

**CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE**

General Order: 818
Subject: Missing Persons/Children
Reference: Support Services
Effective Date: August 1, 2016

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. Reporting/Classification of Missing Persons
- II. Initial Report Taking
- III. Preliminary Investigation
- IV. Follow-Up Investigation
- V. Follow-Up Responsibilities of Investigative Bureau for Missing Juveniles
- VI. Recovery of Missing Persons and Case Closure

PURPOSE: To establish responsibilities and guidelines for this department's response and investigation of missing persons and children.

POLICY: It is the policy of this department that all reports of missing persons/children will be responded to expeditiously and thoroughly investigated. This will include a careful recording of factual circumstances surrounding the disappearance. Particular care will be exercised in instances involving missing children and those who may be mentally or physically impaired or others who are insufficiently prepared to take care of themselves.

PROCEDURES:

I. REPORTING/CLASSIFICATION OF MISSING PERSONS

Any time a complainant contacts the police department and wishes to file a missing persons report, an Officer shall be assigned to investigate. The Officer will respond and determine what police action is necessary. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person, they shall be taken in-person by an Officer.

A person/child may be declared "missing" when their whereabouts are 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.

A. A missing person/child may be considered endangered if they meet the foregoing criteria and who, among other possible circumstances:

1. May be the subject of foul play.
2. Because of age (young or old), may be unable to properly safeguard or care for themselves.
3. Suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated/unattended.
4. Is a patient of a psychiatric institution and is considered potentially dangerous to themselves or others.
5. Has demonstrated the potential for suicide.
6. Is a person with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia who wander from the safety of their homes or caregivers and become lost.

General Order No. 818
MISSING PERSONS/CHILDREN

- B. Reports of juveniles who have voluntarily left home (i.e., runaways) should be classified as such only after a thorough investigation.
- C. 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.

II. INITIAL REPORT TAKING

- A. The initial report taker must gather as much pertinent information as possible in order to properly classify a missing person report and initiate a proper response. This includes the following information:
 - 1. Name, date of birth, age, social security number, address, physical description of the subject and relationship of the reporting party to the missing person.
 - 2. Time and location of last known contact and the identity of anyone accompanying the subject.
 - 3. The extent of any search for the subject.
 - 4. Whether the subject has been missing on prior occasions and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits or plans.
 - 5. Whether the individual has been involved recently in:
 - a. Domestic incidents.
 - b. Suffered emotional trauma or life crises,
 - c. Demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior.
 - d. Is dependent on drugs or alcohol or has a history of mental illness.
 - 6. The current physical condition of the subject and whether the person is currently on prescription medication.
- B. If the missing person is a child, Officers shall be particularly cognizant of information that may suggest the potential for parental abduction or the possibility of stranger abduction. Additional inquiry should also determine if the child:
 - 1. Is or may be with any adult who could cause them harm.
 - 2. Has a history of any behavioral problems.
 - 3. Has previously run away from home, has threatened to do so or has a history of explainable or unexplainable absences for extended periods of time.
 - 4. Shows signs of an abusive home environment or dysfunctional family situation.
 - 5. The name and location of the school attended by the child along with the names of those responsible for transportation to/from the school.
 - 6. If circumstances indicate the activation of an AMBER Alert (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response System) the Chief shall be contacted. See General Order 817 for AMBER Alert criteria and activation procedures.
- C. A supervisory Officer shall be notified immediately upon classification of a missing person or child report.

III. PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

The preliminary investigation shall also be used 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 for the following types of information and materials:

- A. Complete description of the subject and a recent photograph.
- B. Details of any physical or emotional problems identified in Section II-A-5 and 6 of this policy.

General Order No. 818
MISSING PERSONS/CHILDREN

- C. 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.
- D. Plans, habits, routines and personal interests of the subject including places frequented or locations of particular personal significance.
- E. Indications of missing personal belongings, particularly money, cell phones, and other valuables. If applicable, request access to home or personal computer to determine solicitation of any predator.
- F. Any suggestions of foul play or accident.
- G. 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, and The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children).
- H. In the case of missing persons or children designated as endangered, a supervisor may direct that:
 - 1. The Dispatcher broadcast to all persons on duty, as well as neighboring agencies, all information necessary to identify the missing person.
 - 2. Authorize mobilization of resources necessary for an area search.
 - 3. The supervisor may also consider the use of the CodeRed Emergency Notification System. This system can deliver a recorded message to a high volume of telephone numbers and can be map programmed to notify specific geographic areas. The CodeRed system can only be activated by the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, or the Mayor through www.coderedweb.net.
 - 4. The supervisor may also consider the use of the A CHILD IS MISSING INC., (AC.I.M.) neighborhood alert system. The AC.I.M. is a rapid response communication system subject to certain criteria. See General Order 814 for AC.I.M. criteria and activation guidelines.

IV. FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION

Prompt follow-up investigations are conducted on all missing person reports and should include but not be limited to the following actions and activities:

- A. Re-contact the person reporting the missing person and follow-up relevant leads.
- B. Request release of dental records and any fingerprints available.
- C. Contact hospitals and the coroner's office as appropriate for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
- D. 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.
- E. 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.

General Order No. 818
MISSING PERSONS/CHILDREN

- F. Provide identification and related information to all elements of this agency, neighboring police agencies and, if parental or stranger-to-stranger abduction is suspected, the FBI.
- G. Decisions to use local media to help locate missing persons shall be made with the approval of the Chief and the missing person's family.
- H. 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.

V. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES OF INVESTIGATIVE BUREAU FOR MISSING JUVENILES

- A. Detectives shall institute or assist with appropriate search and investigation procedures.
- B. A report of a missing juvenile will be made available to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse through the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.
- C. After a missing person or juvenile has been missing for 30 days, use of the Ohio Attorney General's "Project Link" program should be considered. This program uses the DNA samples of relatives of missing persons to be compared against the samples of DNA profiles in the database which are those of unidentified human remains.

The program operates through BCI & I and the Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse. The state database link is also linked to other states, which allows searching other states' unidentified remains DNA databases.

If relatives elect to participate in the program, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Request a "LINK" kit from BCI & I by contacting BCI's Criminal Intelligence Unit at 740-845-2100. The kits are free of charge and contain instructions for usage.
 2. The completed kit should be returned to the following address:
Ohio Bureau of Criminal
Identification & Investigation
ATTN: CIU
P.O. Box 365
London, Ohio 43140
 3. Personal belongings may also be submitted for testing such as toothbrush, razor, pillowcase, hairbrush, inhaler, article of clothing, etc.
 4. Since children inherit half their DNA from their biological mother and the other half from their biological father, the best possible DNA link would come from samples provided by the biological parents or children of the missing persons.
 5. Advise providers that no personal identifiable information will be entered into the LINK database. Only their DNA profiles will be searched through the DNA profiles of unidentified human remains in the LINK database.
- D. Detectives shall maintain close liaison with the National Center for Missing and Exploited children for the exchange of information and technical assistance regarding all missing children cases under investigation.
 - E. No later than 30 days after the original entry into LEADS and NCIC computer networks, Detectives shall review the original entry for verification and provide the communications center with any additional information (i.e., medical and dental records) to use in updating the entry. NCIC forms shall be used for the collection of dental information.


General Order No. 818
MISSING PERSONS/CHILDREN

VI. RECOVERY OF MISSING PERSONS AND CASE CLOSURE

- A. Competent adults, having left home for personal reasons, cannot be forced to return home. Officers locating such individuals shall:
1. Advise them that they are the subject of a missing person investigation.
 2. Ask if they desire the reporting party or next-of-kin to be notified of their whereabouts.
 3. Make provisions to transmit this information to the reporting party or next-of-kin if permitted by the missing person.
- B. 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.
- C. Missing persons shall be questioned to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and whether criminal activity was involved.
- D. In cases involving juveniles, Officers shall ensure that:
1. The juvenile receives medical attention if necessary in a timely manner.
 2. 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.
 3. That the parents, guardians, and/or the person reporting the missing youth are notified in a timely manner.
- E. Upon location of a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified or updated. A copy of any locate, clearance, or cancel received or sent on LEADS shall be forwarded to the Investigative Bureau by communications center personnel sending or receiving such information.
- F. Where indicted, proper follow-up action shall be taken for abuse and neglect cases.
- G. The follow-up report shall include a complete narrative on the whereabouts, actions and activities of children while missing.
- H. Where indicated, criminal charges shall be filed with the prosecutor's office.

REFERENCES: UHGO 814, A Child is Missing (ACIM)
UHGO 817, Amber Alert

BY ORDER OF



Chief of Police

DATE 8-1-16