



SYKESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Missing Persons Investigations

General Order 6-15

Effective: 08/07/17

Authorized By: *Michael A. Spaulding* Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

To provide the procedures for missing persons investigations.

II. POLICY

The Sykesville Police Department shall conduct all missing persons investigations in a thorough manner, as prescribed in the policy contained herein.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Juvenile - Initial Investigation

1. Missing Child/Juvenile is defined by Maryland State Law as "a person under the age of 18, who is the subject of a missing persons report filed with a Maryland Law Enforcement Agency and whose whereabouts are unknown." (To include: lost, abducted, kidnapped, child custody dispute, or apparent runaway).
2. Any time a call is received in the Communications Center, indicating that a child is or may be missing, an officer will be assigned to investigate. The officer is required to make personal contact with the complainant. Should the juvenile return to the residence prior to the officer's arrival, the call for service will be closed as "unfounded".
3. Once contact has been made with the complainant, and the officer has established that the child is missing, a State of Maryland Missing Persons Report (MSP Form 79) will be completed. The officer will also prepare an investigative narrative on a supplemental report to detail the circumstances surrounding the disappearance. It will also contain all investigative efforts taken to locate the juvenile.

If it is found that more than one subject is missing, a separate case number, Missing Persons Report and supplemental report must be completed for each subject.

4. The initial investigating officer shall take prompt action, including, but not limited to, concentrated efforts to locate the missing child. A thorough search of the juvenile's residence is recommended.

5. The officer will complete the Missing Persons Report entirely, acquiring a photo of the missing child if available.
 - a. Officers should also record the missing child's Social Security Number on the Missing Persons Report.
 - b. All Missing Persons Reports must have the complainant's signature on Line #15 of the Missing Persons Form. (The complainant's signature on the form indicates that all information and the stated condition of the reported person is accurate to the best of the complainant's knowledge.)
6. If upon initial investigation it appears that the child is lost or the victim of a criminal act, i.e., abduction, child stealing, kidnaping, or meets one of the following "critical factors" from the Missing Persons Report, the officer will immediately notify the on duty supervisor:
 - a. C/K - A missing child who is reasonably believed to have been kidnapped or abducted by someone other than a parent.
 - b. CPC - A missing child who is reasonably believed to have been abducted by a parent or guardian, who has legal custody. Include all cases where there is no formal custody agreement to the contrary.
 - c. CPW - A missing child who is reasonably believed to have been abducted by a parent or guardian who does not have custody. Include only those cases where it has been reported that a formal custody agreement to the contrary exists.
 - d. C/C - A missing child who is considered critically missing by the existence of one or more critical factors.
 - e. C/M - A missing child 14 years of age or older, for whom no critical factors are known to exist.
7. The "critical factors" mentioned in subsection 6 above are as follows:
 - a. A child of any age, who has not been the subject of a previous missing persons report,
 - b. A child of any age, who has a mental or physical handicap,
 - c. A child of any age, whose disappearance is considered to be suspicious or dangerous,

- d. If the reporting party has reason to believe that an abduction has occurred,
 - e. A child of any age, who has been the subject of a past child abuse investigation,
 - f. Any child under the age of fourteen (14).
8. Upon becoming acquainted with the facts of the case, the supervisor shall determine if investigative assistance is needed or if any other special efforts to locate the child are to be initiated.
- These efforts could include, but are not limited to, the use of K-9 teams, the helicopter, search parties, etc.
9. The officer on the scene should also ascertain if the missing child has been reported to any other law enforcement agencies, so that duplication does not occur.
10. The officer will advise the complainant that they must immediately notify the Police Department if the child is located or heard from so that follow up investigation can be completed.

B. Adults - Initial Investigation

1. The Sykesville Police Department will only investigate a missing adult complaint, someone eighteen years of age or older, if the adult meets the following criteria:
- a. An adult documented as suffering from a mental or physical disability or is senile
 - b. An adult documented as being in the company of another person under circumstances indicating physical safety is in danger,
 - c. An adult missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, i.e., kidnaping or abduction.
2. Once one or more of these criteria have been met, an officer will be assigned to investigate the incident and make personal contact with the complainant.
3. Once contact has been made with the complainant, and the officer has established that the adult is missing and meets the requirements listed above, a State of Maryland Missing Persons Report (MSP Form 79) will be completed. The officer will also prepare an investigative narrative on a

supplemental report to detail the circumstances surrounding the disappearance. It will also include all investigative efforts made to locate the subject.

If it is found that more than one subject is missing, a separate case number, Missing Persons Report and supplemental report must be completed for each subject.

4. The investigating officer will complete the Missing Persons Report entirely, acquiring a photo of the missing subject if available.
5. The investigating officer will contact and apprise the on duty supervisor of all pertinent information in this case.
6. Upon becoming acquainted with the facts of the case, the supervisor will determine if a detective or other resources are to be notified or called out.
7. The officer will advise the complainant that they must immediately notify the Police Department if the subject is located, returns or is heard from so that a follow up investigation can be completed.

C. NCIC

Once all pertinent information has been obtained at the scene, and other investigation in the area is completed, the officer will immediately make arrangements through the Maryland State Police to have the subject entered into NCIC.

1. NCIC has 5 categories in its Missing Person File. A missing person must meet the criteria of one of the categories in order to be entered into the NCIC computer:
 - a. Disability – A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - b. Endangered - A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety is in danger.
 - c. Involuntary - A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary, i.e., kidnaping or abduction.
 - d. Juvenile - A person of any age who is missing and declared unemancipated as defined by the laws of his/her state of residence

and does not meet the entry criteria set forth in sections a, b, c, or d listed within.

e. Catastrophe Victim - A person of any age who is missing after a disaster.

2. It is also the officer's responsibility to ensure that a "lookout" is broadcast over the radio, and that lookout information is forwarded to other local law enforcement agencies.

3. If the suspected destination of the missing subject is known, the officer should assure that a teletype is sent to that jurisdiction or they are contacted by telephone, so that they may be on the lookout for the subject. This should be done after the subject is entered into NCIC as missing, so that the teletype can refer to the "NIC#".

If this teletype is sent, a supplemental report must be completed by the requesting officer.

4. Cancellation of NCIC Entry

a. When the missing subject is located, returns voluntarily, or is located by another law enforcement agency, a supplemental report will be completed indicating the circumstances of why the subject was missing, etc.

b. The supplemental report will be forwarded to the Maryland State Police so the NCIC entry may be cleared. The officer will ensure the NCIC operator has all pertinent information for removal of the subject from NCIC.

5. NCIC Validations

All NCIC validations will be done in accordance with prescribed NCIC requirements.

D. Follow-Up Investigation

1. All missing person complaints shall be assigned to the initial reporting officer for follow-up investigation. If the missing person has been located and the investigation has been completed, the group supervisor will review the investigation and ensure that proper procedure was followed and all NCIC entries have been cleared. Any follow-up investigation will require a supplemental report be completed by the officer.

2. If the missing person investigation is still active, the assigned officer shall recontact the complainant, parent or guardian of the subject to ascertain if the subject has been returned or if there is any additional information to assist in locating the subject.
3. Officers conducting follow-up investigations shall make every appropriate effort to locate the missing subject.
4. If the subject is missing for 30 days, the officer conducting the follow up investigation shall request the subject's dental records from the complainant, parent or guardian if any such records exist. Once consent is given by the complainant, parent or guardian, the records will be obtained from dentist by the officer and incorporated into the NCIC message. A copy of the updated message will be attached to the investigation.
5. If additional information is uncovered during the course of a missing person investigation, it shall, if appropriate under the circumstances, be integrated into NCIC. It is the responsibility of the investigating officer to ensure the additional information is entered into NCIC and a copy of the revised message is included in the investigative report.

E. Returned Missing Juveniles

1. Any time a call is received at Communications indicating that a missing child has been located, an officer will be assigned to investigate. Whenever possible, the officer handling the investigation will be assigned. In all cases where an investigator from another agency has been assigned, he/she will be notified.
2. Any time it is brought to the attention of an officer that a child previously reported missing is now located, the officer shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance and return. This will include, but not be limited to, the reason for leaving, their location during the time the child was missing, who, if anyone, the child was with, and was the child involved in any criminal activity during the time he was missing.
3. It is the responsibility of the officer handling the returned missing juvenile investigation to have the missing juvenile information removed from NCIC and the administrative message canceled.
4. When a missing juvenile from another jurisdiction is located by an officer, the following process will be completed.
 - a. An NCIC locate message will be sent to the originating jurisdiction to confirm the juvenile is still considered missing.

- b. Once the juvenile's status has been confirmed as missing, and if the originating agency is local, the juvenile will be turned over to that agency. If it is not a local agency, the subject will be transported to Headquarters for appropriate disposition.
 - c. The juvenile may also be turned directly over to the parents/guardian.
5. Should the missing juvenile not be returned safely or if criminal activity is evident, a separate criminal investigation will be initiated.

F. Returned Missing Adults

1. Any time a call is received in the Communications Center indicating that a missing adult has been located, an officer will be assigned to investigate. Whenever possible, the officer handling the investigation will be assigned. In all cases where a detective has been assigned, he/she will be notified.
2. The investigating officer shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the subject's disappearance and return. This will include, but is not limited to, the reason for leaving, their location during the time the adult was missing, who, if anyone, the adult was with, and was the subject involved in any criminal activity during the time he was missing.
3. It is the responsibility of the officer handling the returned missing adult investigation to have the subject removed from NCIC.
4. When a missing adult from another jurisdiction is located by an officer, the following process will be completed.
 - a. An NCIC locate message will be sent to the originating jurisdiction to confirm the adult is still considered missing.
 - b. Once the subject's status has been confirmed as missing, and if the originating agency is local, the subject will be turned over to that agency. If it is not a local agency, the subject will be transported to Headquarters for appropriate disposition.
 - c. The subject may also be turned directly over to a family member.

IV. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces the following policies: General Order 41.2.17, entitled Missing Persons, dated December 11, 2001.