



North Royalton Police Department

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<i>Subject</i> Missing Persons		
<i>Reference</i> 11-69		
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I. PURPOSE

The investigation and resolution of missing persons cases are an important responsibility of law enforcement. The difficult problems surrounding missing persons cases demand a prompt, informed, and uniform response from law enforcement.

II. POLICY

North Royalton Police Department members will take prompt action and thoroughly investigate all reports of missing persons.

III. DISCUSSION

It is a departmental policy that officers taking a missing persons report investigate the missing person case in accordance with Ohio Revised Code:

- A. 2901.30 Missing Child Report
- B. 2901.42 Missing Persons Report Indicating Foul Play

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Responding officers must complete the necessary reports and begin an investigation that is appropriate for existing circumstances. During all phases of the investigation, officers must pay particular attention to follow up leads and collection of evidence. If responding officers can readily locate the missing person, they must attempt to do so.
- B. Officers may encounter several types of missing person cases, each with their own response requirements. They include:

- 1. Lost or missing child
- 2. Runaway child
- 3. Non-family abduction
- 4. Family abduction
- 5. Abandoned / deserted child
- 6. Missing adult
- 7. Disaster victim
- C. Report information
 - 1. When officers receive a complaint of a missing person, they must gather information about the description of the person, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Full name and nickname
 - b. Date and place of birth
 - c. Race and gender
 - d. Social security number
 - e. Height and weight
 - f. Color of hair and eyes
 - g. Use of glasses/contact lenses
 - h. Jewelry
 - i. Physical or mental disabilities
 - j. Special medical conditions or needs
 - k. Abnormalities
 - l. Scars, marks, tattoos, and other distinguishing characteristics
 - m. Drivers license number
 - n. Clothing
 - o. Time, date, and location of last known contact
 - 2. Missing persons reports must include all pertinent information and details that would be valuable as investigative aids such as:
 - a. Clothing, money, cell phone, pager, computer, credit cards, and any other items taken by the missing person
 - b. Possible destination
 - c. Acquaintances who may provide assistance



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- d. Photographs
 - e. Occupation
 - f. Vehicle information
 - g. Hobbies and interests
 - h. Frequented locations
 - i. Location of dental/medical records
 - j. History of runaway offenses and locations where previously found
 - k. Arrest record
 - l. Fingerprints/DNA on file
 - m. All other pertinent information discovered by investigating officers
- D. Entry of missing persons into LEADS / NCIC:
1. Information from missing person cases involving a missing child or a missing adult who is eighteen (18) but less than twenty-one (21) years of age **must be entered into LEADS / NCIC immediately.**
 2. The following conditions apply to missing persons twenty-one (21) years of age or older:
 - a. If the reporting officer suspects foul play, **entry into LEADS / NCIC must occur within seven (7) days.**
 - b. If the reporting officer does not suspect foul play and the subject has not returned, **entry into LEADS / NCIC must occur within thirty (30) days.**
 - c. If the reporting officer does not initially suspect foul play, but evidence of such becomes known to the reporting officer before the end of the seven (7) day period, **entry into LEADS / NCIC must occur before the end of the seven (7) day period.**
 - d. If the report officer does not initially suspect foul play, but evidence of such becomes known to the reporting officer after the seven (7) day period, **entry into LEADS / NCIC must occur within forty-eight (48) hours.**
 3. In cases involving a missing child, the reporting officer authorizing the entry into LEADS / NCIC will promptly notify the parent/guardian when the entry occurs.
4. Any officer receiving new information concerning the missing person is responsible for the prompt integration of the new information into the LEADS / NCIC system. In missing child cases, the officer must then notify the parent/guardian of the new information's entry into LEADS / NCIC.
 5. The North Royalton Police Department may make an NCIC Missing Person File record for missing persons if the proper documentation supporting the criteria under which the person is declared missing is gathered by the reporting officer. This written documentation aids in the protection of the individual's right to privacy. The documentation must be from a source other than the investigating law enforcement agency. Some examples are:
 - 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, next of kin, or other authoritative source advising that the missing person's disappearance is involuntary.
 - c. A written statement from a parent, legal guardian, next of kin, or other authoritative source advising that the missing person is in the company of another person under circumstances suggesting danger to his/her physical safety.
- E. Responsibility for follow-up investigation:
1. Patrol personnel must follow-up all available leads regarding missing persons at the time they take the report.
 2. When there are no extenuating circumstances associated with the missing person case, the reporting officer forwards the report through normal channels to be assigned.
 3. It is the responsibility of the detective assigned to investigate the missing person report to assure the correctness of records through LEADS / NCIC.



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This includes cancellation or validation of each record.

F. Special considerations

1. When a person is missing for thirty (30) days after the filing of the report, the follow-up detective must request the missing person's parent, guardian, or relative provide written consent to obtain the person's dental records. NCIC Missing Person File Data Collection Entry Guide contains a Dental History Information form that is to be used for this purpose.
2. Once the dental records are obtained, the follow-up detective then arranges to have them entered into LEADS / NCIC. Note: a request for dental records can occur prior to the thirty (30) day period. However, after thirty (30) days the follow-up detective must obtain them and arrange for entry into LEADS / NCIC.
3. When a person is missing for (30) days after the filing of the missing person report, a parent, guardian, or relative of the missing person may request to submit a DNA sample, to be forwarded to BCI. The relative must be a first degree relative: mother, father, daughter, or son. The follow-up detective obtains a LINK (Linking Individual Not Known) kit from BCI once the request is received. The LINK kit contains detailed instructions for collecting DNA samples. The follow-up detective must send the LINK kit containing the DNA sample to BCI within fifteen (15) days.
4. The North Royalton Police Department must furnish any information about the missing person to any law enforcement agency upon request, to aid in their investigation.
5. If the complaint is about a minor that is or may be a missing child, officer must follow all requirements of Ohio Revised Code 2901.30.
6. If a parent/guardian has a fingerprint card or child identification card, the officer taking the initial report should obtain the card and attach it to the report. The follow-up detective is responsible for entry of the information in the NCIC Missing Persons File.
7. Several laws have been enacted which are designed to assist law enforcement locate missing children:
 - a. ORC 3313.96: Each board of education may develop a fingerprinting program for students and minors within the district. If developed, it shall be developed in conjunction with local law enforcement. Such law enforcement agencies shall cooperate fully with the school in developing its program. The fingerprinting program shall be developed for the sole purpose of providing a means by which a missing child might be located or identified. The fingerprinting of students or minors shall be performed by members of the associated law enforcement agency.
 - b. ORC 3313.672: When a child transfers from one school to another without a birth certificate and recent school records, the school authority must notify local law enforcement of this fact and that the pupil may be a missing child.
 - c. ORC 2901.30: Upon the filing of a missing child report, the law enforcement agency involved may notify the public or nonpublic school in which the missing child is or was most recently enrolled, as ascertained by the agency, that the child is the subject of a missing child report and that the child's school records are to be marked in accordance with ORC 3313.672. Upon request from a law enforcement agency, a public children services agency shall grant the law enforcement agency access to all information concerning a missing child that the agency possesses that may be relevant to the law enforcement agency in investigating a missing child report concerning that child. The information obtained



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by the law enforcement agency shall be used only to further the investigation to locate the missing child.

VI. INVESTIGATIVE RESOURCES

A. LEADS/NCIC

1. Using the endangered or involuntary category in the LEADS/NCIC missing persons screen and using AA (Amber Alert) or CA (Child Abduction) code/flag in the Missing Person Field Codes, the FBI Child Abduction Unit and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) will offer additional assistance. In addition, using the AA code in the MNP field will notify central dispatch at the State Highway Patrol/Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Attorney General's Office, and law enforcement agencies in the county of and adjacent to the county of the entering agency. By taking the above steps, the following will automatically occur in Ohio:
 - a. The EOC will activate the 1-877-AMBER-OH hotline with recorded information about the AMBER Alert for the public to call and report sightings or tips.
 - b. The EOC (614-466-2660) will activate the Emergency Alert System for agencies that need assistance or for additional regions if the investigating agency deems it appropriate.
 - c. The Attorney General's Office will automatically notify the media with pertinent information for television and radio broadcasting. Members of the Ohio Trucking Association will be notified to be on the lookout while driving on Ohio's roadways. An AMBER Alert poster will be displayed on The Ohio AMBER Plan website and the Attorney General's website.
 - d. The Ohio Department of Transportation will be automatically notified to post the AMBER Alert information on Ohio's highway signs, when appropriate.
 - e. Lottery terminals, mobile providers, and various fax, email, and text messaging subscribers will be automatically notified of the AMBER Alert.
2. Using the endangered or involuntary category in the LEADS/NCIC missing persons screen and using SA code/flag in the Missing Person Field Codes, the Ohio Missing Adult Alert Program will be activated.
 - a. Criteria for using the SA code:
 - 1) The individual is confirmed missing.
 - 2) The individual is 65 years of age or older, or has a mental impairment.
 - 3) The disappearance of the individual poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the individual.
 - 4) There is sufficient descriptive information about the individual and the circumstances surrounding the individual's disappearance to indicate that activation of the alert will help locate the individual.
 - b. The SA code in the missing person entry creates a message that is sent to BCI and the Ohio Highway Patrol EOC. A representative of the Ohio Attorney General's Office will contact our department to activate the alert.
 - 1) www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/MissingPersons will be populated with information and a photo of the missing adult.
 - 2) A toll free number will be activated to provide information and receive tips. (866-693-9171)
 - 3) Notifications will be made to the media and public through cell phones, faxes, emails, and highway billboards.



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- c. Requests for activating the Missing Adult Alert should include the following information:
- 1) Last known address of the adult
 - 2) Area where the adult may be or may be enroute to
 - 3) Name and age of the adult
 - 4) Description of the adult
 - 5) Any other information pertinent to locating the adult
- B. AMBER Plan
- The AMBER Plan is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases.
1. In order to activate the AMBER Plan, officers responding to the report of a missing person must determine if there is credible evidence to believe the child has been abducted in violation of ORC 2905.01 (Kidnapping), 2905.02 (Abduction), 2905.03 (Unlawful Restraint), or 2905.05 (Criminal Child Enticement) and confirm the following criteria are met:
 - a. The missing person is a child under eighteen (18) years of age
 - b. The abduction poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the child
 - c. There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, the suspect, and/or the suspect's vehicle, and the circumstances surrounding the abduction to indicate that activation of the AMBER Plan will help locate the child
 - d. The child is not a runaway and has not been abducted as a result of a child custody dispute, **UNLESS** the dispute poses a credible threat of immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death to the child.
 2. When the responding officers determine the criteria for activating the AMBER Plan are present, the officer in charge must be notified immediately.
 3. The OIC will immediately contact the Detective Bureau supervisor and review the incident with him/her. The Detective Bureau supervisor will activate the AMBER Plan as soon as he/she determines all criteria are met.
 4. If the OIC cannot make contact with the Detective Bureau supervisor in a timely manner, he/she must decide if the required criteria are present for activation of the AMBER Plan.
 5. Steps for activating the AMBER Plan (AMBER ALERT):
 - a. Contact CECOMS (Cuyahoga Emergency Communications System) at 216-771-1363 to request an AMBER Alert.
 - b. FAX CECOMS at 216-443-5705 AND 216-443-4923 the three page AMBER Alert urgent FAX forms, including the exact AMBER Alert message to be broadcast via the Emergency Alert System. This FAX should be on agency letterhead.
 - c. Once the fax message is received at CECOMS, the CECOMS operator will call to confirm the legitimacy of the AMBER Alert and read back the exact message.
 - d. Once confirmed, CECOMS will transmit the AMBER Alert message via the Emergency Alert System (EAS).
 6. Cancellation of the AMBER Alert
 - a. Upon the confirmed recovery of the child, CECOMS will be contacted immediately at 216-771-1363 and advised to cancel the AMBER Alert.
 - b. A cancellation FAX will also be sent to CECOMS at 216-443-5705 AND 216-443-4923.
- C. A Child is Missing (ACIM)
1. The ACIM program enlist the assistance of the community by sending a personalized recorded message to area homes and businesses, via telephone (1,000 calls in 5 minutes), asking them for help in searching for a missing person.
 2. Although this program targets missing children, it can be utilized for adults



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as well, especially when the adult is elderly, suffers some degree of dementia, or any other disability or situation that may place them at risk. ACIM can also assist when a child is found prior to someone reporting them missing.

3. Factors for determining the use of ACIM:

a. Juveniles

- 1) The juvenile should be 17 years of age or younger
- 2) The reporting person must be an adult family member, teacher, or another adult who is responsible for the juvenile
- 3) If the juvenile is a habitual runaway, ACIM would be used if foul play is suspected, or at department discretion
- 4) A first time runaway
- 5) Stranger abduction
- 6) College students living on campus

b. Senior citizens

- 1) The person must be sixty-five (65) years of age or older
- 2) Being missing must be out-of-character for the elderly person
- 3) ACIM can be used even if the elderly person is a frequent walk away from a nursing facility
- 4) Known Alzheimer's patient

c. Disabled person

- 1) There is no age stipulation for a disabled person
- 2) Caution must be used when determining whether a person is truly disabled. ACIM uses the following guidelines:
 - a) The person has a physical or mental impairment that severely limits self care
 - b) The person is disoriented or unable to respond to simple questions

- c) The person is dependent upon life sustaining medication

4. Using A Child is Missing

- a. Contact A Child is Missing at 888-875-2246 or page the operator at 954-492-4778.
- b. Suggested calling times are from 0700 to 2230 hrs. Calls can be placed after 2230 hrs if extenuating circumstances exist and only with a supervisor's approval.
- c. The following information should be available when calling ACIM:
 - 1) Name and age of missing person
 - 2) Physical descriptors
 - 3) Scars, marks, tattoos
 - 4) Description of clothing when last seen
 - 5) Address where last seen, including zip code
 - 6) Time and date last seen
 - 7) Telephone number for the public to report information
 - 8) Name and contact number of the on-duty officer in charge of the investigation

- d. When the missing child is found, the supervisor or case officer will contact ACIM to report the recovery. ACIM will fax a case follow up report to be filled out by the case officer and faxed back to ACIM (954-763-4569).

D. Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Missing Persons Unit

1. After taking the initial report and following all department guidelines:
 - a. Have reporting person sign photo release or get reporting person's permission to release the photo of the missing person and you sign the release.
 - b. Notify Missing Person Liaison (MPL) at 216-443-6882 or tknighton@cuyahogacounty.us of the missing person's information; and forward signed photo release.
 - c. Conduct your investigation as usual. Request help from Impact Unit to assist with your investigation, if necessary.



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- d. Notify MPL once the person is recovered.
- e. The Sheriff's Department will enter and update the Missing Persons website (www.missingpersonscuyahoga.org).
- E. Missing Children's Clearing House through the Ohio Attorney General's Office: 614-466-5610
- F. National Center for Missing Adults: 800-690-FIND
- G. CART (Child Abduction Response Team) if warranted: CECOMS 216-771-1363

H. Reverse 911 (Swift Reach)

BY ORDER OF

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. H. ...", written over a horizontal line.

CHIEF OF POLICE