

435.00 Missing Persons

I. Purpose

The Missing Persons Unit, which reports to the sergeant of the Human Trafficking Unit is under the direction of the Narcotics/Vice Unit commander. This unit will conduct follow-up investigations and be responsible for the maintenance of the current status of missing person/runaway cases. See St. Paul Police General Order 369.00 Missing Persons Unit

II. Definitions:

- A. **Missing Person:** The status of a person after a law enforcement agency has received a report of a missing person, conducted a preliminary investigation, and determined that the person cannot be located. ([Minnesota Statute 299C.52](#))
- B. **Runaway:** An unmarried child, under the age of 18 years, who is absent from the home of a parent or other lawful placement without the consent of the parent, guardian, or lawful custodian. ([Minnesota Statute 260C.007](#))
- C. **Endangered Person:** A law enforcement agency has recorded sufficient evidence that the missing person is at risk of physical injury or death. Examples of this are listed in [Minnesota Statute 299C.52](#):
 - 1. The person is missing because of kidnapping or under involuntary circumstances.
 - 2. The person is missing under dangerous circumstances.
 - 3. The person is missing more than 30 days.
 - 4. The person is under the age of 21 and at least one other factor in this list.
 - 5. There is evidence the person needs medical attention or does not have access to important prescription medication due to their disappearance.
 - 6. The person does not have a pattern of running away or disappearing.
 - 7. The person is mentally impaired.
 - 8. There is evidence the person may have been taken by a non-custodial parent.
 - 9. The person has been the subject of threats or acts of violence.
 - 10. The person is lost in the wilderness, backcountry, or outdoors where survival is hazardous.
 - 11. Any other factor that officers believe indicates the person may be at risk of physical injury or death.

III. Guidelines for an Immediate Police Response:

If the reported missing person meets the criteria listed below, an immediate patrol response is necessary.

Age:

- 1. Ten years and under
- 2. Under 21 with one of the following factors:
 - a. Mentally impaired
 - b. Taken by a non-custodial parent
- 3. A person 70 years of age or older

Special considerations requiring immediate action regardless of age:

1. Inclement weather
2. Health/vulnerability issues
3. Suicidal tendencies
4. Mysterious circumstances
5. Sufficient evidence the person is endangered and at risk of physical injury or death.
6. If a crime is suspected - notify appropriate unit: Homicide/Robbery Unit, Family Violence Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, Special Investigations Unit.

The responding officer will obtain the information regarding the missing person/runaway and include it in their report:

1. Full Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Gender
4. Race
5. Height
6. Weight
7. Hair Color
8. Eye Color
9. Last known clothing worn
10. Last known location
11. Possible locations of the missing party
12. All contact information for the missing person/runaway, to include, phone numbers, email address, social media names, etc.

IV. Police Reporting on Missing Persons

A police report will be written to document a missing person, even if the reporting party cannot answer all investigative questions. According to [Minnesota Statutes 299C.53, subd 1](#), officers must accept, without delay, any report of a missing person.

The law enforcement agency shall not refuse to accept a missing person report on the basis that:

1. The reporting party or missing person are from another jurisdiction.
2. The missing person is an adult.
3. The circumstances do not indicate foul play.
4. The person has been missing for a short amount of time.
5. The person has been missing for a long amount of time.
6. There is no indication that the missing person was in the jurisdiction served by the law enforcement agency at the time of disappearance.
7. The circumstances suggest that the disappearance may be voluntary.
8. The reporting person does not have personal knowledge of the facts.
9. The reporting person cannot provide all of the information requested by the law enforcement agency.
10. The reporting person lacks a familial or other relationship with the missing person.
11. For any other reason, except in cases where the law enforcement agency has direct knowledge that the person is, in fact, not missing and the whereabouts and welfare of the person are known at the time the report is being made.

Once the responding officer has obtained all relevant information about the missing person/runaway, they are to:

1. Advise the reporting party to contact the Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center should the missing person/runaway return or is located.
2. Conduct a routine RMS search to ensure that the individual being reported isn't already listed as a missing person.
3. Immediately contact the Ramsey County Data Channel and request this information be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The Data Channel will give the officer the NCIC number.
4. Notify the district supervisor of the call.
5. Write a missing person or runaway report, depending on the circumstances.
6. Include the NCIC number in the report.

If the missing person/runaway falls under the Immediate Response Criteria, the district sergeant will make appropriate notifications by following the Watch Commander Notification Guide.

V. Guidelines for a Teleserve Response:

If the reported missing person/runaway does not meet the immediate response criteria, Teleserve officers will be responsible for taking the call.

1. RCECC will generate a call for service and assign this call a Priority 3.
 - a) The call will be titled, Missing Person or Runaway, depending on the circumstances.
 - b) The call will then be sent to the Teleserve queue, based on the district of the call location.
 - c) In the absence of a Teleserve officer, the appropriate district will be assigned the call.
 - d) Officers assigned to Teleserve will prioritize all missing person and runaway calls over other calls in the queue.
2. The Teleserve officer will call the complainant back, as soon as possible, to obtain all necessary information regarding the missing person/runaway. See the above list of information to gather about the missing person/runaway.
3. The Teleserve officer will advise the reporting party to contact the RCECC, should the missing person/runaway return.
4. Conduct a routine RMS search to ensure the individual being reported isn't already listed as a missing person/runaway.
5. Once the necessary information has been obtained from the complainant, the Teleserve officer will immediately call the Data Channel and request this information be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The Data Channel will give the Teleserve officer the NCIC number.
6. The Teleserve officer will write a missing person or runaway original report, depending on the circumstances. The NCIC number must be listed in the report.

VI. Clearing the Missing Person/Runaway Record:

1. The reporting party will contact the RCECC, notifying them of the missing person/runaway's return.
 - a) The RCECC will generate a PCN, under the original missing person/runaway report, documenting the return of the missing person/runaway.
 - b) This call will be placed in the Teleserve queue, or in the absence of a Teleserve officer, the call for service will be dispatched to the appropriate district.

2. The Teleserve officer will call the reporting party and obtain the necessary information regarding the missing person/runaway's return; to include the name of the party reporting the missing person had returned.
3. The Teleserve officer will then contact the Data Channel and request the missing person/runaway be removed from NCIC. Obtain the name of the Data Channel employee who removed the missing person/runaway from NCIC.
4. Write a supplemental report under the original case number. Document in the report the name of the person reporting the return of the missing person/runaway and the name of the Data Channel personnel who removed the missing person/runaway from NCIC.

VII. Investigation of Missing Persons and Runaway Cases:

The Missing Persons Unit will be responsible for updating the missing person's file. After 30 days from the initiation of the missing person report, the report must be updated. Dental records (including x-rays), DNA, additional photographs, and fingerprints for the missing person will be requested from the complainant after 30 days and must be entered into NCIC within 60 days. If no contact has been made with the initial complainant, a registered letter will be sent to the complainant requesting an updated status on the reported missing person. The missing person file will be updated annually on the anniversary of the person's reported missing date. All information gathered or attempted to be gathered will be documented in a supplemental report.

Procedures for missing persons determined to be endangered (see above definition), as outlined by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA):

Initial response:

1. Dispatch an officer to the scene to conduct a preliminary investigation.
2. Obtain interpretive services, if necessary.
3. Interview the person who made the initial report, and if the person is a child, the child's parents / guardians.
4. Interview the individual(s) who last had contact with the person.
5. Obtain a detailed description of the missing person, abductor, vehicles, etc. and ask for a recent photo of the missing person.
6. Secure the crime scene.
7. Immediately enter the complete descriptive and critical information, regarding the missing and endangered person, into NCIC.
8. Request needed investigative and supervisory assistance, to include immediate supervisor, district commander, or watch commander. The Special Investigations Unit, Family Violence Unit, Sexual Violence Unit, Homicide/Robbery Unit and Missing Persons Unit have technological capabilities, knowledge, and relationships which may be useful during the investigation.
9. As required by [Minnesota Statute 299C.53, subd. 1\(b\)](#), consult with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and request assistance as necessary.
10. Obtain and protect uncontaminated missing person scent articles for possible use by search canines.
11. Contact the Public Information Officer and activate protocols for working with the media (Amber Alert, G.O. 435.30, Minnesota Crime Alert Network).

Initial investigation:

1. Conduct a neighborhood/vehicle canvas.

2. Arrange for use of helpful media.
3. Maintain records of communications/messages.
4. Ensure that everyone at the scene is identified and interviewed separately.
5. Search the home or building where the incident took place and conduct search including all surrounding areas, following St. Paul Police G.O. 447.00 Execution of a Search Warrant.
6. Assign an investigator whose duties will include coordination of the investigation.

Ongoing Investigation:

1. Begin setting up the command post/operation base away from the person's residence for the supervisor, media specialist, search coordinator, investigative coordinator, communication officer, support unit coordinator, and two liaison officers (one at command post, one at victim's residence). The role of the liaison at the home will include facilitating support and advocacy for the family.
2. Establish the ability to "trap and trace" all incoming calls. Consider setting up a separate telephone line or cellular telephone for agency use.
3. Compile a list of known sex offenders in the region.
4. In cases of infant abduction, investigate claims of home births made in that area.
5. Obtain child protective agency records for reports of child abuse.
6. Review records for previous incidents related to the missing child and prior police activity in the area including prowlers, indecent exposure, attempted abductions, etc.
7. Obtain the missing person's medical and dental records, fingerprints, and DNA when practical or within 30 days.
8. Update the NCIC missing person file with any additional information regarding the child or suspect as necessary.
9. Interview delivery personnel; employees of gas, water, electric, and cable companies; taxi drivers; post office personnel; sanitation workers; etc.
10. For persons under the age of 21, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) for photo dissemination, and other case assistance.
11. Determine if outside help is needed and utilize local, state, and federal resources related to specialized investigative needs, including:
 - A. Search and rescue resources
 - B. Investigative resources
 - C. Interpretive services
 - D. Telephone services (traps, traces, triangulation, etc.)
 - E. Media assistance (local and national)
12. Secure electronic communication information such as the missing person's cell phone number, email address(s) and social networking site information.
13. Appoint an officer who shall be responsible to communicate with the family/reporting party or their designee and who will be the primary point of contact for the family/reporting party or designee. Provide contact information and the family information packet (if available) to the family/reporting party or designee.
14. Provide general information to the family/reporting party or designee about the handling of the missing person case or about intended efforts in the case to the extent that the law enforcement agency determines that disclosure would not adversely affect the ability to locate or protect the missing person or to apprehend or prosecute any person(s) criminally in the disappearance.

Prolonged investigation:

1. Develop a profile on the possible abductor.
2. Consider the use of a truth verification device for the parents, spouse, and other key individuals.
3. Re-read all reports and transcripts of interviews, revisit the crime scene, review all photographs, and video tapes, re-interview key individuals, and re-examine all physical evidence collected.
4. Review all potential witness/suspect information obtained in the initial investigation and consider background checks on anyone identified in the investigation.
5. Periodically check pertinent sources of information about the missing person for any activity such as phone, bank, internet, or credit card activity.
6. Develop timeline and other visual exhibits.
7. Critique results of the ongoing investigation with appropriate investigative resources.
8. Arrange for periodic media coverage.
9. Utilize rewards and Crime Stoppers programs.
10. Update NCIC Missing Person File information, as necessary.
11. Re-contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for age progression assistance.
12. Maintain contact with the family and/or the reporting party or designee as appropriate.

Recovery/case closure:

1. Verify the located person is in fact the person reported to be missing.
2. If appropriate, arrange for a comprehensive physical examination of the person.
3. Conduct a careful interview of the person, document the results of the interview, and involve all appropriate agencies.
4. Notify the family/reporting party that the missing person has been located. (In adult cases, if the located adult permits the disclosure of their whereabouts and contact information, the family/reporting party may be informed of this information.)
5. Dependent on the circumstances of the disappearance, consider the need for reunification assistance, intervention, counseling, or other services for either the missing persons or family/reporting party.
6. Cancel alerts, remove case from NCIC and other information systems and remove posters and other publications from circulation.
7. Deputy Chief of Major Crimes will lead a constructive post-case review of the investigative process.

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