



Greenbelt Police Department – General Orders

	Title: Missing Adults		Order #: 608	
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	<input checked="" type="radio"/> New <input type="radio"/> Amends <input type="radio"/> Rescinds			
Approved by: Chief James Craze				CALEA 5 th Edition
CALEA Standard: 41.2.5 54.1.1.a				Pages: 7

- 01 POLICY:** It is the policy of the Greenbelt Police Department to actively investigate missing persons incidents, persons with physical or mental problems, and incidents involving persons missing under suspicious circumstances including when foul play may be involved.
- 02 PROCEDURES:** From the time of the first notification to the Department, sufficient information should be taken to determine if the report indicates an emergency or immediate response is necessary. Although not every report involves an extreme emergency, proper response will often result in the safe return of the missing person.
- A. Missing Person/Exceptional Circumstances:** (CALEA 41.2.5.f)
1. Phase I: Normally involves patrol officers being dispatched to a location to investigate a report of a missing person. If the person is not immediately located, and if exigent circumstances or the possibility of foul play exists, the on-duty Shift Supervisor will respond to the scene and direct the initial investigation and/or search.
 2. Phase II: Involves the participation of the Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU) to assist patrol with any necessary investigation of the incident.
 3. Phase III: Involves CIU assuming responsibility for the incident due to indications of foul play or criminal activity. The CIU Sergeant, or his/her designee, will assume investigative command and direct all participating personnel.
 4. Phase IV: Involves extended follow-up investigation by CIU.
- B. Phase I:**
1. The first responding officer on the scene will:
 - a. Interview the reporting party, family, parents, friends, witnesses, neighbors, etc., to obtain an initial description and gather all pertinent information; (CALEA 41.2.5.a)
 - b. Determine the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and advise a supervisor if assistance is required; (CALEA 41.2.5.a)
 - c. Gather and disseminate as much information as is immediately available, including photographs. (CALEA 41.2.5.a & b)
 - d. Depending on the circumstances, an immediate search may need to be initiated, commencing with the location the person was last known to be, the residence or possible route of travel.
 - e. Brief other assisting units of a possible reason for the disappearance, possible areas to search and request broadcast of information, if indicated. (CALEA 41.2.5.b)

2. The on-duty Shift Supervisor will:
 - a. Assume overall command of the incident.
 - b. Evaluate the circumstances and investigation thus far.
 - c. Review the circumstances of the disappearance to determine if the person is lost or possibly the victim of criminal activity.
 - d. Coordinate the activities of participating personnel, to include allied agencies and the Prince George's County Fire Department (PGFD), if appropriate. Searches should include searches within specific grids. Door to door searches will be conducted, if applicable (i.e., in a residential neighborhood). (CALEA 41.2.5.e)
 - e. Ensure that an accurate log or record is kept of areas searched, persons contacted, actions taken and personnel involved.
 - f. Ensure all necessary information (updates) regarding the missing person is broadcast or conveyed to other concerned agencies or jurisdictions. (CALEA 41.2.5.b)
 - g. Continue to direct supervision of line personnel and request assistance, if necessary.
 - h. Evaluate the use of personnel and/or resource requirements and adjust as necessary.
 - i. Evaluate the need for special assistance (Canine, Air Support, Search and Rescue, etc.).
 - j. Ensure required notifications are made.
 - k. Request the involvement of CIU and the initiation of Phase II, if necessary.
- C. Phase II: Upon request of the on-duty Shift Supervisor, CIU will respond to the scene. The CIU Sergeant or his/her designee, and CIU detectives responding will report to the on-duty Shift Supervisor and assist with the investigative aspect of the incident. Actions normally taken include:
1. Establish a temporary command post.
 2. Notify the Special Operation Division Commander during normal business hours or the on-call Commander during non-business hours.
 3. The on-duty Shift Supervisor shall remain in command to oversee the overall operation until relieved by CIU personnel. Although a Command officer may be in-charge of the overall tactical coordination, CIU personnel will remain in-charge of the investigative leads and follow-up.
 4. Interview the reporting party, family, parents, friends, witnesses, neighbors, etc. (CALEA 41.2.5.d)
 5. Conduct a thorough background check of the missing person, reporting parties, and other investigative leads.
 6. Assist the on-duty Shift Supervisor in making required notifications, coordinating with other agencies and appropriate NCIC entries. (CALEA 41.2.5.c)

7. Recommend initiation of Phase III if the investigation or search becomes complex or extended, and/or additional resources are required.
- D. Phase III:** If the missing person is not found within a reasonable period of time (depending upon age, weather, and/or circumstances, within 1 to 2 hours), then the on-duty Shift Supervisor may request that Phase III be initiated. However, if abduction is suspect or probable Phase III may begin immediately.
1. During normal business hours, the Special Operations Division Commander or his/her designee or during non-business hours the on-call Commander will respond to the scene and assume overall command.
 2. A task force of officers may be assigned initially under the direction of the CIU Sergeant and overseen by the above Commander.
 3. The command post will be relocated if possible in a suitable nearby facility where telephone and radio communications will be established.
 4. The PIO will be called to the command post to coordinate information, news releases, media inquiries, and establish a media site away from the command post.(CALEA 41.2.5.b & 54.1.1.a)
 5. Actions taken in Phase III will involve, at a minimum, evaluation of the search and investigation to date, expanding the scope as indicated, door to door contacts, including requests for additional resources, and notification of other agencies such as the Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD), United States Park Police (USPD), Maryland State Police (MSP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A task force may be organized for a sustained operation on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, if warranted. Personnel resources will be assigned to maximize the search and investigative effort.
- E. Phase IV:** If the missing person is not found during Phase III, the Special Operations Division Commander or his/her designee will recommend scaling down the effort at a point in the investigation when all viable leads have been exhausted and all possible locations have been searched. The decision to disband the task force and command post will be made by the Special Operations Division Commander after consultation with the on-duty Shift Supervisor, CIU Sergeant, and approval of the Chief of Police.
1. Phase IV will involve continued follow-up by CIU of any new information, viable leads and additional media publicity.
 2. The case will remain in an open status and assigned to a detective until such time that the missing person is located or the case is solved.
- F. Missing Person:**
1. Reports: Reports on missing persons are normally taken after the person has been missing for twenty-four hours. Officers will use the State of Maryland Missing Persons Report Form (MSP Form 79), and details of the incident will be reported on a Departmental Supplement. These reports shall be made in person whenever possible. The exceptions to the time limit are situations involving juveniles,
6. Logs, reports, and related paperwork will be organized and promptly processed by a CIU detective to facilitate direction and continuity of the investigation. The Department Command Staff will be briefed in a timely manner.

elderly persons, person with physical or mental disabilities, person missing after a catastrophe/kidnapped/abducted person, a person missing in the company of another person indicating their physical safety is in danger or life threatening medication, if the above exceptional circumstances apply, Section A of this policy should be implemented. (CALEA 41.2.5.f)

2. When responding to a missing person call, the officer will obtain as much initial information as possible for the report. A separate incident report number will be assigned to each missing person. If two (2) or more persons are missing from the same family at the same time under similar circumstances, a separate MSP Form 79 with an incident report number and a Department Supplement will be generated for each missing person.

a. In addition to the general information obtained, the Missing Persons Report should contain the following information: (CALEA 41.2.5.a)

- i. The missing person will be listed as the "victim";
- ii. Clothing and jewelry description;
- iii. Previous medical condition;
- iv. Current medical condition;
- v. Drugs (therapeutic and abusive);

vi. Vehicle information associated with the disappearance; and,

vii. Dental records information, if available.

3. Photographs: The most recent photograph of the missing person shall be obtained from the reporting person. On the reverse side of the photograph the officer will write the incident report number, the date or approximate age of the photograph, victim's name, title of the report and the officer's initials. The photo will be attached to the original Missing Persons report and submitted to the Records Unit. The Records Unit will forward the photo with a copy of the Missing Persons report to Special Operations Division Commander for dissemination to CIU investigators.

4. The Missing Persons report shall be completed expeditiously and prior to the end of the officer's shift. The reporting officer shall prepare a supplement to document all relevant information and forward a hard copy to the on-duty Communications Specialist. (CALEA 41.2.5.b)

5. The officer taking the missing person report will: (CALEA 41.2.5.a)

a. Request the on-duty Communications Specialist broadcast the missing person information when appropriate.

b. Request that Communications send out an area wide teletype when appropriate.

6. NCIC: The on-duty Communications Specialist shall then input this information into the NCIC system, if applicable. For the purpose of NCIC, entries of missing persons are divided into four categories and must meet the criteria of one of the categories in order to be entered into NCIC as a missing person. (CALEA 41.2.5.c)
 - a. A person of any age who is missing and who is under proven physical or mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - b. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.
 - c. A person of any age who is in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety is in danger.
 - d. A person who is declared un-emancipated (under the age of 18 years) as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in a, b, or c above.
7. Justification: When possible, it is requested that the agency entering a missing person in any of the preceding categories have documentation from a source other than the investigating police agency at the time of the entry supporting the stated conditions under which the person is declared missing for NCIC purposes. This documentation reassures that the individual's rights to privacy will not be violated and may consist of:
 - a. When feasible, a written statement from the parent or legal guardian confirming that the person is missing and verifying the date of birth.
 - b. When feasible, a written statement from a physician or other authoritative source corroborating the missing person's physical or mental disability.
 - c. When feasible, a written statement from a parent, legal guardian, family member or other authoritative source advising that the missing person's disappearance was not voluntary or that they are in the company of another person under circumstances indicating their physical safety is in danger.
 - d. Having the reporting party sign the front of the Missing Persons Report may also serve as proper documentation.
8. When obtained, a Missing Persons written statement will be completed and signed by the appropriate reporting individual and submitted with the officer's report, if feasible. In situations where the missing person has a mental or physical disability, an independent third party written corroboration shall be attached to the Missing Persons Report.
9. Missing Adults: In cases involving missing adults:
 - a. The officer dispatched to take the report will contact the reporting party as soon

as possible and use the utmost tact and courtesy while questioning.

- b. The officer should inquire as to the personal habits and the physical and mental condition of the person reported missing, (i.e., whether there have been recent family quarrels or trouble, whether the person has ever been missing before, whether the person is having financial or marital problems, job uncertainties or is a heavy drinker, etc).
- c. Police officers cannot force missing persons to return home against their wishes, and shall advise the reporting party that the whereabouts of a located missing adult will not be released if the disappearance was voluntary and no crime is involved.(CALEA 41.2.5.d & e)
- d. Once the missing adult has returned and/or been located, the Police Department shall first verify this information, in person (whether the victim comes to the Department or the officer responds to the residence) prior to completing a supplement report allowing the on-duty Communications Specialist to remove the individual from the MILES/NCIC system. If the missing adult is located out of the City, the personal verification should be completed with the assistance of the allied agency in that jurisdiction. (CALEA 41.2.5.c)

G. Investigative Follow Up On Missing Persons:

1. If the person is still missing ten days after last being seen, the assigned investigator will give the parent, guardian, reporting party, etc. an NCIC Missing Person File Data Collection Guide. Prior to giving it to the parent, guardian, reporting party, etc., the investigator will complete certain information in the Missing Person Packet inside of the guide, such as the missing person's name, date of birth, investigating agency, investigator's name, and agency case number (this latter item is to also be completed on the front cover of the Data Collection Guide).
2. The investigator will explain the Missing person Packet to the parent, guardian, reporting party, etc. and request that it be completed and returned to him/her no later than 30 days after the person was reported missing. The investigator will explain the importance of having information in the Packet, particularly the Missing Person Dental Report, completed as thoroughly and expeditiously as possible.
3. When the assigned investigator receives the completed Missing Person Packet, he/she will have as much additional information added to the missing person's NCIC record as possible. The completed Packet will then be maintained in the missing person's investigative case folder, and a copy forwarded with a supplemental report for filing in the Record's Unit.
4. If the investigator cannot have all of the information requested in the Packet added to the missing person's NCIC record thirty days after the person was reported missing, he/she will specify the reason in a supplemental report (e.g. the parent, guardian, reporting

party, etc. did not have the Missing Persons Packet completed; claims to have completed it but failed to return it; completed all but the dental report; didn't complete all of the personal descriptors, etc.).