warrant an investigation if the person was missing in Takoma Park, the following procedures will be followed:

1. **Report:** A Police Information Report (CAD clearance code 2938) will be written in lieu of a Missing Person Report. A copy of the report will be forwarded to CIS for follow-up action.
2. **Notification:** (a) If the report pertains to a critically missing adult or critically missing child, the officer will notify the on-call investigator immediately; (b) In a non-critical case, the officer will immediately contact the jurisdiction wherein the missing person is believed to be. This will be noted in the report, to include a point of contact and a phone number for the other jurisdiction.
3. **Liaison:** Once an investigator is assigned to the case, the investigator will act as a liaison between the complainant and the jurisdiction wherein the missing person is believed to be. The investigator will fax a copy of the report to the other jurisdiction.
4. **NCIC Entry:** The jurisdiction wherein the missing person is believed to be, or was last known to be, is responsible for making the NCIC entry. However, the Takoma Park investigator will cause the entry to be made if the other jurisdiction disclaims responsibility.

06 NCIC Entry Procedures:

A. When evaluating whether a missing child or adult is to be entered into NCIC, the NCIC Guidelines will be followed. Those guidelines specify one of the following criteria must be met for entry:

1. The person is disabled, with a proven mental or physical disability, or is senile, thereby subjecting him/her or others to personal and immediate danger.
2. The person is endangered or there are circumstances indicating physical danger.
3. The person is missing under circumstances indicative of a kidnaping or abduction.
4. The person is the victim of a catastrophe and is missing.
5. The person is a juvenile.
6. The missing person is over the age of 18 and does not meet the criteria for entry in any of the foregoing categories, but there is a reasonable concern for his/her safety.

B. If it is determined that NCIC entry is appropriate, as soon as possible the officer or CID investigator will forward to communications dispatch personnel a completed TPPD Form 300-54, Missing Person File Check List, and a State of Maryland Missing Person Report Form, with the latter containing the signature of the complainant or responsible adult reporting person. If it is not possible to obtain a signature of the complainant, next of kin, or reporting person, then a signed statement form indicating their knowledge of the circumstances supporting the report shall be sufficient.

C. Once the information is entered into METERS/NCIC, communications personnel will return the forms and copies of any teletypes sent to the reporting officer/investigator, who will attach them to the Incident Report and designate copies for Administrative Services (Records) and CID.

07 Intensive Search Procedures:

The following procedures should be incorporated, if possible, in an intensive search for a Critically Missing Person:

A. Prompt notification to CIS supervisor during regular business hours or on-call investigator after hours, either of whom will notify the on-call Duty Commander.

B. One officer will remain with the complainant, who should remain in the home if the person is missing from the residence. Telephones should be kept as free as possible to enable in-coming calls.

C. A command post will be established, out of hearing distance from the complainant and under direction of the Shift Supervisor. Communications will advise all incoming resources of the exact location of the command post and to report there for assignment. The command post will:

- * be the central source for information related to the search and the staging area for all incoming resources;
- * set the search areas;
- * evaluate and allocate resources for the search;
- * record all activity relative to the search;
- * provide information necessary for any media briefings;
- * request additional resources from other agencies, as appropriate, and consider use of K-9 with tracking capability and/or aircraft to include helicopter with heat-detecting capability, depending on characteristics of the search and the subject of the search.

D. The CIS investigator will conduct an exhaustive interview with the complainant and perform follow-up investigation, which may preclude direct command of the command post, but will maintain communication with the post.

E. With the arrival of a Command-level officer, he/she may assume supervision of the search.

G. A clear photograph (the most recent possible) of the search subject should be obtained and copies made for distribution to searchers.

H. The location at which the missing person was last seen will be checked. Greater thoroughness should be paid to this location, depending on the age and mental condition of the search subject.

I. A search grid will be established, with the last known location as the center and the searchers moving out therefrom, or some other systematic method as deemed appropriate. Coverage will be plotted on a map at the command post.

J. Two-person search teams will be used whenever possible, which may be facilitated by volunteer civilian participants paired with an officer.

K. Residents in the immediate vicinity should be interviewed directly, including individuals in the same age group as the search subject.

L. One unit may be assigned to check sites attractive to, or frequented by, the search subject, such as parks and playgrounds for young children.

M. Searches for critically missing children and adults with impaired mental capacity, such as Alzheimer's Disease, should include a comprehensive interview with the complainant to identify possible locations to which the subject may be attracted. If the search subject is operating a vehicle, contact should be made with law enforcement agencies in the area of identified locations.

08 Assistance by the Maryland State Police:

A. Pursuant to the Public Safety Article, §3-604, Maryland Annotated Code, the Maryland State Police (MSP) has put into effect a "Silver Alert" program to assist in the timely recovery of individuals with cognitive disorders who have gone missing. Patterned after the AMBER Alert program for critically missing children, the Silver Alert requires that certain criteria be met involving the critically missing person before the MSP will issue an alert:

- 1.** The missing person must suffer from a cognitive impairment, such as Alzheimer's Disease or dementia.
- 2.** The person's disappearance must pose a true threat to his/her health and safety.
- 3.** The missing person must be traveling in a vehicle and there must be enough descriptive information about the person and the vehicle for an alert to be issued.
- 4.** The investigating police department must have already activated a local alert by contacting the media in its area.
- 5.** The missing person must have been entered into the NCIC database.

B. The law directs the MSP to coordinate a notification plan upon request from other law enforcement agencies and confirmation that the aforementioned criteria have been met. Such assistance may be requested at the direction of Command authority. The on-call/assigned investigator will review the original officer's information and determine whether investigative developments meet the Silver Alert requirements. If so, the investigator will notify the on-call Duty Commander of his/her intent to request a Silver Alert by the MSP.

1. If in concurrence, the on-call Duty Commander will cause notification to the Chief and Public Information Officer.

2. The investigator will contact the MSP duty officer at MSP Headquarters, telephone 410-653-4200, who will notify the MSP Silver Alert coordinator. The TPPD investigator should be prepared to provide MSP an investigator's telephone contact that can and will be immediately accessible for callback, as well as the telephone numbers for the public to call with investigative leads and for the media to call for information.

3. Upon confirmation of the Silver Alert criteria, the MSP coordinator will contact the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and request an emergency alert. This alert will go to all Maryland police departments, media outlets, and 9-1-1 centers. The State Police coordinator will also contact the State Highway Administration. Alert information, including a description of the person and the vehicle he or she is traveling in, will then be displayed on overhead highway signs in the geographic area where the missing person was last seen. Information may also be broadcast on the Highway Advisory Radio network.

4. Media broadcast outlets, alerted by MSP, will direct informants to contact this Department (the investigative leads phone number) and/or 9-1-1.

5. This Department will be responsible for the investigation and for any requests for media interviews and information. As soon as possible, information regarding the look-out for the missing person and/or vehicle will be provided to Communications Dispatch and the Public Information Officer.

09 Recovery and Follow-up: Whenever a missing person has been located, it is the responsibility of the shift supervisor receiving such information to:

A. Ensure that recovery is confirmed; that the circumstances of the return and the condition of the individual are documented; and appropriate case closure is assigned.

B. Ensure the missing person is immediately removed from METERS/NCIC.

C. Ensure that, upon recovery of a missing person who is the subject of a Silver Alert, the investigator will cause notification of the MSP Duty Officer at MSP Headquarters, who will alert the media of the recovery and cause the alerts to be discontinued. In all cases of recovery/return, the investigator (patrol or CID, depending upon who is handling the investigation) will promptly email notification to the Public Information Officer who, in turn, will cancel local public alerts/lookouts. Note: If recovery/return is handled by patrol, notification will also be made to assigned or on-call CID investigator.

D. Ensure that a follow-up contact is made with the original complainant to advise him/her the search subject has been located. Divulging details of the subject's location or condition may not be appropriate, and in some cases may compromise the subject's privacy concerns.

E. During the follow-up contact in the case of a missing person with cognitive disabilities, the complainant, caregiver and/or family members shall be informed of the following resources available to them that can assist in the search and safe recovery of missing persons with cognitive disorders:

1. The National Silver Alert Program: This program is open to all senior citizens and individuals with Alzheimer's or other cognitive disorders, regardless of age, who wish to have their vital health, personal, medical and caregiver information readily available in the event of an emergency. The information is stored in a secure, online database, where it can be accessed by emergency responders via the National Silver Alert call center's toll-free, emergency phone number. The free, online registration program (www.nationalsilveralert.com) records the vital information as well as a photograph of each registered individual. The program also offers ID Card Packages and ID Bracelets and Pendants that inform emergency responders how to retrieve vital emergency information.

2. Project Lifesaver: This is a proactive response by the Montgomery County Police to identify individuals within the community who have a propensity to wander and not be able to return home. Once identified, these individuals are equipped with a trackable bracelet so that in the event they wander police, using specialized equipment, can find them in a short amount of time