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			Distribution: All
Title: MISSING PERSON-ADULT		Section: Investigations	
Issued: 09/15/2010	Effective: 09/22/2010	Revised: 03/29/2019	
Rescinds: All Previous		Amends:	
CALEA References: LE 41.2.5a-f; COM 6.2.13			
Review: Annual	Authority: Chief Michael A. Keller 		

## I. Purpose

The purpose of this General Order is to establish responsibilities and guidelines for the investigation of missing adults.

## 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 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 physically impaired or others who are insufficiently prepared to take care of themselves.

## III. Definitions

- A. **Silver Alert:** Public notification of a missing adult suffering from dementia, or who is over the age of 65 and (1) has a reported medical or mental condition that may threaten, or greatly reduce, their ability to make sound reasonable decisions and/or may diminish their ability to survive without assistance, or (2) the person has been determined to be a risk to harm them self.
- B. **Missing Critical:** An individual who is missing and is considered "at-risk" due to circumstances such as; subject of foul play, potential for harm to self or others, a diminished mental capacity, serious medical condition and/or suicidal.

## IV. Regulations

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## V. 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 General Order and the criticality of the incident.
2. A person 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.
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;
  - b. Because of age, may be unable to properly safeguard or care for themselves;
  - 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 a potential for suicide; or
  - f. May have been involved in a boating, swimming or other sporting accident or natural disaster.
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. Communications officers will gather as much information as possible from the reporting party and immediately dispatch an officer to take the report.
2. The initial officers 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 (LE 41.2.5a):
  - a. Name, age and physical description of the subject 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.


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- 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 and mental condition of the subject and whether the person is currently on prescription medication.
3. The on-duty supervisor shall be notified immediately upon classification of a report as “missing – critical.” If the supervisor agrees that the case is “missing – critical” the supervisor shall request the on-call detective and notify the Duty Chief.

### **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 (Use APD FORM 10 –Missing Adult Checklist):

1. Complete description of the subject and a recent photograph.
2. Details of any physical or emotional problems identified in items B,2,e and f of this general order. Officers should obtain documentation of medical or psychological conditions if possible, or obtain a signed affidavit (APD FORM 11) from the reporting party.
3. Officers shall obtain a signed witness statement (APD FORM 16) from the reporting party stating the conditions under which the person is declared missing.
4. 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.
5. Plans, habits, routines and personal interests of the subject including places frequented or locations of particular personal significance.
6. Indications of missing personal belongings, particularly money and other valuables.
7. Any suggestions of foul play or accident.
8. Irrespective of any search that may have been conducted previously by others, verify that the adult is missing by conducting a search of the adult’s residence, regardless of whether the adult was reported missing from their home, and of the grounds where the adult was reported missing. All searches should be conducted with the proper legal authority (i.e. consent, search warrant, exigency).

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9. Upon verification of a missing person, a missing person report shall be completed, an attempt to locate broadcasted to all appropriate agencies and areas, and appropriate entries made in state and national information databases in accordance with established procedures (e.g. NCIC, Kansas Hot Files, etc.) Missing adults shall be entered into the missing person system of the National Crime Information Center and the Missing and Unidentified Person System of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation within two hours of receipt of the minimum data required to enter a record into such system (LE 41.2.5b & c).
10. Officers shall provide the reporting person a victim and witnesses of crime pamphlet with their name and the case number which shall also include the contact information for the National Center for Missing Adults.
11. In the case of persons designated as “missing – critical,” a supervisory officer will ensure the Duty Chief is contacted. The Duty Chief will notify the Chief of Police and respond to the scene.
12. Once a missing person is determined to be “missing – critical” the Duty Chief will request additional assistance as determined prudent to locate the missing adult (LE 41.2.5f). This may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Requesting additional law enforcement personnel and emergency services personnel to begin an area search;
  - b. Requesting specialized units to conduct searches of bodies of water in the area, air searches, and other specialized searches as necessary.
  - c. Alerting the media to request public assistance in locating the missing adult when adequate information is available and the family and Chief of Police do not object to the release of information to the public (APD FORM 12 – Request to Release Information should be obtained from the next of kin). The following should be provided to the media by telephone, email or fax (LE 41.2.5b):
    - Name and age of the missing person;
    - Description of the individual (height, weight, hair color, other identifying characteristics);
    - Description of vehicle and clothes;
    - Last known location and possible direction of travel;
    - Most recent picture of the missing person if possible;
    - Other pertinent information;
    - Contact telephone number for the public to call with tips.
  - d. When contacting the media, the term “Silver Alert” should be used when, and only when, the following criteria are met:
    - Law enforcement has reason to believe the person reported missing is either suffering from dementia, or is over the age 65, and (1) the person

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has a reported medical or mental condition that may threaten, or greatly reduce, their ability to make sound reasonable decisions and/or may diminish their ability to survive without assistance, or (2) the person has been determined to be a risk to harm them self.

- e. Using available automated telephone, text messaging or e-mail alert systems;
- f. Requesting local civic organizations and City departments that may aid in a search.


#### **D. Ongoing Investigation and Search**

Ongoing investigations of missing persons should include but should not be limited to the following actions and activities (LE 41.2.5e):

1. Request release of dental records and any fingerprints available.
2. Contact hospitals and the coroner's office as appropriate for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
3. Thoroughly search 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, and others as appropriate to explore the potential for foul play, or voluntary flight.
5. If the person has a cell phone, request location information from the cell phone company if the criteria are met for such request.
6. If a Silver Alert is issued, the incident must be reported immediately to the Office of the Kansas Attorney General by email to [silveralert@ksag.org](mailto:silveralert@ksag.org); and a report of the incident must be submitted to the Office of the Kansas Attorney General on the following business day via telephone, fax or email.
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 (LE 41.2.5d).

#### **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

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- 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. Upon location of a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified or updated (LE 41.2.5c).