

TITLE: MISSING PERSON AND CHILD ABDUCTION INVESTIGATIONS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures and guidelines for the handling of reported missing or lost person/juvenile, and child abduction investigations.

DISCUSSION

Santa Fe Police Personnel shall use its resources, acting within the scope of their authority to locate, and/or rescue any reported missing or lost person/juvenile, or abducted child.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Santa Fe Police Department to investigate and document all missing person/juvenile, and child abduction reports.

PROCEDURE

JUVENILE/MISSING

47.1.01 Patrol personnel will normally be responsible for initial reports on missing and runaway juveniles. Proper investigation of these reports requires that the following steps be taken:

- A.** Interview the parents/guardian making the report.
- B.** Obtain a description and recent photograph of the child.
- C.** Advise dispatch of the information received, including the last known location and have this information broadcast on all radio frequencies.

D. An offense/incident report shall be completed and all pertinent information will be entered into the mandatory sections of the form. In addition the following information must be included:

- 1.** Place of birth.
- 2.** Mother's maiden name.
- 3.** Parent(s) address(s) if different from the juvenile's.

E. The department's Press Information Officer will be notified and a recent photograph will be provided to facilitate dissemination of the information.

F. The juvenile will be entered into N.C.I.C. and a copy of the entry will be attached to the officer's handwritten report.

G. The investigating officer shall attach a recent photograph (if available) to the Hot Sheet.

H. A copy of the report shall be forwarded to the Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU).

I. Notify Missing Person Clearing House with appropriate forms.

47.1.02 After an initial investigation, if the juvenile is not located, the on-call Detective Sergeant and the Deputy Chief or Chief shall be contacted and advised of the situation in the following cases:

- A.** In the event that the missing juvenile is less than thirteen years of age.
- B.** In the event that it appears suspicious circumstances exist surrounding the juvenile's disappearance.

MISSING CHILD/CHILD ABDUCTION INVESTIGATIONS

47.1.03 Missing Child/Child Abduction investigations apply when:

- A.** The child is younger than 18 years of age, and,
- B.** Whose whereabouts are unknown to a parent, guardian or, responsible party

47.1.04 Factors that should be considered when investigating a missing child/child abduction report include, but are not limited to:

- A. If the child is 13 years of age or younger.
- B. If the child is out of the zone of safety for his/her age and developmental stage.
- C. If the mental capacity of the child is diminished.
- D. If the child is on prescribed medication and/or is drug dependent on elicit substances.
- E. If the child is a potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.
- F. If the situation can be considered life threatening in any way.
- G. If the incident occurred near a busy thoroughfare.
- H. The length of time since the juvenile was last seen.
- I. If the child is believed to be with adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- J. If the child is absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior.
- K. If the child's disappearance involves circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to believe that the child should be considered at risk.

47.1.05 Resources that can be utilized for Missing Child/Child Abduction cases include but are not limited to:

- A. Amber Alert - Law Enforcement EMERGENCY Alert System.
- B. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- C. THE TRAK COMPUTER SYSTEM.
- D. The LOCATOR Computer System.
- E. K-9 Unit (ours and/or other agency's).
- F. New Mexico State Police.
- G. Santa Fe County Sheriffs Department.
- H. Federal Bureau of Investigations.

I. Air support (State Police or other agency)

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING MISSING CHILD/CHILD ABDUCTION CASES.

47.1.06 The responding officer shall:

- A. Determine if circumstances of the report meet the requirements of a missing child, as set forth in "47.1.03" above.
- B. Notify the on-duty field supervisor.
- C. Ensure that dispatch transmits the appropriate initial information.
- D. Have dispatch search radio/dispatch records for prior cases involving the child.
- E. Safeguard all pertinent records such as handwritten notes and dispatch logs.

47.1.07 Upon arriving at the scene, responding officer shall:

- A. Interview the parents/guardians making the report.
- B. Obtain a description and current photograph of the child.
- C. Advise dispatch of the pertinent information received, including the description and last known location and have this information broadcast on all radio frequencies.
- D. Request additional officers to secure any scene(s) that may be of evidentiary value if the location is other than the home or location the officer was dispatched.
- E. Interview potential witnesses at the scene, including children.
- F. Ensure the on-scene supervisor is apprised of pertinent information.
- G. Stay on the scene to ensure the integrity of all potential evidence, and obtain any new information when available.
- H. Initiate an offense incident report as soon as practical.
- I. If an audio recorder is used, ensure the recording is tagged into evidence, along with any other items of evidentiary value

47.1.08 The on-scene Supervisor shall:

- A.** Obtain a briefing from the handling officer.
- B.** Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed.
- C.** Organize and coordinate an immediate search of the area surrounding the missing child's home and/or place where the child was last seen.
- D.** Determine if an Amber Alert Broadcast is appropriate
- E.** Ensure that an officer has been established as the victim family liaison.
- F.** Notify the Chief's office and Public Information Officer (PIO).
- G.** Establish a command post, if needed.
- H.** Contact the Criminal Investigation Supervisor and brief him/her of the incident and request their presence, if the case is verified as child abduction.
- I.** Ensure that NCIC is notified as soon as possible with the child's information.
- J.** Monitor media relations (incoming and outgoing information).
- K.** Ensure that all responding personnel write supplemental reports

47.1.09 Criminal Investigations Supervisor will respond if the case is verified as a child abduction, and shall:

- A.** After being briefed, assess the incident.
- B.** Determine level of response.
- C.** If the situation warrants, assign the Crimes Against Children Unit Detectives case responsibility.
- D.** Assure that reasonable requests from the case agent are carried out to their completion.
- E.** Be responsible for command post operations, if implemented.
- F.** Act as liaison between investigators and other police personnel.
- G.** Request additional resources as needed.

H. Keep the Department PIO informed of all aspects of the investigation, that are releasable to the media.

47.1.10 Case Agent and Assistant Case Agent shall:

- A.** Obtain briefing from personnel at the scene.
 - B.** Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information.
 - C.** Ensure that proper personnel are in place to carry out a proper and thorough investigation.
 - D.** Immediately assign a record keeper who will keep accurate records of all investigative steps taken.
 - E.** Immediately assign personnel to begin a canvass of the neighborhood using a standardized canvass form.
 - F.** Obtain a brief history of family dynamics.
 - G.** Utilize information from the canvass forms.
 - H.** Assign personnel to interview other family members, friends and associates.
 - I.** Obtain records from Children Youth and Families (CYFD).
 - J.** Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services.
 - K.** Update descriptive information.
 - L.** Conduct follow-up interviews with reporting parent/guardian and all possible witnesses and suspects.
 - M.** Prepare necessary reports and complete appropriate forms.
 - N.** Assume responsibility for all phases of the investigation, with the exception of processing the scene and the collection of evidence.
 - O.** Notify FBI if deemed appropriate.
- 47.1.11** Field Investigators or Crime Scene Technicians shall:
- A.** Take preliminary photographs of the scene and search for evidence, as appropriate.

- B. Be responsible for collecting evidence at the scene and tagging it into evidence.

47.1.12 Use of Volunteers:

- A. Volunteers will be used only when absolutely necessary.
- B. If volunteers are used, they must be under direct supervision of police personnel.
- C. No person will be allowed to volunteer without first being identified.
- D. The person's information will be recorded and given to the record keeper.

ACTIVATION OF AMBER ALERT

47.1.13 Criteria for Amber Alert activation:

- A. There must be evidence of non-familial abduction.
- B. The child must be under 18 years of age.
- C. There should be no doubt that the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- D. There must be specific, detailed description of the child, the abductor, and/or the abductor's vehicle.

47.1.14 Authorized Requestors:

- A. Deputy Chief for Operations.
- B. Designated Public Information Officer.
- C. Criminal Investigations Commander.
- D. Crimes Against Children Unit Sergeant.

47.1.15 Procedures for Activating an Amber Alert:

- A. An authorized requestor will notify KKOB-AM radio to activate the Amber Alert abduction information, via New Mexico Emergency Alert System.
- B. A statement (30 seconds or less) will be recorded for broadcast. Amber Alert forms will be prepared/utilized for every activation.
- C. The KKOB-AM employee receiving the request will ask the requestor for appropriate code information.

- D. The alert will be authorized only if the requestor's identity is verified by code, and only if the information provided meets the required criteria listed in number 1 above.

- E. No one other than authorized requestors may activate the Amber Alert. Violation of this procedure can result in the Santa Fe Police Department's authorization to participate being withdrawn.

- F. Upon the completion of a child abduction investigation, the Chief of Police may direct that either a debriefing be held or an After Action Report be prepared for an administrative review.

ADULT MISSING PERSON REPORTS

47.1.16 This section applies to persons who are declared emancipated as defined by State statute and does not apply to juveniles.

47.1.17 While conducting preliminary or follow-up investigations regarding missing persons, personnel may encounter several situations that would require the missing adult to be entered into N.C.I.C. For entry of a missing person into N.C.I.C. there must be reasonable grounds to believe that the disappearance was not voluntary, that the person's physical safety is in danger, that the person has a physical disability, or that the person has a mental disability. The investigating officer shall be responsible for properly documenting and submitting any information with his/her written report in accordance with the following guidelines.

47.1.18 Guidelines for documentation of adult entries are as follows:

- A. When evidence suggests that a missing person's physical safety is in danger or that the person's disappearance is not voluntary, a written statement from a parent, legal guardian, next of kin, or other authoritative source is required. The documentation must include the circumstances relating to the person's disappearance.
- B. If the missing person has a physical and/or mental disability, a written statement verifying the missing person's condition is required from a physician or other authoritative source, (e.g., parent, next of kin, etc.).

INVESTIGATIONS OF ADULT MISSING PERSONS

47.1.19 When a field patrol officer takes an adult missing persons report, it will be the responsibility of the initiating officer to properly determine the circumstances (voluntary/involuntary, etc.) under which the person is missing and to include all pertinent facts surrounding the case in a complete report.

47.1.20 If the report necessitates an N.C.I.C. entry or an “attempt to locate” broadcast, the guidelines set forth above, under section “Missing Persons Report” will be followed.

47.1.21 If the missing adult is not located by the end of the officer’s shift, the officer will forward a copy of the report to the Criminal Investigations Division for follow-up investigation.

A. If the adult disappeared under suspicious or questionable circumstances, the Detective Supervisor shall be notified to allow dispatch of the on-call detective when necessary for immediate follow-up.

47.1.22 If the missing adult has not been located by the end of the officer’s shift, the investigating officer shall prepare a hot sheet (if possible, to include a recent photo of the missing person) and dispatch will be instructed to B.O.L.O. the information to all oncoming shifts and other local law enforcement agencies.

47.1.23 The Detective from the Criminal Investigations Division will have the final responsibility for the investigation of all adult missing persons reports in which the missing person has not been located by the end of the initiating officer’s shift.

PROCEDURES FOR RECC

47.1.24 Upon being dispatched, the handling Officer shall ensure that the dispatcher does the following:

A. Obtain sufficient information to prepare a BOLO for the missing person.

B. BOLO the description of the missing person to all units and assure that the BOLO is repeated to all incoming shifts.

C. Enter the person into NCIC, when requested to do so by an officer.

D. Notify the on-duty commander when foul play is suspected or other exigent circumstances exist (i.e. kidnapping, mental illness, etc.)

SEARCH & RESCUE

47.1.25 Upon notification that an individual(s) is missing *and* believed to be lost, or trapped, in the City of Santa Fe, the Department member receiving such information shall immediately advise the on-duty patrol supervisor of the situation. The on-duty patrol supervisor shall immediately initiate search and rescue operations if the individual is believed to be in, or immediately adjacent to, a residential area. The Department’s ATVs, or other specialty resources, may be deployed in the search and rescue operation at the discretion of the on-duty patrol supervisor if the individual is believed to be in a non-residential area.

47.1.26 If the individual is believed to be in a remote, or difficult to access area of the City of Santa Fe and not immediately located, the on-duty patrol supervisor shall initiate notification of the situation up the chain of command to the Chief of Police or his/her designee

New Mexico State Police Search and Rescue Activation

47.1.27 At the discretion of the Chief of Police, or designee, the New Mexico State Police Search and Rescue (SAR) Team in Santa Fe may be contacted through their communications center (827-9300) for their assistance.

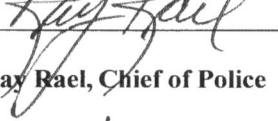
A. A Command Post shall be established and search and rescue operations should be continued until the arrival of the NM State Police SAR Team

B. The on-duty commander will brief the SAR Team Leader on the situation and actions taken. The on-duty commander will assist and coordinate search and rescue

operations with the SAR Team.

- C. As needed, City of Santa Fe resources, such as Fire and EMS personnel and equipment, may be requested to assist.
- D. Upon the completion of a search and rescue operation, the Chief of Police may direct that either a debriefing be held or an After Action Report be prepared for an administrative review.

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APPROVED: 
Ray Rael, Chief of Police

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