



GENERAL ORDER OPS-71 MISSING PERSONS

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 21, 2011

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I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall diligently investigate all reports of missing persons immediately, whether they are adults or children.¹ No law enforcement agency may establish a waiting period before taking a missing person report. A planned, strategic search shall be initiated by Patrol personnel upon verification of a critical missing subject, when foul play is suspected or as otherwise directed by a supervisor, the search may be augmented by additional personnel, including those from the Special Operations Bureau and the Criminal Investigation Bureau. The HCPD shall participate in the Maryland Amber Alert Plan when it is deemed appropriate in order to effectively use technology and the broadcast media to quickly disseminate information about abducted children to the public.²

II. DEFINITIONS

Within this General Order, the following meanings shall apply.

A. A Missing Adult is any person who is:

- 1. Eighteen (18) years of age or older; AND
- 2. Missing from his home or geographical location; AND
- 3. Whose whereabouts are unknown; AND
- 4. The reason for, and/or cause of the absence is also unknown.

B. A Missing Child is a person who is:

- 1. Under the age of eighteen (18) years; AND,
- 2. The subject of a missing persons report filed with a law enforcement agency; AND
- 3. Whose whereabouts are unknown.

¹ CALEA 41.2.6a

² CALEA 41.2.6d

- C. A Missing Emancipated Person is a person who is:
 - 1. Under the age of eighteen (18) years; AND
 - 2. Legally declared emancipated (released from paternal care) by the laws of his/her state of residence; AND
 - 3. The subject of a missing persons report filed with a law enforcement agency; AND
 - 4. Whose whereabouts are unknown; AND
 - 5. The agency has signed documentation in its possession supporting the stated conditions under which the person is declared missing.

- D. Runaway

Any juvenile under the age of eighteen (18) who purposefully leaves home to escape (parental custody and/or guidance) and there is concern among family members for the welfare of such individual.

- E. A Critical Missing Subject is a person who is:
 - 1. Child, elderly person, disabled person, mental patient, disoriented person in need of swift medical assistance, or other individual in need of prompt location; AND
 - 2. Whose whereabouts are unknown.

- F. Abduction

Within this General Order, Abduction shall mean that a child is reported to be involuntarily missing from the person(s) having care-taking responsibilities for the child. There is an eyewitness who states that the child was taken by a person or persons. Lacking an eyewitness, there exists concrete evidence that the child's disappearance was not voluntary.

- G. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Entry

Within this General Order, an NCIC entry will be considered any information entered into the index of criminal justice information with regards to a missing person.

- H. Teletype (TTY) Entry

Within this General Order, a Teletype entry contains information regarding a missing person or runaway.

- I. Grassroots

A twenty-four (24) hour, non-profit crisis counseling center and shelter care facility that provides runaways and their families with counseling and referral services.

- J. Rapid Return

A program which uses an electronic tracking system on participants which can assist the HCPD if they become a critical missing person.

K. Amber Alert

A program to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child-abduction cases. Broadcasters use the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to air a description of the abducted child and suspected abductor.

L. Silver Alert

A program to promptly alert public safety agencies and the general public when a person with a cognitive impairment is reported missing. The cognitive impairment must be to the extent that the subject requires assistance from a caregiver. Cognitive impairments include, but are not limited to Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Persons of all ages can suffer from a cognitive impairment.

III. TELETYPE PROCEDURES³

When it is determined that a Teletype is to be sent regarding a missing adult or child, the below procedures will be followed:

- A. Identify the appropriate/surrounding jurisdictions to receive the Teletype.
- B. Provide all information for inclusion in the Teletype on a Teletype Request form. If the Records Section is not open, fax the completed request form to the Communications Division.
- C. Supervisors will evaluate Teletypes for their urgency. If a Teletype is urgent and in need of an immediate response, it will be directly faxed to the Communications Division.
- D. Request the Teletype number for inclusion in the report.

IV. NCIC REPORTING PROCEDURES⁴

- A. The following minimum information is required for an initial National Crime Information Center (NCIC) entry using the State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet.⁵

- 1. Case Number
- 2. Case criteria (D – disability, E – endangered, I – involuntary, J – juvenile, V – catastrophe victim, O – Other)
- 3. Full name
- 4. Date and place of birth
- 5. Date of last contact
- 6. Eye color
- 7. Hair color
- 8. Height and weight
- 9. Sex and race

* For a critically missing subject, the assigned officer shall attempt to complete as much as possible of the State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet as possible at the time of making the initial report.⁶

³ CALEA 41.2.6c & 41.2.5b
⁴ CALEA 41.2.5b, c & 41.2.6c
⁵ CALEA 41.2.5a
⁶ CALEA 41.2.5f

B. Within 72 hours, a supplemental State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet must be completed and submitted to the Records Section by the assigned officer.⁷ The Records Section, upon receipt of State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet, will send a copy of the Worksheet to the Maryland State Police (MSP), Computer Crimes Unit.⁸ The following information shall be included in this supplemental report when available:⁹

1. Blood type
2. Circumcision
3. Scars, marks, and tattoos
4. Skin tone
5. Availability of footprints
6. Availability of x-rays
7. Availability of dental records
8. Eyeglasses or contacts
9. Fingerprint class
10. Jewelry type and description
11. Detailed clothing description
12. Driver's license number and state
13. License plate of operated vehicle
14. Description of operated vehicle
15. Social Security number

C. The following miscellaneous information may be entered into NCIC, if necessary:¹⁰

1. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of associates, friends, and/or classmates;
2. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of any school/college attended and/or places frequented;
3. Names, addresses, and work, home, cell phone, and beeper numbers for reporting parties, parents, or guardians;
4. Any known threats of violence, relevant information, etc;
5. Investigative action taken; and
6. Any other information deemed relevant.

V. NCIC ENTRY PROCEDURES¹¹

A. When it is determined that a missing adult or child is to be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), General Order OPS-20, NCIC Guidelines, shall be followed.

B. One of the following criteria must be met for entry:

1. **Disability (EMD):** a person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting him/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.¹²
2. **Endangered (EME):** a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.¹³

⁷ CALEA 41.2.5c & 41.2.6c

⁸ CALEA 41.2.5b & 41.2.5c

⁹ CALEA 41.2.5a

¹⁰ CALEA 41.2.5a, c

¹¹ CALEA 41.2.5b, c

¹² CALEA 41.2.5f

¹³ CALEA 41.2.5f

3. **Involuntary** (EMI): a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary, i.e., abduction or kidnapping.
 4. **Juvenile** (EMJ): a person under the age of 18 ~~24~~ who is missing and not declared emancipated and does not meet any of the entry criteria set forth in 1, 2, 3, or 5.
 5. **Catastrophe** Victim (EMV): a person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.
 6. **Other** (EMO): a person not meeting the criteria for entry in any other category who is missing; and a) for whom there is a reasonable concern for his/her safety; or b) a person who is over the age of 18.
- C. If it is determined that NCIC entry is appropriate, a completed State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet shall be faxed to the Communications Division. The Communications Division, in turn, will send a log number confirming receipt to either the officer's Mobile Data Computer (MDC) or HCPD e-mail account. It is the responsibility of the officer to ensure that he has received his log number before clearing at the end of his shift.

VI. MISSING ADULT PROCEDURES

- A. The Call Taker receiving a call in reference to a missing adult will obtain the following information, following the Police Tactical Dispatch Protocols for Missing Persons:¹⁴
1. Location of the incident (caller);
 2. Telephone number/call back number of the reporting person;
 3. Exact nature of the incident;
 4. Time frame of the incident;
 5. Name and age of the individual missing;
 6. Reason for reporting the subject as missing;
 7. Time frame and location of subject's last known whereabouts;
 8. Any medical/mental health considerations;
 9. Any medications (if so, does the subject have them with him?);
 10. Full (specific) description of subject, to include clothing (if possible);
 11. Any other useful or relevant information about the subject; AND
 12. Possible destination(s).
- B. A police officer taking a report of a missing adult will:
1. Conduct a thorough preliminary investigation.
 2. Request the Communications Division broadcast a complete, detailed description of the missing person, and any known, associated vehicle, as provided by the investigating officer.¹⁵
 3. Request a Teletype be sent to other jurisdictions, if appropriate, by completing a Teletype Request Form.¹⁶
 4. If the subject is between the ages of 18 and 21, the officer shall request the missing person be entered into NCIC by completing a State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet.¹⁷ The Communications Division shall ensure that the NCIC entry is made immediately upon receipt of the Worksheet.
 5. Contact his Supervisor to determine if immediate follow-up will be necessary.¹⁸

¹⁴ CALEA 41.2.5a

¹⁵ CALEA 41.2.5b

¹⁶ CALEA 41.2.5b

¹⁷ CALEA 41.2.6b, c

¹⁸ CALEA 41.2.5e

6. The officer who requested a missing person be entered into NCIC will make a follow-up contact with the reporting person during his next tour of duty.¹⁹
 7. Submit a completed report at the end of his shift, including any and all Teletype numbers, as well as the original State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet stamped "RECV'D" by the Communications Division.²⁰
- C. The officer's Supervisor will:
1. Determine if immediate follow-up will be necessary. Consider all relevant factors, including, but not limited to:²¹
 - a. If the subject has been missing less than twenty-four (24) hours and no foul play is suspected.
 - b. If the subject could be in danger (e.g. temperature, age, mental condition, etc.).²²
 2. Ensure that a copy of the report is forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB) for review and assignment if deemed necessary by the CIB Supervisor; AND²³
 3. Determine if additional officers should be dispatched to immediately conduct a physical search of the area, with consideration of the following:²⁴
 - a. The inclusion of the CIB, Aviation and K-9 Support Units.
 - b. The utilization of police officers equipped with motorcycles or bicycles as modes of transportation.²⁵
 - c. The usage of Search Teams through the Department of Fire and Rescue Services.
 - d. The inclusion of the Office of Public Affairs (OPA).
- D. When a missing adult is located and the report has been initiated by the HCPD, the officer receiving information of the adult's recovery will:
1. Submit a follow-up report containing the date closed, nature of closure, condition of the adult, city and state where found, reason for disappearance, locating jurisdiction, any suspect information (if a suspect was arrested), and any charges placed.
 2. Request that the adult be removed from NCIC immediately (no later than the end of that day's tour of duty). Deletion of Missing Persons shall be done through HCPD Form 1417. The officer is responsible for submitting a supplemental report of action taken, to include the cancellation message number.²⁶
 3. Ensure that a copy of the supplement is forwarded to the case investigator and his supervisor.²⁷

¹⁹ CALEA 41.2.5d

²⁰ CALEA 42.2.5c

²¹ CALEA 41.2.5e

²² CALEA 41.2.5f

²³ CALEA 41.2.5b, e

²⁴ CALEA 41.2.5e

²⁵ CALEA 41.1.3a

²⁶ CALEA 41.2.5c

²⁷ CALEA 41.2.5b

VII. MISSING CHILD

A. The Call Taker receiving a call in reference to a missing or found child will obtain the following information, following the Police Tactical Dispatch Protocols for Missing Persons:²⁸

1. Location of the incident (caller);
2. Telephone number/call back number of the reporting person;
3. Exact nature of the incident;
4. Time frame of the incident;
5. Name and age of the individual missing;
6. Reason for reporting the subject as missing;
7. Time frame and location of child's last known whereabouts;
8. Any medical/mental health considerations;
9. Any medications (if so, does the child have them with him?);
10. Full (specific) description of child, to include clothing (if possible);
11. Any other useful or relevant information about the child; AND
12. Possible destination(s).

B. A police officer taking the initial report of a missing child shall determine the following information:²⁹

1. If the missing child has ever been the subject of a prior missing persons report;
2. If the missing child suffers from a mental or physical handicap or illness;
3. If the disappearance of the missing child is suspicious or dangerous in nature;
4. If the reporting person has reason to believe that the missing child has been abducted;
5. If the missing child has previously been the victim of a child abuse report or investigation;
6. If the missing child is under the age of fourteen (14) years;
7. If the missing child is under the age of eighteen (18) ~~twenty-one (21)~~ years and has left any hospital, alcohol and/or drug abuse treatment facility in Howard County without permission.

NOTE: If conditions 3, 4, or 5 exist, a Criminal Investigations Bureau Supervisor shall be notified immediately.

C. When any of the conditions in subsection B, above, exist:

1. The police officer taking the initial report shall:
 - a. Immediately notify his supervisor of the incident and all relevant circumstances.³⁰
 - b. Request the Communications Division broadcast a complete description of the missing child, as provided by the investigating officer.³¹ These broadcasts will be repeated every hour until either the child is found or the Communications Division is told to discontinue the broadcast by the Supervisor or Watch Commander.

²⁸ CALEA 41.2.6e

²⁹ CALEA 41.2.6b, e

³⁰ CALEA 41.2.6b

³¹ CALEA 41.2.6e

- c. Request that teletypes be sent to other jurisdictions, as appropriate, by completing a Teletype Request Form. In accordance with METERS guidelines, the officer must provide specific location(s) to be checked.³²
 - d. Request the missing child be entered into NCIC by completing a State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet.³³ The Communications Division shall ensure that the NCIC entry is made immediately upon receipt of the Worksheet.³⁴
 - e. Submit a completed report at the end of his shift, including any and all Teletype numbers, as well as a copy of the State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet stamped "RECV'D" by the Communications Division.
2. The officer will continue appropriate search/investigative actions coordinated by the supervisor, to include:³⁵
 - a. Notifying the on duty Watch Commander.
 - b. Ensuring that the Department of Social Services (DSS) is notified, in those cases where there has been any prior DSS involvement or where the investigator or supervisor feels contact is now warranted. The name of the DSS representative contacted shall be included in the officer's report.³⁶
 - c. Until relieved by the Youth Services Section, the supervisor shall make arrangements with the Watch Commander for continued follow-up by the following shifts.
 3. The Youth Services Section will follow up on all runaways/missing child cases when abduction or foul play is not suspected and will receive case responsibility at 0900 hours on the first business day following the report.³⁷
 4. The Youth Services Section will be responsible for coordinating the assistance of outside agencies and clearinghouses.
 5. The Watch Commander will provide the Youth Service Section with operational support on a twenty-four (24) hour basis until the missing child has been located.
 6. OPA will utilize the child's photograph as well as print and electronic media (radio, Internet, television, etc.) to help locate the missing child.
- D. **When none of the conditions set forth in subsection B exist**, the police officer taking the initial report shall:
1. Initiate an investigation surrounding the disappearance of the child.³⁸
 2. Complete a State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet.
 3. Request that teletypes be sent to surrounding jurisdictions, as appropriate, by completing a Teletype Request Form.³⁹
 4. Implement the procedures in subsection C by the end of the shift if the missing child has not been located.

³² CALEA 41.2.6c

³³ CALEA 41.2.6c

³⁴ CALEA 41.2.6e

³⁵ CALEA 41.2.6e, f

³⁶ CALEA 41.2.6c

³⁷ CALEA 41.2.6f

³⁸ CALEA 41.2.6e

³⁹ CALEA 41.2.6c

- E. When a missing child is not located and there is reason to believe the missing child may be located in another jurisdiction, the HCPD will coordinate the investigation with other police jurisdictions and other agencies as appropriate.⁴⁰
- F. The Records Section shall be responsible for the dispersal of all reports and supplements to outside agencies as appropriate.⁴¹
- G. A copy of all missing child reports will be faxed to the Youth Services Section at the end of the shift during which it was reported.⁴²
- H. CIB shall be responsible for all follow-up investigations involving a missing child when the child is believed to have been abducted by a non-custodial parent or a stranger.⁴³
- I. When a missing child is located and the report has been initiated by this HCPD, the officer receiving information of the child's recovery will:⁴⁴
 - 1. Submit a follow-up report containing the date closed, nature of closure, condition of the child, city and state where found, reason for disappearance, locating jurisdiction, any suspect information (if a suspect was arrested), and any charges placed.
 - 2. Request that the child be removed from NCIC immediately (no later than the end of that day's tour of duty). Deletion of Missing Persons shall be done through HCPD Form 1417. The officer is responsible for submitting a supplemental report of action taken, to include the cancellation message number.
 - 3. Ensure that a copy of the supplement is forwarded to the case investigator and his supervisor.

VIII. RUNAWAY PROCEDURES

- A. The Call Taker receiving a call in reference to a runaway will obtain the following information, following the Police Tactical Dispatch Protocols for Missing Persons:⁴⁵
 - 1. Location of the incident (caller);
 - 2. Telephone number/call back number of the reporting person;
 - 3. Exact nature of the incident;
 - 4. Time frame of the incident;
 - 5. Name and age of the subject;
 - 6. Reason for reporting the subject as missing;
 - 7. Time frame and location of subject's last known whereabouts;
 - 8. Any medical/mental health considerations;
 - 9. Any medications (if so, does the subject have them with him?);
 - 10. Full (specific) description of subject, to include clothing (if possible);
 - 11. Any other useful or relevant information about the subject; AND
 - 12. Possible destination(s).

⁴⁰ CALEA 41.2.6c

⁴¹ CALEA 41.2.6c

⁴² CALEA 41.2.6c

⁴³ CALEA 41.2.6e, f

⁴⁴ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁴⁵ CALEA 41.2.6e

B. Initial Reporting Procedures⁴⁶

1. Officers taking runaway reports will provide the reporting parent/guardian with a copy of the HCPD brochure “**Runaways Q&A**” at the time of the initial report. The brochure will provide families with answers to the most commonly asked questions about runaways, as well as information on how they can obtain crisis intervention and counseling through Grassroots. A supply of brochures shall be maintained in the debriefing room of each District station.
2. Officers are encouraged to request the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) (during their normal hours of operation) at the time of the runaway report if they believe that the family may be in need of immediate crisis intervention. During the hours where the MCT is not available, officers may contact the Grassroots Hotline at (410) 531-6677 for guidance and/or assistance. Grassroots will ensure that the most appropriate follow-up resource makes contact with the family in a timely fashion.
3. The Runaway Investigator within the Youth Services Section will screen active runaway cases that could benefit from involvement with Grassroots and/or MCT. The Runaway Investigator will confirm that the family is aware of all available resources (Grassroots, MCT, HCPD brochure “Runaways Q&A”).
4. Officers will ensure that all runaway reports are faxed to the Youth Services Section at ext. 2611 prior to the end of the shift in which the report is received.
5. Officers will fax a completed “State of Maryland Missing Person/NCIC Worksheet” to Communications prior to the end of the shift in which the report is received.⁴⁷

C. Recovered Juvenile Runaway – For Subjects Who Reside in Howard County

Upon the recovery of a juvenile runaway at a location other than the runaway’s residence or school, officers shall:⁴⁸

1. Initiate contact with the parent/guardian of the runaway and advise them that their child has been located and is being transported to Grassroots to provide an opportunity for assessment.⁴⁹
2. Advise the parent/guardian that they must respond to Grassroots within forty-five (45) minutes to take custody of their child.
3. Notify Grassroots, via Communications, that the officer will be in route with a recovered juvenile runaway.
4. If the parent/guardian advises that they do not wish the child to be transported to Grassroots the officer will transport the child home or to the appropriate station where the child will be picked up by the parent/guardian.⁵⁰
5. When juveniles are not transported to Grassroots for assessment, officers must indicate the reason in their report.
6. Juveniles who are unruly, combative, or might otherwise pose a threat to Grassroots staff will not be transported to Grassroots, but will be taken to the appropriate facility for final disposition.⁵¹

⁴⁶ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁴⁷ CALEA 41.2.5c

⁴⁸ CALEA 41.2.6e, f

⁴⁹ CALEA 41.2.6f & 44.2.2d

⁵⁰ CALEA 44.2.1a

⁵¹ CALEA 44.2.2d

7. In the event a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, or in cases where the parent/guardian does not have a timely response to Grassroots, the officer will remain at Grassroots until the runaway has had the opportunity to take advantage of assessment services and then transport the runaway to the appropriate district station for assistance.
 8. Prior to the end of the shift, the recovering officer will make sure copies of all reports are faxed to the Youth Services Section and also fax a completed HCPD "Clear Missing Person Form" to the Communications Division.⁵²
 9. In the event a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the Department of Social Services shall be contacted for assistance.
 10. If a recovered runaway is to be processed for a criminal charge, the juvenile will not be taken to Grassroots, but will be taken to the appropriate district station and arrangements will be made to have the child picked up by the parent or guardian (or the Department of Juvenile Services if appropriate).⁵³
 11. Officers will clearly document the circumstances regarding the recovery and what, if any, action was taken by the Officer, Parent/Guardian or Grassroots.
- D. Recovered Juvenile Runaway – For Subjects Who Reside Outside Howard County or Outside the State of Maryland⁵⁴
1. If a child is reported as a runaway in another jurisdiction or an out-of-state jurisdiction, and is recovered in Howard County, the child will be transported to the appropriate district station. Notification of the recovery will be made to the parent/guardian and to the reporting agency, if applicable.
 - a. In the event that the parent/guardian lives **outside of Maryland** and are unable to respond in a timely manner, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) should be contacted at 410-480-7878 (on business days, 0800-1700 hours) or 877-404-3724 for Juvenile Intake on evenings, weekends and holidays.
 - i. Should an officer experience difficulty in obtaining the required services, the officer should request to speak to a DJS supervisor who has the authority to override the Intake Officer's initial decision. This may include times when staff may not be aware of the fact that the DJS is mandated, by law, to provide a runaway with the above listed services.
 - ii. The Interstate Compact on Juveniles requires the DJS to assume custody of the youth, provide shelter/detention, food and transportation for their return home. See Annotated Code of Maryland, Human Services Article, § 9-301 through 9-314.
 - b. In the event that the parent/guardian lives in **another jurisdiction** in Maryland and are unable to respond in a timely manner, the Department of Juvenile Services can provide emergency shelter for the child. If DJS is unable to provide assistance, the DSS should be contacted via Communications. Officers shall document all notifications to DJS/DSS and parent/guardian in the incident report.

⁵² CALEA 41.2.5c

⁵³ CALEA 44.2.2d

⁵⁴ CALEA 41.2.6e & 44.2.2d

6. The officer will request Communications complete a "Hit Confirmation" and "Locate" to ensure that the juvenile is removed from METERS/NCIC by the appropriate agency.
- E. Recovery of a juvenile runaway at his/her residence or school⁵⁵
- If the HCPD is notified of a juvenile runaway's return to their residence or school, the investigating officer will:
1. Complete a supplement report verifying the return of the child and the circumstances surrounding his/her absence.
 2. Ensure appropriate notification to the child's parent/guardian if the child returned to school.
 3. Complete and fax, to the Communications Division, a "Clear Missing Person Form" to have the juvenile removed from METERS/NCIC, as appropriate.

IX. RUNAWAY SEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES⁵⁶

- A. The Runaway Investigator designated by the Youth Services Section will:
1. Follow-up on all runaway reports.⁵⁷
 2. Act as the liaison between HCPD and Grassroots.
 3. Be available to assist patrol with any problems should they occur. The Runaway Investigator will address concerns identified by both HCPD personnel and Grassroots staff by telephone and only respond when absolutely necessary to maintain the integrity of the program.
- B. The Youth Services Section shall be responsible for the oversight of the use of Grassroots. All inquiries, concerns and suggestions regarding procedural issues shall be directed to the Supervisor of the Youth Services Section.

X. CRITICAL MISSING SUBJECT SEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES⁵⁸

- A. Patrol Officers
1. The officer will immediately determine if the missing person is a critical missing subject and/or a participant in Rapid Return and advise the on-duty supervisor.
 2. Immediate request for entry into NCIC will be the responsibility of the initial patrol officer, as appropriate, in accordance with General Order OPS-20, NCIC Procedures.⁵⁹
 3. Once the person is listed as missing in NCIC, the initial officer will broadcast a lookout for the critical missing person including as much pertinent information as appropriate regarding their description, clothing, vehicle, etc.
 4. The responding patrol officer(s) will initiate appropriate contact with the acquaintances, friends, and relatives the missing person is likely to contact. Contact should also be made with the local taxicab companies, HATS bus service, and local hospitals when appropriate.

⁵⁵ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁵⁶ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁵⁷ CALEA 41.2.6f

⁵⁸ CALEA 46.2.5e & f

⁵⁹ CALEA 41.2.5c

5. An area canvas of surrounding neighborhoods and communities should be initiated immediately following the patrol officer's verification of a critical missing subject.
 6. Consideration should be made as to whether or not any previous missing person reports or police reports of any nature have been filed for the subject.
 7. The responding officer will obtain photographs of the missing person from the reporting party or other immediately available resources.
 8. If the critical missing subject is a child, special consideration should be afforded to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the missing child. An officer (i.e., chaplain) should be assigned to the parent(s) or guardian(s) to serve as a liaison between them and the Department for the duration of the search.
 9. **The initial officer(s) shall conduct an intensive search of the home or immediate area at least twice (in the event the party is hiding/moving).** In the event of a missing child, the search should be expanded to include any small spaces that could double as a hiding place. Two separate officers, one preferably a supervisor, should be utilized for the search of the home or immediate area.
 10. The location from which a person goes missing should be treated like a crime scene until proven otherwise. As such, any consent to search should be documented and photographs of rooms, houses, surround areas, etc. should be taken.
 11. The initial officer will ensure that an appropriate party remains at the home, or scene, in case the critical missing subject returns.
 12. If the missing person is located during the search, the locating officer will verify his welfare and offer to return the individual to his home, to a medical facility, or to the District Station, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the situation. The locating officer's supervisor will make notification to the reporting party and the assigned HCPD liaison, as appropriate.⁶⁰
- B. Patrol Supervisor⁶¹
1. The on duty Patrol Supervisor will determine if additional officers should be dispatched to immediately conduct a physical search of the area.
 2. The Supervisor will also determine whether other personnel, special equipment, or other agencies are immediately required to assist in conducting the search. The names and ranks of any other personnel involved should be documented.
 3. The Supervisor will make an initial determination regarding the need for a response from the CIB:
 - a. CIB assistance may be helpful (tracking credit card or ATM card use, cellular phone use, interviewing witnesses, etc.)
 - b. Supervisors should be aware of the potential for criminal activity in any missing person case. CIB may begin a "parallel" investigation early in the incident.
 4. The Supervisor will determine the need for the Department of Fire Rescue Services' (DFRS) Search Management Team. The Supervisor may recommend that the DFRS stage during search incidents involving inclement weather.

⁶⁰ CALEA 41.2.5d

⁶¹ CALEA 41.2.6e & 41.2.5f

5. The Supervisor, unless relieved by the Watch Commander, will be responsible for the search operation and the coordination of all personnel and agencies involved.
6. The Supervisor, in conjunction with the Watch Commander, will determine the need to **activate the Incident Command System (ICS)**.

C. Watch Commander⁶²

1. The Watch Commander will determine if the missing person is a participant in Rapid Return. If so, he shall ensure notification to the on-call Rapid Return supervisor and team members, as well as, access the personal information and photograph from the HCPD shared drive and/or the Howard County intranet.
2. The Watch Commander will assume management of any incident regarding the search and rescue of lost or missing persons if the situation meets any of the following criteria:
 - a. The search will involve more than four officers at any time;
 - b. The search may be longer than two hours in duration;
 - c. The search will involve two or more Departments within the County;
 - d. The search involves significant community impact/outreach.
3. The Watch Commander will determine the need to activate the Incident Command System (ICS) and ensure the following (should the ICS be activated, the following will default to the Incident Commander):
 - a. Determining an appropriate Incident Command Post staging site, one that sits away from but within proximity to the residence.
 - b. Ensuring that the operation is moved to a dedicated radio talk group that is monitored by Dispatch.
 - c. Ensuring that a Scribe documents the incident.
 - d. Ensuring the development of an operational plan.
 - e. Determining if a flyer needs to be developed and circulated.
 - f. Determining if the Community Notification System (CNS) should be activated.
 - g. Determining if the Amber Alert program should be activated, if applicable.
 - h. Determining if OPA needs to be notified to obtain a Public Information Officer In the event media coverage is anticipated or desired to assist in getting vital information publicized.
 - i. Determining when to suspend the operation.
 - j. Ensuring all relevant information is entered into the Watch Commander's Log and the briefing book.
 - k. Ensuring a documented critique of any significant search operation is conducted. A copy of the documentation shall be provided to Education and Training and to Research and Planning for Accreditation purposes.
 - l. Creating and submitting an After Action Report.

⁶² CALEA 41.2.6e

XI. OPERATIONAL SEARCH PLAN⁶³

- A. A specific plan will be developed by the Watch Commander to provide for the following:
1. Designation of an Incident Commander;
 2. The Incident Commander will coordinate operations within the department and with outside agencies. Such agencies may include the Sheriffs Office, DFRS, MSP, and/other County Resources;
 3. The use of any special operational components of the HCPD, such as Tactical, K-9, Bike Officers, the Aviation Unit or special operational components from other agencies;
 4. Any travel of search routes required will be planned and mapped;
 5. Provisions for emergency first aid, ambulance, and medical assistance;
 6. Applicable procedures for coordination with Department units and outside agencies, to include radio communication procedures;
 7. Logistics requirements, to include the number of officers and other personnel needed, and the use of special equipment.
- B. Unified Command

All operational search plans will be developed in conjunction with the Department of Fire Rescue Services (DFRS) Urban Search and Rescue Group, as appropriate. The Watch Commander may request that a DFRS Incident Commander assume responsibility for the physical search, however Incident Command and case responsibility would remain with the HCPD. If DFRS assumes management of the physical search, patrol officers may assume perimeter and roving positions as coordinated by the DFRS Incident Commander.

XII. AMBER ALERT PROCEDURES⁶⁴

- A. To activate the Maryland Amber Alert Plan, the following criteria must be satisfied:
1. A confirmed report of child abduction. Child abduction by a non-custodial parent is not a case that would routinely meet Maryland AMBER plan criteria, unless the Watch Commander can articulate a reasonable suspicion that the parent intends to physically harm the child.
 2. Determination that the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in serious danger of bodily harm or death.
 3. There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert would assist.
 4. The abductor and/or child are likely to still be in the broadcast area.
 5. The Watch Commander must authorize the Alert and notify Communications to prepare for a possible increase in 911 calls. A separate Tip Line should be activated to distinguish tip calls from 911 calls.⁶⁵

⁶³ CALEA 46.2.5

⁶⁴ CALEA 41.2.6d

⁶⁵ CALEA 41.2.6e

- B. The Watch Commander will contact the Maryland State Police Headquarters Duty Officer:⁶⁶
 - 1. Telephone (410) 486-3101 or (800) 525-5555;
 - 2. Fax (410) 653-4269;
 - 3. METERS Terminal LPH1.

- C. The following information must be provided:
 - 1. Location of abduction;
 - 2. Description of the child, to include name, age, and physical descriptors;
 - 3. Description of the abductor;
 - 4. Description of the vehicle involved;
 - 5. Last known direction of travel of the suspect vehicle.

- D. The Maryland Amber Plan coordinator from either the Command Staff of the Criminal Enforcement Command or the Maryland Center for Missing and Exploited Persons will immediately contact the Watch Commander to confirm that all activation criteria have been met. Once confirmed, MSP will initiate notifications to the media and the Maryland Department of Transportation for the activation of "Dynamic Message Signs" and Highway Advisory Radios. As programming permits, participating broadcasters will broadcast the AMBER Alert four (4) times per hour for the first two (2) hours, continuing with three (3) times per hour for the next three (3) hours. All alerts will direct persons with information to call the established tip line.⁶⁷

- E. Immediately following the Amber activation, the Watch Commander shall ensure that the appropriate District/Bureau Commander, Deputy Chief for Operations, the CIB Commander, the Public Information Officer and the Chief of Police are notified of the activation.⁶⁸

- F. The Watch Commander will immediately contact the Maryland Amber Plan coordinator if the child is located. If the child is not recovered within 24 hours, the alert is self-canceling.⁶⁹

- G. The Communications Division shall notify the Division Commander, or his designee, to ensure appropriate staffing immediately upon learning of an Amber Alert request for activation.⁷⁰

XIII. SILVER ALERT PROCEDURES⁷¹

- A. To activate the Maryland Silver Alert Program, the following criteria must exist:
 - 1. Subject suffers from a cognitive impairment, such as a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or dementia, and
 - 2. Subject poses a credible threat to their own health and safety, and
 - 3. Subject is traveling in a vehicle and there is enough descriptive information about the missing person and vehicle for law enforcement to issue an Alert, and
 - 4. HCPD has already activated a local or regional alert by contacting media outlets in our jurisdiction, and
 - 5. The subject has been entered into NCIC.

⁶⁶ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁶⁷ CALEA 41.2.6d

⁶⁸ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁶⁹ CALEA 41.2.6f

⁷⁰ CALEA 41.2.6e

⁷¹ CALEA 41.2.5f

- B. Provided the Silver Alert criteria are met:
1. The Watch Commander will contact the MSP Duty Officer at 410-486-3101 or 800-525-5555 (in state only).
 2. HCPD will provide the following information:
 - a. Callback information; and
 - b. Contact information for the MSP Silver Alert coordinator to call for verification.
- C. Immediately following the Silver Alert activation, the Watch Commander shall ensure that the appropriate District/Bureau Commander, the Deputy Chief for Operations, the CIB Commander, the Public Information Officer and the Chief of Police are notified of the activation.

XIV. CANCELLATION

This General Order will cancel and replace General Order OPS-71, Missing Persons, dated October 1, 2008.

AUTHORITY:



William J. McMahon
Chief of Police