



Bowie Police Department - General Orders

TITLE: MISSING PERSON		NUMBER: 447
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AUTHORITY Chief John K. Nesky	ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS CALEA STANDARDS: 41.2.5 54.1.1.a 41.2.6	TOTAL PAGES 13
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I. POLICY

It is the policy of the City of Bowie Police Department to actively investigate missing person incidents, persons with physical or mental problems, and incidents involving persons missing under suspicious circumstances including when foul play may be involved.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. A Missing Adult is any person who is:
 - 1. Eighteen (18) years of age or older; AND,
 - 2. Missing from his/her home or geographical location; AND
 - 3. Whose whereabouts are unknown; AND,
 - 4. The reason for, and/or cause of the absence is also unknown.
- B. A Missing Child is a person who is:
 - 1. Under the age of eighteen (18) years; AND,
 - 2. The subject of a missing persons report filed with a law enforcement agency; AND
 - 3. Whose whereabouts are unknown.
- C. Runaway

Any juvenile under the age of eighteen (18) who purposefully leaves home to escape (parental custody and/or guidance) and there is concern among family members for the welfare of such individual.
- D. A Critical Missing Subject is a person who is:

1. Child, elderly person, disabled person, mental patient, disoriented person in need of swift medical assistance, or other individual in need of prompt locating; AND,
2. Whose whereabouts are unknown.
3. Critical Missing child is seventeen (17) years old or under.

E. Abduction

Within this General Order, Abduction shall mean that a child is reported to be involuntarily missing from the person(s) having care-taking responsibilities for the child. There is an eyewitness who states that the child was taken by a person or persons. Lacking an eyewitness, there exists concrete evidence that the child's disappearance was not voluntary.

F. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Entry

Within this General Order, an NCIC entry will be considered any information entered into the index of criminal justice information with regards to a missing person.

G. Teletype (TTY) Entry

Within this General Order, a Teletype entry contains information regarding a missing person or runaway.

III. PROCEDURES

From the time of the first notification to the Department, sufficient information should be taken to determine if the report indicates an emergency or if immediate response is necessary. Although not every report involves an extreme emergency, proper response will often result in the safe return of the missing person.

A. Missing Person/Exceptional Circumstances: (CALEA 41.2.5.f)

1. Phase I: Normally involves patrol officers being dispatched to a location to investigate a report of a missing person. If the person is not immediately located, and if exigent circumstances or the possibility of foul play exists, the on-duty Shift Supervisor will respond to the scene and direct the initial investigation and/or search.
2. Phase II: Involves the participation of the Criminal Investigations Section (CIS) to assist patrol with any necessary investigation of the incident.
3. Phase III: Involves CIS assuming responsibility for the incident due to indications of foul play or criminal activity. The CIS Sergeant, or his/her designee, will assume investigative command and direct all participating personnel.
4. Phase IV: Involves extended follow-up investigation by CIS.

B. Phase I:

1. The first responding officer on the scene will:
 - a. Interview the reporting party, family, parents, friends, witnesses, neighbors, etc., to obtain an initial description and gather all pertinent information; (CALEA 41.2.5.a)
 - b. Determine the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and advise a supervisor if assistance is required; (CALEA 41.2.5.a)

- c. Gather and disseminate as much information as is immediately available, including photographs. (CALEA 41.2.5.a & b)
- d. Depending on the circumstances, an immediate search may need to be initiated, commencing with the location the person was last known to be, the residence or possible route of travel.
- e. Brief other assisting units of a possible reason for the disappearance, possible areas to search and request broadcast of information, if indicated. (CALEA 41.2.5.b)

2. The on-duty Shift Supervisor will:

- a. Assume overall command of the incident.
- b. Evaluate the circumstances and investigation thus far.
- c. Review the circumstances of the disappearance to determine if the person is lost or possibly the victim of criminal activity.
- d. Coordinate the activities of participating personnel, to include allied agencies and the Prince George's County Fire Department (PGFD), if appropriate. Searches should include searches within specific grids. Door to door searches will be conducted, if applicable (i.e., in a residential neighborhood). (CALEA 41.2.5.e)
- e. Ensure that an accurate log or record is kept of areas searched, persons contacted, actions taken and personnel involved.
- f. Ensure all necessary information (updates) regarding the missing person is broadcast or conveyed to other concerned agencies or jurisdictions. (CALEA 41.2.5.b)
- g. Continue to direct supervision of line personnel and request assistance, if necessary.
- h. Evaluate the use of personnel and/or resource requirements and adjust as necessary.
- i. Evaluate the need for special assistance (Canine, Air Support, Search and Rescue, etc.).
- j. Ensure required notifications are made.
- k. Request the involvement of CIS and the initiation of Phase II, if necessary.

C. Phase II: Upon request of the on-duty Shift Supervisor, CIS will respond to the scene. The CIS Sergeant or his/her designee, and CIS detectives responding will report to the on-duty Shift Supervisor and assist with the investigative aspect of the incident. Actions normally taken include:

- 1. Establish a temporary command post.
- 2. Notify the Division Commander.
- 3. The on-duty Shift Supervisor shall remain in command to oversee the overall operation until relieved by CIS personnel. Although a Command officer may be in-charge of the overall tactical coordination, CIS personnel will remain in-charge of the investigative leads and follow-up.
- 4. Interview the reporting party, family, parents, friends, witnesses, neighbors, etc. (CALEA 41.2.5.d)

5. Conduct a thorough background check of the missing person, reporting parties, and other investigative leads.
6. Assist the on-duty Shift Supervisor in making required notifications, coordinating with other agencies and appropriate NCIC entries. (CALEA 41.2.5.c)
7. Recommend initiation of Phase III if the investigation or search becomes complex or extended, and/or additional resources are required.

D. Phase III: If the missing person is not found within a reasonable period of time (depending upon age, weather, and/or circumstances, within 1 to 2 hours), then the on-duty Shift Supervisor may request that Phase III be initiated. However, if abduction is suspected or probable Phase III may begin immediately.

1. A Commander or his/her designee will respond to the scene and assume overall command.
2. A task force of officers may be assigned initially under the direction of the CIS Sergeant and overseen by the above Commander.
3. The command post will be relocated if possible in a suitable nearby facility where telephone and radio communications will be established.
4. All press releases will be coordinated by the command post. (CALEA 41.2.5.b & 54.1.1.a)
5. Actions taken in Phase III will involve, at a minimum, evaluation of the search and investigation to date, expanding the scope as indicated, door to door contacts, including requests for additional resources, and notification of other agencies such as the Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD), United States Park Police (USPD), Maryland State Police (MSP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A task force may be organized for a sustained operation on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, if warranted. Personnel resources will be assigned to maximize the search and investigative effort.
6. Logs, reports, and related paperwork will be organized and promptly processed by a CIS detective to facilitate direction and continuity of the investigation. The Department Command Staff will be briefed in a timely manner.

E. Phase IV: If the missing person is not found during Phase III, the Division Commander or his/her designee will recommend scaling down the effort at a point in the investigation when all viable leads have been exhausted and all possible locations have been searched. The decision to disband the task force and command post will be made by the Division Commander after consultation with the on-duty Shift Supervisor, CIS Sergeant, and approval of the Chief of Police.

1. Phase IV will involve continued follow-up by CIS of any new information, viable leads and additional media publicity.
2. The case will remain in an open status and assigned to a detective until such time that the missing person is located or the case is solved.

IV. MISSING PERSON:

1. Reports: Officers will use the State of Maryland Missing Person's Report Form, and details of the incident will be reported on a Departmental Continuation Report. These reports shall be made in person whenever possible. The exceptions to the time limit are situations involving juveniles, elderly persons, person with physical or mental disabilities, person missing after a catastrophe/kidnapped/ abducted person, a person

missing in the company of another person indicating their physical safety is in danger or life threatening medication, if the above exceptional circumstances apply, Section A of this policy should be implemented. (CALEA 41.2.5.f)

2. When responding to a missing person call, the officer will obtain as much initial information as possible for the report. A separate incident report number will be assigned to each missing person. If two (2) or more persons are missing from the same family at the same time under similar circumstances, a separate MSP Form with an incident report number and a Department Continuation Report will be generated for each missing person.
 - a. In addition to the general information obtained, the Missing Persons Report should contain the following information: (CALEA 41.2.5.a)
 - i. Clothing and jewelry description;
 - ii. Previous medical condition;
 - iv. Current medical condition;
 - v. Drugs (therapeutic and abusive);
 - vi. Vehicle information associated with the disappearance; and,
 - vii. Dental records information, if available.
3. Photographs: The most recent photograph of the missing person shall be obtained from the reporting person. On the reverse side of the photograph the officer will write the incident report number, the date or approximate age of the photograph, victim's name, title of the report and the officer's initials. The photo will be obtained and submitted with the original Missing Person's report.
4. The Missing Person's report shall be completed expeditiously and prior to the end of the officer's shift. The reporting officer shall prepare a supplement to document all relevant information. (CALEA 41.2.5.b)
5. The officer taking the missing person report will: (CALEA 41.2.5.a)
 - a. Request Public Safety Communications to broadcast the missing person information when appropriate.
 - b. Request that Public Safety Communications send out an area wide teletype when appropriate.
6. NCIC: The reporting Officer shall call PG Teletype to have the missing entered into the NCIC system, if applicable. For the purpose of NCIC, entries of missing persons are divided into four categories and must meet the criteria of one of the categories in order to be entered into NCIC as a missing person. (CALEA 41.2.5.c)
 - a. A person of any age who is missing.
 - b. Who is under proven physical or mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - c. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.

d. A person of any age who is in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety is in danger.

e. A person who is declared un-emancipated (under the age of 18 years) as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in a, b, or c above.

7. Justification: When possible, it is requested that the agency entering a missing person in any of the preceding categories have documentation from a source other than the investigating police agency at the time of the entry supporting the stated conditions under which the person is declared missing for NCIC purposes. This documentation reassures that the individual's rights to privacy will not be violated and may consist of:

a. When feasible, a written statement from the parent or legal guardian confirming that the person is missing and verifying the date of birth.

b. When feasible, a written statement from a physician or other authoritative source corroborating the missing person's physical or mental disability.

c. When feasible, a written statement from a parent, legal guardian, family member or other authoritative source advising that the missing person's disappearance was not voluntary or that they are in the company of another person under circumstances indicating their physical safety is in danger.

d. Having the reporting party sign the front of the Missing Person's Report may also serve as proper documentation.

8. When obtained, a Missing Persons written statement will be completed and signed by the appropriate reporting individual and submitted with the officer's report, if feasible. In situations where the missing person has a mental or physical disability, an independent third party written corroboration shall be attached to the Missing Person's Report.

9. Missing Adults: In cases involving missing adults:

a. The officer dispatched to take the report will contact the reporting party as soon as possible and use the utmost tact and courtesy while questioning.

b. The officer should inquire as to the personal habits and the physical and mental condition of the person reported missing, (i.e., whether there have been recent family quarrels or trouble, whether the person has ever been missing before, whether the person is having financial or marital problems, job uncertainties or is a heavy drinker, etc).

c. Police officers cannot force missing persons to return home against their wishes, and shall advise the reporting party that the whereabouts of a located missing adult will not be released if the disappearance was voluntary and no crime is involved. (CALEA 41.2.5.d & e)

d. Once the missing adult has returned and/or been located, the Police Department shall first verify this information, in person (whether the victim comes to the Department or the officer responds to the residence) prior to completing a supplement report and calling PG Teletype to remove the individual from the MILES/NCIC system. If the missing adult is located out of the City, the personal verification should be completed with the assistance of the allied agency in that jurisdiction. (CALEA 41.2.5.c)

V. MISSING JUVENILES

A. Follow Phase I-IV as outlined above.

1. The on-duty Shift Supervisor will in addition to the above actions take the following actions for juveniles: (CALEA 41.2.6.e)

a. Determine if the Maryland Amber Alert System needs to be set in motion. (CALEA 41.2.6.d)

b. Determine if a Child is Missing Alert should be set in motion. (CALEA 41.2.6.d)

c. Review the circumstances of the disappearance to determine if the child or juvenile is lost or possibly the victim of criminal activity.

B. Missing Children and Juveniles Reports: Reports on missing child(ren) and juveniles will be written on the Missing Persons Report Form, and details of the incident will be reported on a Departmental Supplement. These reports shall be made in person whenever possible. There are no time limits (waiting a period of time prior to taking a report) on reporting a missing child or juvenile.

1. Photographs: The most recent photograph of the missing child or juvenile shall be obtained from the reporting person and submitted with the original missing person report .

2. The Missing Persons report shall be completed expeditiously and prior to the end of the officer's shift. The reporting officer shall prepare a supplement to document all relevant information and forward a hard copy to the on-duty Communications Specialist.

3. The officer taking the missing person report will:

a. Request the on-duty Communications Specialist broadcast the missing person information when appropriate.

b. Request that Communications send out an area wide teletype, when appropriate.

4. NCIC: The reporting Officer shall call Prince George's County Teletype to have the information input into NCIC.

For the purpose of NCIC, entries of missing persons are divided into four categories and must meet the criteria of one of the categories in order to be entered into NCIC as a missing person.

a. A person of any age who is missing and who is under proven physical or mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal and immediate danger.

b. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.

c. A person of any age who is in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety is in danger.

d. A person who is declared unemancipated (under the age of 18 years) as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in a, b, or c above.

VI. CRITICAL MISSING SUBJECT SEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Patrol Officers

1. Upon verification by the initial patrol officer at the scene, of a critical missing subject, the officer will immediately advise the on-duty supervisor.
2. **The initial officer(s) shall conduct an intensive search of the home or immediate area at least twice (in the event the party is hiding/moving).** In the event of a missing child, the search should be expanded to include any small spaces that could double as a hiding place. Two separate officers, one preferably a supervisor, should be utilized for the search of the home or immediate area.
3. The initial officer will broadcast a lookout for the critical missing person including as much pertinent information as appropriate regarding their description, clothing, vehicle, etc.
4. The responding patrol officer(s) will initiate appropriate contact with the acquaintances, friends, and relatives the missing person is likely to contact. Contact should also be made with the local taxicab companies, MTA bus service, and local hospitals when appropriate.
5. An area canvass of surrounding neighborhoods and communities should be initiated immediately following the patrol officer's verification of a critical missing subject.
6. Consideration should be made as to whether or not any previous missing person reports or police reports of any nature have been filed for the subject.
7. The responding officer will obtain photographs of the missing person from the reporting party or other immediately available resources.
8. If the critical missing subject is a child, special consideration should be afforded to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the missing child. An officer (i.e., chaplain) should be assigned to the parent(s) or guardian(s) to serve as a liaison between them and the Department for the duration of the search.
9. The location from which a person goes missing should be treated like a crime scene until proven otherwise. As such, any consent to search should be documented and photographs of rooms, houses, surround areas, etc. should be taken.
10. The initial officer will ensure that an appropriate party remains at the home, or scene, in case the critical missing subject returns.
11. If the missing person is located during the search, the locating officer will verify his/her welfare and offer to return the individual to his/her home, to a medical facility, or to the Police Station, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the situation. The

locating officer's supervisor will make notification to the reporting party and the assigned Departmental liaison, as appropriate.

B. Patrol Supervisor

1. The on duty Patrol Supervisor will determine if additional officers should be dispatched to immediately conduct a physical search of the area.
2. The Supervisor will also determine whether other personnel, special equipment, or other agencies are immediately required to assist in conducting the search. The names and ranks of any other personnel involved should be documented.
3. The Supervisor will make an initial determination regarding the need for a response from the Criminal Investigations Section (CIS):
 - a. CIS assistance may be helpful (tracking credit card or ATM card use, cellular phone use, interviewing witnesses, etc.)
 - b. Supervisors should be aware of the potential for criminal activity in any missing person case. CIS may begin a "parallel" investigation early in the incident.
4. The Supervisor, unless relieved by the on duty Division Commander, will be responsible for the search operation and the coordination of all personnel and agencies involved.
5. The Supervisor, in conjunction with the Division Commander, will determine the need to activate the Incident Command System (ICS).

C. Division Commander

1. The Division Commander will assume management of any incident regarding the search and rescue of lost or missing persons if the situation meets the following criteria:
 - a. The search will involve more than four officers at any time;
 - b. The search may be longer than two hours in duration;
 - c. The search will involve two or more Departments within the County;
 - d. The search involves significant community impact/outreach.
2. The Division Commander will determine the need to activate the Incident Command System (ICS) and ensure the following (Should the ICS be activated, the following will default to the Commander):
 - a. Determining an appropriate Incident Command Post staging site, one that sits away from but within proximity to the residence.
 - b. Ensuring that the operation is moved to a dedicated radio talk group this is monitored by Dispatch.
 - c. Ensuring that a Scribe documents the incident.
 - d. Ensuring the development of an operational plan.
 - e. Determining if a flyer needs to be developed and circulated.

- f. Determining if the Amber Alert program should be activated, obtain a Public Information Officer in the event media coverage is anticipated or desired to assist in getting vital information publicized.
- g. Determining when to discontinue the operation.
- h. Ensuring a documented critique of any significant search operation is conducted. A copy of the documentation shall be provided to the Administrative Sergeant for Accreditation purposes.

VII. AMBER ALERT

The Maryland AMBER Plan will be set in motion Statewide by the Maryland State Police only upon request made by law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies making such request must first determine if the following criteria exist:

A. Law Enforcement verifies that a child has been abducted;

B. Law Enforcement believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate the child is in serious danger of bodily harm or death;

C. There must be enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert would help; and,

D. The abductor and/or child are likely to still be in the broadcast area.

NOTE: Child abduction by a non-custodial parent is not a case which would routinely meet the Maryland AMBER Plan criteria, unless the investigating agency can articulate a reasonable suspicion that the parent intends to physically harm the child.

E. Upon confirmation of the above criteria, Law Enforcement Agencies will contact the Maryland State Police Headquarters Duty Officer and request that the Maryland AMBER Plan be activated.

F. Contact may be made by:

1. Telephone: 410-486-3101 or 800-525-5555 (in State only);

2. Facsimile: 410-653-4269; or

G. The requesting Agency will be immediately contacted by the designated Maryland AMBER Plan coordinator from either the Command Staff of the Criminal Enforcement Command or the Maryland Center for Missing Children. The coordinator will review all requests for alerts for existence of the above criteria.

H. After an abduction is confirmed and it meets all points for activation:

1. The Maryland State Police may enter the necessary information into the designated website, www.MDAMBERplan.mdsp.org, or if immediate Internet access is available, the Law Enforcement Agency may complete the Maryland AMBER Plan website itself.

2. The Maryland State Police will notify the five Maryland/DC EAS stations by telephone, followed up by FAX, of the activation of the Maryland AMBER Plan and provide the necessary information for broadcast.

3. The Maryland State Police will notify the Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration, Statewide Operations Center (SOC), of the activation of the Maryland AMBER Plan and provide the necessary information for display on the Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) and Highway Advisory Radios (HAR). The DMS has three (3) lines which contains twenty-two (22) characters each.

4. The EAS stations will broadcast a civil emergency/child abduction message to all media outlets. The participating media outlets then broadcast the lookout(s) to the public.

5. The SOC will display lookout information on the DMS signs under SOC control and contact the Maryland Department of Transportation Authority (MDTA) and provide them with the information to be displayed on the DMS signs under MDTA control. The SOC will place lookout information on the HAR.

VIII. BROADCAST TO THE PUBLIC:

A. EAS stations will record and transmit the alert to all area media outlets via EAS. After being notified by MSP, media outlets may go to the website www.MDAMBERplan.mdsp.org to verify and retrieve a text of the alert. The broadcast will include an attention getting tone unique to child abductions, and the alert should begin with the phrase: "This is a Child Abduction ~~Alert~~ please stand by for important information."

B. The alert shall include the following:

1. A child has been abducted;
2. Where the abduction took place;
3. A description of the child, to include name, age, and physical descriptors.
4. A description of the abductor;
5. A description of the vehicle involved;
6. The last known direction of travel of the suspect vehicle; and,
7. Instructions for the public to contact 911 with any information.

C. As programming permits, participating broadcasters should broadcast this alert 4 times per hour for the first two (2) hours after the initial alert, continuing with three (3) times per hour for the next three (3) hours. The alert should conclude with a statement that person(s) who may locate the abductor should take no action other than to call 911 as soon as possible and provide law enforcement with the location. Updated alerts may be broadcast if significant new information that may result in the location of the abductor and/or child has been developed, or they have been found within twenty-four (24) hours.

D. The MDOT/SOC will display information about the alert on DMS signs. These signs will display, at a minimum:

1. AMBER Alert activation;
2. A description of the vehicle involved; and,

3. A request to call 911 with information.

E. The MDOT/SOC information will be displayed for the first two hours after the initial alert. This information may be displayed for more than two (2) hours, if information is developed that may warrant the display of this information for a greater time period.

F. The MDOT/SOC will place information about the alert on the HAR. This information will include details of the alert and conclude with a statement that the person(s) who may locate the abductor should take no action other than to call the local law enforcement agency as soon as possible and provide them with the location. Updated alerts may be broadcast if significant new information that may result in the location of the abductor and/or child is developed, or they have been found within twenty-four (24) hours.

G. If the child has not been recovered within twenty-four (24) hours, the alert is self-canceling.

VII. ACTIVATION REVIEW:

As soon as practical after activation of a Maryland AMBER Alert, the coordinating Council Members will meet with the law enforcement agency that activated the Maryland AMBER Alert to review the implementation of established procedures and address any deficiencies.

IX. INVESTIGATOR FOLLOW UP

1. Returned missing persons shall be removed from teletype.
2. Refer to the CIS SOP for supplemental documentation for missing persons in excess of 30 days.