



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
KENNETH R. BALL II, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2019 - 047	EFFECTIVE DATE April 15, 2019	RESCINDS P-2011-047 Issued 10-31-2011
SUBJECT Missing Person Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Kenneth R. Ball II

I. POLICY

All missing person cases are viewed as potential crimes and require prompt and thorough investigation. The scope and duration of the search and any investigation will be based upon the level of risk to the person if not located.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. High-Risk Missing Person – A person under the age of thirteen, a mentally incompetent person, or a person missing under unusual or suspected criminal circumstances.
- B. AMBER Alert – The AMBER Alert is a voluntary partnership involving law enforcement, broadcasting, transportation, and other agencies. During an AMBER Alert, an urgent news bulletin is broadcast over the airwaves, as well as, highway alert signs and a variety of other notification systems to enlist the aid of the public in finding an abducted child and stopping a perpetrator.
- C. Endangered Missing Child Alert - The Endangered Missing Child Alert was created for missing children cases where the circumstances do not meet the AMBER Alert criteria, but the child’s life is still considered at risk of serious bodily harm or death if the child is not found quickly.
- D. Endangered Missing Adult Alert - The Endangered Missing Adult Alert was created to aid in the identification and location of any individual who has a mental impairment or is sixty-five years of age or older, and to enlist the help of the public to find the missing adult, where the circumstances pose a credible threat that the missing person’s life is at risk of serious bodily harm or death if they are not located quickly. This alert is most commonly issued for a missing elderly person (65 years old or older) who suffers from Alzheimer’s or other related illnesses. The alert is also issued for any age missing adult who suffers from a serious mental impairment to the extent they cannot care for themselves.
- E. Ohio Blue Alert – A statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information to speed the apprehension of persons suspected of killing or seriously injuring law enforcement officers. *A Blue Alert may also be used in the event of a missing law enforcement officer.*

- F. Reverse 911 System - A system that utilizes a computerized data base to contact residences and businesses to inform them of imminent and critical emergency situations. The Reverse Alert System is provided by the Summit County Emergency Management Agency (SCEMA). An alert area may be designated by providing street boundaries, a specified mile radius from a location, or the whole community.
- G. Child Abduction Response Team (CART) - A team of officers who are available to respond as needed and specifically trained for an organized and planned response to an abducted or endangered missing child incident. This team may be utilized when a missing child is considered to be in immediate danger. The goal of CART is the safe recovery of the missing child and, if applicable, the apprehension of the offender(s).
- H. CART Coordinator - A JAM Unit supervisor responsible for directing a missing person investigation when CART is activated. The CART Coordinator will be tasked with coordinating the entire investigation to include investigator and CART member assignments and resource allocation.
- I. Missing Child – is either:
 - 1. A minor who has run away from or who otherwise is missing from the home of, or the care, custody, and control of, the minor’s parents, parent who is the residential parent and legal custodian, guardian, legal custodian, or other person having responsibility for the care of the minor, or
 - 2. A minor who is missing and about whom there is reason to believe the minor could be the victim of kidnapping, abduction, unlawful restraint, or interference with custody.
- J. Missing Person – an individual who is eighteen years of age or older who is a temporary or permanent resident of Ohio and meets one of the following characteristics:
 - 1. the individual has a physical or mental disability;
 - 2. the individual is missing under circumstances indicating their safety may be in danger;
or
 - 3. the individual is missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary.

III. PROCEDURE

The actions required when a report of a missing person is received are determined based upon the age of the missing person and whether or not foul play and suspicious circumstances exist. Indicators of foul play may include but are not limited to:

- A. A person’s car or home being in disarray;
- B. Evidence of a struggle.

A. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Conduct a thorough preliminary investigation, including:
 - a. Search the residence thoroughly, even if the family insists the missing person is not there.
 - b. Attempt to obtain a recent photo of the missing person. If the missing child report is filed by a county public children services agency, the agency is required to provide a photograph of the missing child to the officer when the photograph is determined to be relevant to the investigation and is either contained in a statewide automated database or maintained by the agency as part of its assessment/investigation and provision of social services to families and children.
 - c. Conduct a neighborhood canvas and document any information in an AOIBRS report or an action taken.
 - d. Interview witnesses, including the last person who saw the missing person.
 - e. Determine if the incident meets the criteria for a high-risk missing person, AMBER Alert, Endangered Missing Child Alert, Endangered Missing Adult Alert or Ohio Blue Alert.
2. Notify immediate supervisor on ALL missing person cases. Include with the notification any circumstances that may involve a high-risk missing person or possible need to activate the AMBER Alert, Endangered Missing Child Alert, Endangered Missing Adult Alert, or Ohio Blue Alert systems.
3. Complete a Missing Person report and any other applicable reports.
 - a. There is **no waiting period** for reporting a missing person. If the matter involves a minor that is or may be a missing child, if the person providing the information wishes to file a missing child report, the officer must take the report.
 - i. A minor is not considered missing if they are a party to a child custody dispute unless there is a threat of bodily harm or death to the minor or the minor is being relocated outside of the state without the authorization of the court.
 - b. In cases where missing persons are under eighteen years of age, or under the age of twenty-one but is mentally or physically handicapped, it is important to obtain the names of their dentist and doctor and include them on the report.
 - c. Document any possible social media websites they may use and any cell phone information available.

- d. A Missing Person report shall be completed if a report number is obtained, even if the missing person is located before the call is cleared. Officers shall document the recovery information in the narrative of the report.
4. Notify Safety Communications.
The Missing Person Report **MUST** be entered into LEADS within two hours and NCIC immediately.
5. Promptly notify the missing child's parents, parent who is the residential parent and legal custodian, guardian, or legal custodian, or any other person responsible for the care of the missing child, that the child's information was entered into NCIC.
6. All reports are to be submitted to the appropriate supervisor by the end of the officer's tour of duty, even if the missing person returned.
7. In cases where the missing person is considered a high-risk missing person or those cases in which any of the alert systems have been activated:
 - a. Contact the Detective Bureau Desk. The Detective Bureau Desk will contact a JAM Unit supervisor (if on duty) or another available Detective Bureau supervisor to determine whether to have a detective respond.
 - b. Continue the search for the high risk missing person until:
 - 1) Relieved by the Detective Bureau, or
 - 2) Relieved by the next on duty shift, or
 - 3) Relieved by a supervisor.
 - c. Officers shall note in the remarks section of the Missing Person report the type of alert issued.
8. If additional information is received regarding the missing person listed in a report, Safety Communications must be notified of that information so that it can promptly be entered into NCIC.
9. Upon verification that a missing person has been located, officers shall immediately report that information to Safety Communications. The JAM Unit should also be notified if during normal working hours.
10. Officers shall interview the missing person upon their recovery. This recovery interview should include inquiries concerning the circumstances relating to the missing person's disappearance, details of their activities, and their whereabouts during that time. The details of this interview should be documented in the Investigative Notes section of the original Missing Person report.

B. PATROL SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Respond to all high-risk missing person calls or incidents that satisfy the activation criteria of any alert/advisory or Reverse 911 System.
2. Determine the scope of the search and what further actions are necessary; *e.g.*, duration of search, personnel needs, notifications, BOLO's, MDT messages, the need for any alert/advisory activations, etc.
3. Verify that all alert/advisory criteria has been met, and if any alert/advisory system is to be activated or if the Reverse 911 System will be needed:
 - a. Contact the on-duty shift commander for notification and approval.
 - b. Notify the Safety Communications police supervisor of the approval to activate the Reverse 911 System or of the type of alert/advisory to be activated.
 - c. Verify that the missing person's information has been telephoned into Safety Communications prior to activation.
 - d. Verify that the Detective Bureau Desk has been notified of the type, time, and details of the alert/advisory activation.
4. Ensure that officers have made the necessary notifications.
5. Coordinate the on scene investigation.
6. Establish a command post if needed.
7. If the missing person has not been located prior to the end of the shift, inform the oncoming shift commander and/or responding Detective Bureau personnel of all actions taken, including a list of all witnesses interviewed, addresses searched, and the type, time, and details of any active alert/advisory. This list should also include the addresses covered in the neighborhood canvass, noting whether or not contact was made.
8. Verify that the narrative of the Missing Person report indicates the type, time, and details of any alert/advisory activation.

C. SHIFT COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Authorize the issuance of the relevant alert/advisory or Reverse 911 System. Only shift commanders or JAM Unit supervisors have this authority.
2. Determine the scope of the alert/advisory:

1. Northern Ohio – Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Erie, Geauga, Huron, Lake, Lorain, Medina, and Summit counties.
2. Statewide or multiple regional alert based on EAS regions.
3. Factors in determining the scope of the alert:
 - i. Time since the person was abducted or otherwise became missing.
 - ii. Available resources to operate a telephone bank.
 - iii. Possible destination of the missing person, or in the case of an AMBER Alert, the destination of the missing child and/or suspect.
 - iv. Any other information gained during the initial investigation.
3. Ensure the following notifications have been made:
 - a. Uniform and Investigative Sub-Division deputy chiefs (alert/advisories).
 - b. Police Information Officer.
 - c. Detective Bureau Desk.
4. Any shift commander recognizing a potential need to activate CART shall contact the JAM commander, Detective Bureau captain or deputy chief, or the chief of police.

D. DETECTIVE BUREAU RESPONSIBILITIES – In high-risk missing person cases or when any alert/advisory system has been activated:

1. The Detective Bureau Desk shall notify a Detective Bureau supervisor if a JAM Unit detective is unavailable.
2. If a JAM Unit detective is unavailable, an on-duty detective will be sent to the scene to assist patrol units with the initial investigation.
3. A Detective Bureau supervisor may contact a JAM Unit supervisor if deemed necessary.

E. MISSING PERSONS UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Assist field units as necessary.
2. In high-risk missing person cases or when any alert/advisory system has been activated:
 - a. Send a JAM Unit detective (or other on-duty detective if no JAM Unit detective is available) to the scene.

- b. Coordinate the on scene response with the responding patrol supervisor.
 - c. For incidents where an Alert was issued, complete the case follow-up report and forward it to the appropriate Alert oversight committee.
4. Conduct and complete follow-up investigations on all active missing persons.
 - a. When a person is missing and has been continuously absent from their home for thirty days or more, or where foul play is suspected, DNA standards may be submitted to BCI.
 - b. In cases when a child is missing for more than 30 days, obtain written consent from the missing child's parents to obtain dental records. Ensure that those dental records are entered into NCIC.

F. SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Obtain as much information as possible in relation to the call; *e.g.* age, mental awareness, possible cause of absence, etc.
2. Notify the responding officer's immediate supervisor at the time of dispatch when it is known that the missing person is high-risk.
3. Enter the missing person in LEADS/NCIC files immediately upon notification by a reporting officer or supervisor. Update NCIC promptly if additional information is received regarding the missing person listed in the report.
5. Promptly remove all information from NCIC once a missing person is verified as recovered.
6. If the individual is located deceased, notification of next of kin shall occur before removing the entry from NCIC and before canceling an Alert.
7. Notify the reporting party or guardian of the located missing person. If unable to contact the reporting party or guardian, then notify the Missing Persons Unit so that proper notification can be made at a later time.

G. SAFETY COMMUNICATION POLICE SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. In cases where an AMBER Alert, Blue Alert, or Reverse 911 System has been authorized:
 - a. Notify all personnel assigned to Safety Communications of the alert and/or Reverse 911 System activation.
 - b. Ensure that LEADS personnel will enter the missing person (or suspect in a Blue Alert) through LEADS and NCIC using the appropriate flag.

- c. Fill out the AMBER Alert Urgent Fax forms or other appropriate alert forms located in the template files on all police department computers and forward to the appropriate agency.
 - d. Notify the Summit County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) of the alert.
 - e. Provide a copy of the AMBER Alert Urgent Fax form or other appropriate forms to the SCSO.
 - f. Ensure that all alert information is broadcast on all dispatch channels prior to activation.
 - g. Prepare the Situation Room and verify that the telephones and personnel are in place to handle the influx of alert-related calls.
 - h. If available, assign a dispatcher to the Situation Room to assist the personnel handling the telephone bank.
 - i. Ensure that all alerts are broadcast over police and fire dispatch channels.
 - j. Provide a copy of the alert cancellation fax form to the SCSO when appropriate.
2. In cases where an Endangered Missing Child Alert or Endangered Missing Adult Alert will be activated:
 - a. Notify all personnel assigned to Safety Communications of the alert (and Reverse 911 system activation if utilized).
 - b. Ensure that LEADS personnel will enter the missing person through LEADS and NCIC, listing them as endangered.
 - c. Call the Ohio Attorney General's Missing Children Clearinghouse (1-800-325-5604) to issue the advisory.
 3. In cases where CART is activated:
 - a. Ensure that a group notification including the incident location is initiated to all CART members.
 - b. Maintain a log of CART personnel that have been notified and are responding.

H. THE FOLLOWING ARE AUTHORIZED TO VALIDATE THAT A MISSING PERSON HAS BEEN LOCATED:

1. Police officers from any agency
2. Children Services Board
3. School officials
4. Juvenile Court
5. Original reporting party
6. Legal guardian

IV. ALERT CRITERIA

A. AMBER ALERT - The following four criteria must be met to initiate an AMBER Alert:

1. Law enforcement confirms that an abduction has occurred.
2. Law enforcement confirms the child is under 18 years of age.
3. Law enforcement believes the abduction poses a credible threat of immediate danger or serious bodily harm or death to the child.
 - a. There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, the suspect, and the circumstances surrounding the abduction to believe that activation of the alert will help locate the child.
 - b. A law enforcement agency determines the child is not a runaway and has not been abducted as a result of a child custody dispute, unless the investigation determines the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death.

B. ENDANGERED MISSING CHILD ALERT - The following four criteria must be met to initiate an Endangered Missing Child Alert:

1. Law enforcement confirms the child is under 18 years of age.
2. Law enforcement confirms the child is missing; *i.e.* lost, non-witnessed/non-confirmed abduction, or the child's whereabouts are unknown.
3. Law enforcement believes the circumstances pose a credible threat of serious bodily harm or death to the child.
4. There is sufficient descriptive information about the child, the suspect and/or the circumstances surrounding the disappearance that the alert activation will help locate the child.

C. ENDANGERED MISSING ADULT ALERT – The following four criteria must be met to initiate an Endangered Missing Adult Alert:

1. Law enforcement confirms the individual is missing and investigative steps have been taken to locate the person but were unsuccessful. These steps may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Checking local hospitals.
 - b. Checking local jails.
 - c. Checking with the missing person's family and neighbors to see if they know of possible locations to check for the missing person.
2. Law enforcement confirms the individual is 65 years of age or older or is an adult who has a serious mental impairment that prevents him/her from taking care of himself/herself.
3. Law enforcement believes 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 disappearance that the alert activation will help locate the individual.

D. OHIO BLUE ALERT

A statewide blue alert shall be activated if:

1. Law enforcement confirms that a law enforcement officer has been seriously injured or killed, and a suspect has not been apprehended; or a law enforcement officer is missing while on duty under circumstances warranting concern for the officer's safety.
2. There is sufficient descriptive information about the suspect or the circumstances surrounding a law enforcement officer's injury, death, or disappearance to indicate that activation of the alert may help locate a suspect or a missing law enforcement officer.

V. **CHILD ABDUCTION RESPONSE TEAM (CART)**

- A. The decision to activate the CART and the scope of the activation shall be the responsibility of the Juvenile Bureau Commander, Detective Bureau Captain, Deputy Chief, or Chief of Police.
- B. Criteria to consider when determining a CART activation may include any of the following:
 1. A child under the age of 18 who is missing and the available information indicates a possible abduction.

2. A child under the age of 18 who is missing under unusual or suspicious circumstances. These circumstances may include the possibility of foul play or the child is believed to be in a life threatening situation.
 3. Any other abduction or missing child investigation involving a child that is developmentally disabled or suffers from a mental or medical condition which places the child in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- C. If any of the above conditions exist, a shift commander shall consult with the Juvenile Bureau Commander, Detective Bureau Captain, Deputy Chief, or Chief of Police to determine if CART should be activated.
- D. The CART Coordinator will respond to the scene to determine the initial CART response, changes in CART response needs, and the duration of CART response. The CART Coordinator will oversee the continuing investigation.

VI. REVERSE 911

- A. The Reverse 911 System should be utilized in an attempt to locate a missing person any time an AMBER Alert, Blue Alert, Endangered Missing Child Advisory, or an Endangered Missing Adult Advisory is issued.
- B. The Reverse 911 may be utilized as a tool to locate **any** missing person who does not meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert, Blue Alert, Endangered Missing Child Advisory, or an Endangered Missing Adult Advisory. The decision to utilize the Reverse 911 System will be at the discretion of the shift commander or JAM Unit supervisors based on the circumstances of the situation.

By Order Of,



Chief Kenneth R. Ball II
Chief of Police

Date April 8, 2019