



<b>University of Pennsylvania Police Department</b> 4040 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa 19104		 
<b>Directive:</b> 55	<b>Subject:</b> Missing Persons	<b>Effective Date:</b> 02/08/2000
<b>Order of:</b> Gary Williams, Chief of Police		<b>Amended Date:</b> 08/01/2023

## I. Purpose

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

## II. 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 many instances in which persons disappear for unexplained reasons and under circumstances where they may be considered at risk. The roles of the call 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 the University of Pennsylvania Police Department (UPPD) that: (1) all reports of missing persons be given full consideration and attention by members of the UPPD to include careful recording and investigation of factual circumstances surrounding the disappearance in accordance with this directive; and (2) that particular care 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. **The lead investigative agency in missing person cases originating within the UPPD's jurisdiction will be the Philadelphia Police Department.**

## III. Scope

This directive shall affect all sworn police officers.

## IV. Procedures

### A. Missing Person Categories

The following categories have been formulated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and adopted by the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) as criteria for entry of missing persons into NCIC and CLEAN systems:

1. Disabled Persons - A person of any age who is missing and is proven to be physically or mentally disabled, or senile, thereby subjecting themselves or others to immediate danger.
2. Persons Involuntarily Missing - A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary, (i.e., abduction or kidnapping).
3. Endangered Person - A person of any age who is in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that their physical safety is in danger.
4. Juvenile - A person under 18 years of age who is missing and declared unemancipated as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the criteria set in 1, 2, 3, or 5.
  - a. Juveniles who are married or declared adults by court order are emancipated and will be investigated relative to the criteria set forth in 1, 2, 3, or 5.
  - b. Tender age is defined as any juvenile less than 10 years of age, subject to modification by the assigned investigator.
5. Catastrophe - A person of any age who is missing after a disaster.

#### B. Reporting of Missing Persons

1. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person. A Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) Missing Person Report (75-74A) and a UPPD Incident Report (UPPD-10) shall be taken in-person or by telephone in conformance with the criteria of this directive and the criticality of the incident.
2. A person may be declared "missing" when his/her whereabouts are unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties (i.e., parent, physician, legal guardian, next-of-kin over 18 years of age, etc.) as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the subject's behavior patterns, plans or routines.
3. An individual may be considered "missing critical" if he/she meets the criteria established in Section A., above.
4. Reports of juveniles who have voluntarily left home (i.e., "runaways") should be classified as such only after thorough investigation.
5. 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.
6. If The Missing Person Is A Student, The Following Procedures Will Be Followed:
  - a. The PennComm Police Supervisor, upon confirmation that a student is missing and cannot be located, shall notify the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life.

- b. If the missing student resides in on-campus housing, the PennComm Police Supervisor will notify the Resident Advisor (RA) or the House Dean for the area in which the student is housed. The RA should be directed to contact neighbors and friends in the immediate vicinity of the student's room and report any findings to UPPD.
  - 1) If the missing student residing on-campus has been missing for more than twenty-four (24) hours, UPPD will notify the student's designated emergency contact.
  - 2) If the student is under eighteen (18) years old, the UPPD will immediately notify a custodial parent or legal guardian; and the missing student will be entered into NCIC by the UPPD Detective Unit (see Section IV.F).
  - 3) If a student over eighteen (18) years old has not designated an emergency contact the law enforcement agency where the student's primary residence is located will be notified. All notifications as mentioned in this section will be made by the Director of Special Services or his/her designee.
- c. If the student lives at a fraternity or sorority, the PennComm Police Supervisor should contact the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs for assistance in obtaining information about the person's possible whereabouts.
- d. For international students, the PennComm Police Supervisor should contact the department of International Programs for assistance.
- e. The PennComm Police Supervisor should also check hospital admissions and the PPD for further information regarding the missing person. Further, the PennComm Police Supervisor should also contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) in the event that the student has been receiving counseling, as well as Student Health and the Out Patient Emergency Room.
- f. If the student lives off-campus, the PennComm Police Supervisor will contact the Director of Off-Campus Living, who will contact the landlord of the property to obtain the names of neighbors or fellow residence, assuming this information is not already known. The landlord shall be asked to accompany UPPD officers to the apartment of the missing student.
- g. If the student has not been located within a reasonable amount of time, the VPUL's office may contact the student's parents for additional assistance.

### C. Initial Report Taking

- 1. The initial call/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 (complainant) and relationship of the reporting party to the missing person.
  - 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 subject 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. If the missing person is a child, inquiry should also determine if the child:
    - a. is or may be with any adult who could cause him/her harm;
    - b. may have been the subject of a parental abduction; or
    - c. 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.
  3. The assigned officer shall record the above information on an Incident Report (UPPD-10) and a PPD Missing Person Report (75-74A).
  4. When the missing person is classified as "missing critical," a supervisor shall be notified immediately. The assigned officer shall remain with the reporting person until the supervisor arrives.
- D. "Missing Critical" - Supervisory Responsibilities
1. The Shift Commander/Supervisor shall immediately proceed to the scene of the person reported missing to determine if the subject meets the "missing critical" criteria.
  2. If the Shift Commander/Supervisor determines that the subject meets the "missing critical" criteria, the PennComm Center shall:
    - a. notify the PPD if the criteria for an "Amber Alert" activation are met; (see Section IV. E of this directive)
    - b. notify the PPD and request that a search of the immediate area be conducted;

- c. provide PPD with description of the missing person and request that the description be broadcast via police radio at regular intervals until the “missing critical” person is located; and
- d. broadcast the description via UPPD radio at regular intervals until the “missing critical” person is located.

3. Additionally, the Shift Commander/Supervisor will:

- a. Obtain briefing and written reports from the first responding officer;
- b. Determine if additional personnel are needed to assist in the investigation;
- c. Determine if outside help is needed from:
  - 1) Philadelphia Police;
  - 2) State Missing Children Clearing House;
  - 3) FBI – notified in suspected child abduction and mysterious child disappearance cases;
  - 4) Specialized units; or
  - 5) National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Project ALERT. ALERT-America’s Law Enforcement Retiree Team utilizes retired law enforcement professionals to provide special consultative assistance to local jurisdictions in difficult cases involving missing and exploited children.
- d. Ensure that all required resources, equipment and assistance necessary to conduct an efficient investigation have been requested. Expedite their availability;
- e. Establish a command post away from the missing person’s residence;
- f. Establish that all required notifications have been made;
- g. Ensure that all UPPD policies and procedures are in compliance; and
- h. Be able to make any decisions or determinations as they develop.

E. Amber Alert

- 1. The Amber Alert Plan is a method of alerting citizens of Pennsylvania when a child has been abducted.
- 2. The Amber Alert Plan uses the Emergency Alert System (EAS), via the code CAE – Child Abduction Emergency, to warn citizens by radio and television when a child abduction has

occurred. The emergency alert contains information regarding the victim, the suspect and if applicable the suspect's vehicle information. This allows the citizens and the media to assist police by getting the message out immediately and reporting sightings of the child, perpetrator, or any other associated information.

3. In order for the Pennsylvania Amber Alert Plan to be activated, UPPD personnel must be satisfied the following criteria have been met:
  - a. The abducted child must be under eighteen (18) years of age;
  - b. The abducted child is believed to be in imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury.
4. The plan is limited to "abducted" children, and, therefore, excludes children believed to be runaways or throwaways from home.
5. The UPPD Shift Commander/Supervisor will ensure that Philadelphia Police Radio is notified of the abduction by the PennComm Center. The Pennsylvania State Police will be contacted by telephone at 717-671-7500 and through the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (C.L.E.A.N.) computer. The State Police will analyze the information reported by the PPD. If there is enough information available to believe that an activation will assist in the recovery of the child, the State Police will activate the Amber Alert Plan.
6. The Pennsylvania State Police will issue a statewide alert message to all law enforcement in Pennsylvania through C.L.E.A.N. to notify them of the abduction.
7. EAS will then be activated to notify citizens of any and all pertinent information regarding the abduction. If applicable, the Pennsylvania State Police will notify the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission for posting of information on roadway message signs and highway travel advisory radio. Additionally, the State Police will post the abduction information to its Amber Alert website: [www.amber.state.pa.us](http://www.amber.state.pa.us).
8. The Pennsylvania State Police will be notified of critical updates / recovery / cancellations at 717-671-7500.

F. Detective Unit Investigative Responsibilities

1. The preliminary investigation conducted by the Detective Unit 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 from the reporting person(s) and other sources the following types of information and materials:
  - a. complete description of the subject and a recent photograph;
  - b. details of any physical or emotional difficulties that the subject may be afflicted with;

- c. obtaining a briefing from the first responding officer and other on-scene personnel;
  - d. verifying the accuracy of all descriptive information and other details provided by the reporting person(s);
  - e. obtaining a brief, recent history of family dynamics;
  - f. determining if there were any similar incidents within the area that were reported to the police (attempted abductions, prowlers, suspicious persons);
  - g. obtaining information from Child Protective Services;
  - h. checking school attendance records;
  - i. correcting and investigating the reasons for any conflicting information offered by witnesses and other individuals submitting information;
  - j. reviewing and evaluating all available information and evidence collected;
  - k. developing an investigative plan for follow-up;
  - l. determining what additional resources and specialized services are required, and
  - m. executing investigative follow-up plan.
2. Additionally, it shall be the responsibility of the UPPD Detective Unit to enter all missing persons reported to UPPD into NCIC/PCIC/CLEAN.
  3. Searches shall be coordinated with the Detective Unit, the UPPD Shift Commander/Supervisor, and the PPD.

#### G. Recovery of Missing Persons/Case Closure

1. When a suspected missing person (adult or emancipated juvenile) is located, uniform personnel will request an NCIC/CLEAN/PCIC inquiry from the PennComm Center. Upon confirmation that the individual is a reported missing person, police officers will:
  - a. Transport the missing person to UPPD HQ.
  - b. If the person is afflicted with mental illness, follow procedures according to **Directive 57, "Mental Health Emergencies"**.
  - c. If the individual is a juvenile, the jurisdiction of record shall be notified that the person is in custody. The juvenile, a printed copy of the NCIC/CLEAN/PCIC confirmation, and a "Juvenile Information Sheet/Flow Chart" (PPD 75-602) shall then be taken to the PPD 12th Police District (if taken into custody south of Market Street), or the 19th District (if

taken into custody north of Market Street) to await the arrival of parents or officers from the jurisdiction of record.

- d. If the person is an adult, with no apparent mental or physical affliction, the jurisdiction of record shall be contacted. If the person wishes to return to his/her residence, the person (along with a printed copy of the NCIC/CLEAN/PCIC conformation) shall be taken to the PPD Southwest Detective Division to await the arrival of family or officers from the jurisdiction of record.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Missing persons shall be questioned to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and whether criminal activity was involved.
5. The agency that entered the individual missing into NCIC/PCIC/CLEAN is responsible for removing the information from the system(s).

#### H. Compliance

Violations of this directive, or portions thereof, may result in disciplinary action.

#### I. Officers Assigned to Other Agencies

Officers of this department assigned to or assisting other law enforcement agencies will be guided by this directive.

#### J. Application

This directive constitutes departmental policy, and is not intended to enlarge the employer's or employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims insofar as the employer's or employee's legal duty as imposed by law. Violations of policy will



only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.