

DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT

Subject: **Missing or Endangered Persons**

Policy #: **402.10**

Effective Since: 8-21-03

Revision Effective: 3-1-09

FTO Training Task: # 39

Reference Material: IACP "Missing Persons" Research Paper

ILEAP Standards Covered: OPR.04.01(g)

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish responsibilities and guidelines for the investigation of missing persons.

POLICY: Many missing person reports involve individuals who have voluntarily left home for personal reasons, while other reports are often unfounded or quickly resolved. However, there are instances in which persons disappear for unexplained reasons and under circumstances where they may be considered at risk. The roles of the complaint taker and initial responding officer are critical in identifying the circumstances surrounding missing persons and in identifying those persons at risk. Therefore, it is the policy of this agency that (1) all reports of missing persons be given full consideration and attention by members of this agency to include careful recording and investigation of factual circumstances surrounding the disappearance in accordance with this policy, and (2) that particular care be exercised in instances involving those who may be mentally or physical impaired or others who are insufficiently prepared to take care of themselves.

DEFINITIONS: Missing-Critical Person; a person may be classified as missing-critical, when one or more of the following NCIC categories apply: endangered, involuntary, and mentally/physically disabled.

PROCEDURES:

A. Reporting/Classification of Missing Persons

1. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person. Missing person reports shall be taken in-person or by telephone in conformance with the criteria of this policy.
2. A person may be declared "missing" when his/her whereabouts is unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the subject's behavior patterns, plans or routines.
3. An individual may be considered "missing-critical" who meets the foregoing criteria and who, among other possible circumstances:
 - a. may be the subject of foul play or accidental harm due to evidence or suspicious circumstances;
 - b. because of age (young or old), may be unable to properly safeguard or care for himself/herself;
 - c. suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated/unattended;
 - d. is a patient of a mental institution and is considered potentially dangerous to himself or others;
 - e. has demonstrated the potential for suicide.
4. Based on the outcome of initial inquiries, a decision may be made concerning the potential danger posed to the missing person and the urgency of police response.

B. Initial Report Taking

1. The initial report taker must gather as much pertinent information as possible in order to properly classify a missing person report and initiate proper response. This includes the following information:
 - a. Name, age and physical description of the subject and relationship of the reporting party to the missing person.

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- b. Time and place of last known location and the identity of anyone accompanying the subject.
 - c. The extent of any search for the subject.
 - d. Whether the subject has been missing on prior occasions and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits or plans.
 - e. Whether the individual has been involved recently in domestic incidents; suffered emotional trauma or life crises; demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior; is dependent on drugs or alcohol or has a history of mental illness.
 - f. The current physical condition of the subject and whether the person is currently on prescription medication.
 2. A supervisory officer should be notified immediately upon classification of a report as "missing-endangered."
 3. Dissemination of information regarding missing adults should be passed on to officers currently working, officers coming on duty, neighboring law enforcement agencies, and other individuals or agencies as deemed necessary and appropriate.
- C. **Preliminary Investigation** : The preliminary investigation is intended to gather additional information and to take those steps that will aid in the search for and location of a missing person. This includes gathering the following types of information and materials:
 1. Complete description of the subject and a recent photograph.
 2. Details of any physical or emotional problems.
 3. Identity of the last person(s) to have seen the subject as well as friends, relatives, coworkers or associates who were or may have been in contact with the subject prior to disappearance.
 4. Plans, habits, routines and personal interests of the subject including places frequented or locations of particular personal significance.
 5. Indications of missing personal belongings, particularly money and other valuables.
 6. Any suggestions of foul play or accident.
 7. Upon verification of a missing person, a missing person report shall be completed, and appropriate entries made in state and national information databases in accordance with established procedures (e.g.: NCIC, LEADS). Removal of this information shall take place as soon as practically possible upon finding the missing person.
 8. The complainant should complete and sign the NCIC Adult Document Report Form.
 9. In the case of persons designated as "missing- critical," a supervisory officer may direct that:
 - a. the dispatcher broadcast to all persons on duty all information necessary to identify the missing person, and
 - b. request that the Operations or Investigations Commander authorize mobilization of resources necessary for an area search.
- D. **Ongoing Investigation** : Ongoing investigations of missing persons should include but not necessarily be limited to the following actions and activities:
 1. Request release of dental records and any fingerprints available.

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2. Contact hospitals and the coroner's office as appropriate for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
3. Thoroughly check the location at which the missing person was last seen and conduct interviews as appropriate with persons who were with the individual or who may work in or frequent the area.
4. Conduct interviews with any additional family, friends, work associates, schoolmates and teachers as well as school counselors and social case workers, as appropriate, to explore the potential for foul play, voluntary flight, or, in the case of juveniles, parental kidnapping or running away.
5. Provide identification and related information to all personnel of this agency, the state police missing persons' authority, neighboring police agencies and, if parental or stranger-to-stranger abduction is suspected, the FBI.
6. Decisions to use local media to help locate missing persons shall be made with the approval of the police chief and the missing person's family.
7. The lead investigator shall maintain routine on-going contact with the missing person's closest relative concerning progress of the investigation. These and other relevant individuals shall be informed that they must notify the lead investigator as soon as any contact is made with the missing person.
8. The lead investigator may request additional investigation to be conducted by this agency or other pertinent law enforcement agencies or may request additional specific searches to further the location attempts of the missing person.
9. Every investigative effort shall be taken in cases of those persons classified as "missing-critical" as described in Paragraph A of this policy. Upon locating a person in this category, officers should be attentive to any special needs that person may have, such as ensuring a medical or mental evaluation.

E. Recovery of Missing Persons and Case Closure

1. Competent adults, having left home for personal reasons, cannot be forced to return home. Officers locating such individuals shall:
 - a. advise them that they are the subject of a missing person investigation;
 - b. ask if they desire the reporting party or next-of-kin to be notified of their whereabouts; and
 - c. make provisions to transmit this information to the reporting party or next-of-kin if permitted by the missing person.
2. In all cases, reporting parties shall be informed of the well-being of located missing persons. Unless criminal matters necessitate other action, desires of missing persons not to reveal their whereabouts shall be honored.
3. Missing persons shall be questioned to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and whether criminal activity was involved.
4. In cases involving juveniles (see Policy 402.9, Missing Children), officers shall ensure that:
 - a. the juvenile receives medical attention if necessary in a timely manner;
 - b. initial questioning of the youth identifies the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance, any individuals who may be criminally responsible and/ or whether an abusive or negligent home environment was a contributory factor, and
 - c. that parents, guardians and/or the person reporting the missing youth are notified in a timely manner.

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5. Upon location of a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified or updated.
6. Where appropriate, criminal charges shall be filed with the prosecutor's office.

[ILEAP OPR.04.01(g)]

F. Illinois Crime Compensation Act , 740 ILCS 45:

1. Officers must advise any victim or the victim's family of the Illinois Crime Compensation Act when the victim was injured or killed as a result of a kidnapping.
2. Victims may be eligible for compensation for medical and hospital expenses, counseling, loss of earnings, tuition reimbursement, prosthetic appliances and accessibility costs, personal property replacement costs, temporary lodging or relocation, funeral expenses, and crime scene clean-up.
3. In these cases, the officer "shall inform the victim of the offense or his dependents concerning the availability of an award of compensation and advise such persons that any information concerning this Act and the filing of a claim may be obtained from the office of the Attorney General." [740 ILCS 45/5.1(b)]
4. The victim needs to complete an application available through the Attorney's General Office and can be done on-line at www.ag.state.il.us or requested by phone on the Illinois Victims Assistance Line, 800-228-3368.

- G. Automated Victim Notification (AVN)** . The Illinois Automated Victim Notification System provides victims and concerned citizens with a toll-free number where they can call and get up-to-date information on the custody status and/or case status of an offender. Officers should advise victims about AVN availability. The AVN phone number is 1-866-566-8439. TTY: 1-877-502-2423.

Policy originally issued 8-21-03; this revision becomes effective on 1-1-19 by authority of the Chief of Police .

NOTE: This policy and procedure summarizes the department's position on this specific matter. This policy is for general direction and guidance primarily designed for use by the department's members. This policy is for internal use only and does not create or enlarge an officer's liability in any way. This policy shall not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of an internal departmental complaint and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.