

Missing Persons

314.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for handling missing person investigations.

314.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Endangered - A person the Office has confirmed is missing and there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the person is at risk of physical injury or death. Examples include (Minn. Stat. § 299C.52):

- (a) The person is missing because of a confirmed abduction or under circumstances that indicate the person's disappearance was not voluntary.
- (b) The person is missing under known dangerous circumstances.
- (c) The person is missing more than 30 days.
- (d) The person is under the age of 21 and at least one other factor is applicable.
- (e) There is evidence that the person is in need of medical attention or prescription medication such that it will have a serious adverse effect on the person's health if the person does not receive the needed care or medication.
- (f) The person does not have a pattern of running away or disappearing.
- (g) The person is mentally impaired.
- (h) There is evidence that a non-custodial parent may have abducted the person.
- (i) The person has been the subject of past threats or acts of violence.
- (j) There is evidence that the person is lost in the wilderness, backcountry or outdoors where survival is precarious and immediate and effective investigation and search-and-rescue efforts are critical.
- (k) Any other factor the Office deems to indicate the person may be at risk of physical injury or death, including a determination by another law enforcement agency that the person is missing and endangered.
- (l) There is sufficient evidence that a child is with a person who presents a threat of immediate physical injury to the child or physical or sexual abuse of the child.
- (m) Qualify for a state AMBER Alert™ pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 299A.61, Subd. 1.

Missing person - Any person who is reported missing to law enforcement when that person's location is unknown. This includes any person under the age of 18 or who is certified or known to be mentally incompetent (Minn. Stat. § 299C.52).

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Missing person networks - Databases or computer networks that are available to law enforcement and are suitable for obtaining information related to missing person investigations. This includes the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the Minnesota Justice Information Services (MNJIS), the Minnesota Missing and Unidentified Persons Clearinghouse and the Minnesota Crime Alert Network.

314.2 POLICY

The Freeborn County Sheriff's Office does not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and assumes that the missing person is in need of immediate assistance until an investigation reveals otherwise. Priority shall be given to missing person cases over property-related cases. Members will initiate an investigation into all reports of missing persons, regardless of the length of time the person has been missing.

314.3 REQUIRED FORMS AND BIOLOGICAL SAMPLE COLLECTION KITS

The Detective Bureau supervisor shall ensure the following forms and kits are developed and available:

- Missing person report form
- Missing person investigation checklist that provides investigation guidelines and resources that could be helpful in the early hours of a missing person investigation
- Missing person school notification form
- Medical records release form
- Biological sample collection kits

314.4 ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Any member encountering a person who wishes to report a missing person or runaway shall render assistance without delay. This can be accomplished by accepting the report via telephone or in person and initiating the investigation. Those members who do not take such reports or who are unable to give immediate assistance shall promptly dispatch or alert a member who can take the report.

A report shall be accepted in all cases and regardless of where the person was last seen, where the person resides or any question of jurisdiction (Minn. Stat. § 299C.53, Subd.1(a)).

314.5 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

Deputies or other members conducting the initial investigation of a missing person should take the following investigative actions as applicable:

- (a) Respond to a dispatched call as soon as practicable. Obtain a detailed description of the missing person, as well as a description of any related vehicle and/or abductor.
- (b) Interview the reporting party and any witnesses to determine whether the person qualifies as a missing person and, if so, whether the person may be endangered (Minn. Stat. § 299C.53, Subd. 1(b)). Interviews should be conducted separately, if practicable.

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- (c) Consult with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) if the person is determined to be an endangered missing person (Minn. Stat. § 299C.53, Subd. 1(b)).
- (d) Canvass the last known area where the missing person was seen, if known. A search of the location where the incident took place, if known, should also be conducted and a search warrant obtained if necessary.
- (e) Determine when, where and by whom the missing person was last seen. Interview the person who last had contact with the missing person.
- (f) Notify a supervisor immediately if there is evidence that a missing person is either endangered or may qualify for a public alert, or both (see the Public Alerts Policy).
- (g) Broadcast an "Attempt to Locate" (ATL) or similar alert if the person is under 18 years of age or there is evidence that the missing person is endangered. The alert should be broadcast as soon as practicable but in no event more than one hour after determining the missing person is under 18 years of age or may be endangered.
- (h) Relay known details to all on-duty personnel as well as other local or surrounding law enforcement agencies using local and state databases.
- (i) Ensure that entries are made into the appropriate missing person networks:
 - 1. Immediately, when the missing person is endangered (Minn. Stat. § 299C.53, Subd. 1(b)).
 - 2. In all other cases, as soon as practicable, but not later than two hours from the time of the initial report.
- (j) Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely and initiate a search as applicable under the facts.
- (k) Collect and/or review:
 - 1. A photograph and fingerprint card of the missing person, if available (Minn. Stat. § 299C.54, Subd. 2).
 - (a) A voluntarily provided biological sample of the missing person, if available (e.g., toothbrush, hairbrush).
 - 2. Any documents that may assist in the investigation, such as court orders regarding custody.
 - 3. Any other evidence that may assist in the investigation, including personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, computers).
- (l) When circumstances permit and if appropriate, attempt to determine the missing person's location through his/her telecommunications carrier.
- (m) Contact the appropriate agency if the report relates to a missing person report previously made to another agency and that agency is actively investigating the report.

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When this is not practicable, the information should be documented in an appropriate report for transmission to the appropriate agency. If the information relates to an endangered missing person, the member should notify a supervisor and proceed with reasonable steps to locate the missing person.

- (n) Implement multi-jurisdictional coordination/mutual aid plan as appropriate such as when:
 - 1. The primary agency has limited resources.
 - 2. The investigation crosses jurisdictional lines.
 - 3. Jurisdictions have pre-established task forces or investigative teams.

314.5.1 CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION AND MANAGEMENT

If a crime scene is identified, it should be secured and a command post or operation base located at a reasonable distance from the crime scene. Staff and assign the responsibilities for command post supervisor, media specialist, search coordinator, investigative coordinator, communication officer and support unit coordinator. Provide two liaison deputies (one at the command post and one at the crime scene). The role of the liaison at the home will include facilitating support and advocacy for the family.

The investigation of the scene and the crime should consider various elements, including:

- (a) Establishing the ability to "trap and trace" all incoming calls. Consider setting up a separate telephone line or cellular telephone for office use and follow-up on all leads.
- (b) Compiling a list of known sex offenders in the region.
- (c) In cases of infant abduction, investigating claims of home births made in the area.
- (d) In cases involving children, obtaining child protective agency records for reports of child abuse.
- (e) Reviewing records for previous incidents related to the missing person and prior law enforcement activity in the area, including prowlers, indecent exposure, attempted abductions, etc.
- (f) Obtaining the missing person's medical and dental records, fingerprints and a biological sample when practicable or within 30 days.
- (g) Creating a missing person profile with detailed information obtained from records and interviews with family and friends, describing the missing person's health, relationships, personality, problems, life experiences, plans, equipment, etc.
- (h) Interviewing delivery personnel, employees of gas, water, electric and cable companies, taxi drivers, post office personnel, sanitation workers, etc.
- (i) Determining if outside help is needed and the merits of utilizing local, state and federal resources related to specialized investigative needs, including:

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1. Investigative resources (e.g., search and rescue).
 2. Interpretive resources.
 3. Telephone services, such as traps, traces and triangulation.
 4. Media assistance from local and national sources.
- (j) Using secure electronic communication information, such as the missing person's cellular telephone number, e-mail address and information from social networking sites.
- (k) Appointing a deputy to communicate with the family/reporting party or their designee. The deputy will be the primary point of contact for the family/reporting party or their designee, and should provide contact information and the family information packet (if available) to the family/reporting party or their designee.
- (l) Providing general information to the family/reporting party or their designee about the handling of the missing person case or about any intended efforts, only to the extent that disclosure would not adversely affect the office's ability to locate or protect the missing person or to apprehend or criminally prosecute any person in connection to the case.

314.6 REPORT PROCEDURES AND ROUTING

Members should complete all missing person reports and forms promptly and advise the appropriate supervisor as soon as a missing person report is ready for review.

314.6.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the supervisor shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Reviewing and approving missing person reports upon receipt.
 1. The reports should be promptly sent to the Records Department.
- (b) Ensuring resources are deployed as appropriate.
- (c) Initiating a command post as needed.
- (d) Ensuring applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented.
- (e) Ensuring that records have been entered into the appropriate missing persons networks.
- (f) Taking reasonable steps to identify and address any jurisdictional issues to ensure cooperation among agencies.
 1. If the case falls within the jurisdiction of another agency, the supervisor should facilitate transfer of the case to the agency of jurisdiction.

314.6.2 RECORDS DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Records Department receiving member shall include, but are not limited to:

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- (a) As soon as reasonable under the circumstances, notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction for the missing person's residence in cases where the missing person is a resident of another jurisdiction.
- (b) Notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction where the missing person was last seen.
- (c) Notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction for the missing person's intended or possible destination, if known.
- (d) Forwarding a copy of the report to the Detective Bureau.
- (e) Coordinating with the NCIC Terminal Contractor for Minnesota to have the missing person record in the NCIC computer networks updated with additional information obtained from missing person investigations (42 USC § 5780).

314.7 DETECTIVE BUREAU FOLLOW-UP

In addition to completing or continuing any actions listed above, the investigator assigned to a missing person investigation:

- (a) Should ensure that the missing person's school is notified within 10 days if the missing person is a juvenile.
 - 1. The notice shall be in writing and should also include a photograph.
 - 2. The investigator should meet with school officials as appropriate to stress the importance of including the notice in the child's student file, along with the investigator's contact information if the school receives a call requesting the transfer of the missing child's files to another school.
- (b) Should recontact the reporting person and/or other witnesses within 30 days of the initial report and within 30 days thereafter to determine if any additional information has become available.
- (c) Shall review the case file to determine whether any additional information received on the missing person indicates that the person is endangered, and shall update applicable state or federal databases accordingly (Minn. Stat. § 299C.535(b); Minn. Stat. § 299C.535(c)).
- (d) Shall attempt to obtain the following, if not previously obtained, if the person remains missing after 30 days (Minn. Stat § 299C.535(a)):
 - 1. Biological samples from family members and, if possible, from the missing person
 - 2. Dental information and X-rays
 - 3. Additional photographs and video that may aid the investigation or identification
 - 4. Fingerprints

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5. Any other specific identifying information
 - (e) Should consider contacting other agencies involved in the case to determine if any additional information is available.
 - (f) Shall verify and update the Minnesota Justice Information Services (MNJIS), the Minnesota Missing and Unidentified Persons Clearinghouse, NCIC and any other applicable missing person networks within 30 days of the original entry into the networks and every 30 days thereafter until the missing person is located (42 USC § 5780).
 - (g) Should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document these efforts at least every 30 days.
 - (h) Should consider taking certain actions if a person is missing after a prolonged period, generally exceeding 45 days. Those actions include:
 1. Developing a profile of the possible abductor.
 2. Using a truth verification device for parents, spouse and other key individuals.
 3. Reviewing all reports and transcripts of interviews, revisiting the crime scene, reviewing all photographs and videotapes, reinterviewing key individuals and reexamining all physical evidence collected.
 4. Reviewing all potential witness/suspect information obtained in the initial investigation and considering background checks on anyone of interest identified in the investigation.
 5. Periodically checking pertinent sources of information about the missing person for any activity, such as telephone, bank, Internet or credit card activity.
 6. Developing a time line and other visual exhibits.
 7. Critiquing the results of the ongoing investigation with appropriate investigative resources.
 8. Arranging for periodic media coverage.
 9. Considering the use of rewards and crime-stoppers programs.
 10. Maintaining contact with the family and/or the reporting party or designee, as appropriate.
 - (i) Shall maintain a close liaison with state and local child welfare systems and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) if the missing person is under the age of 21 and shall promptly notify NCMEC when the person is missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution (42 USC § 5780).
 - (j) Should make appropriate inquiry with the Medical Examiner.

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- (k) Should obtain and forward medical and dental records, photos, X-rays and biological samples, as applicable.
- (l) Shall attempt to obtain the most recent photograph for persons under 18 years of age if it has not been obtained previously, forward the photograph to BCA (Minn. Stat. § 299C.54) and enter the photograph into applicable missing person networks (42 USC § 5780).
- (m) Should consider making appropriate entries and searches in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).
- (n) In the case of an endangered missing person or a person who has been missing for an extended time, should consult with a supervisor regarding seeking federal assistance from the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service (28 USC § 566).

314.8 WHEN A MISSING PERSON IS FOUND

When any person reported missing is found, the assigned investigator shall document the location of the missing person in the appropriate report, notify the reporting party and other involved agencies and refer the case for additional investigation if warranted.

The Chief Deputy shall ensure that, upon receipt of information that a missing person has been located, the following occurs:

- (a) Notification is made to BCA.
- (b) A missing child's school is notified.
- (c) Entries are made in the applicable missing person networks (Minn. Stat § 299C.53, Subd. 2).
- (d) When a child is endangered, the fact that the child has been found shall be reported within 24 hours to BCA.
- (e) Notification shall be made to any other law enforcement agency that took the initial report or participated in the investigation.

314.8.1 PERSONS FOUND ALIVE

Additional responsibilities related to missing persons who are found alive include:

- (a) Verifying that the located person is the reported missing person.
- (b) If appropriate, arranging for a comprehensive physical examination of the victim.
- (c) Conducting a careful interview of the person, documenting the results of the interview and involving all appropriate agencies.
- (d) Notifying the family/reporting party that the missing person has been located. In adult cases, if the located adult permits the disclosure of his/her whereabouts and contact information, the family/reporting party may be given this information.

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- (e) Depending on the circumstances of the disappearance, considering the need for reunification assistance, intervention, counseling or other services for either the missing person or family/reporting party.
- (f) Performing a constructive post-case critique. Reassessing the procedures used and updating the Office policy and procedures as appropriate.

314.8.2 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS

Members investigating a case of an unidentified person who is deceased or a living person who cannot assist in identifying him/herself should:

- (a) Obtain a complete description of the person.
- (b) Enter the unidentified person's description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File.
- (c) Use available resources, such as those related to missing persons, to identify the person.

314.8.3 DECEASED PERSONS

If a deceased person has been identified as a missing person, the Detective Bureau shall attempt to locate family members and inform them of the death and the location of the deceased missing person's remains. All efforts to locate and notify family members shall be recorded in appropriate reports and properly retained (Minn. Stat. § 390.25, Subd. 2).

Additional investigation responsibilities include the following:

- (a) Secure the crime scene if this office has jurisdiction.
- (b) Contact the coroner, medical examiner or forensic anthropologist to arrange for body recovery and examination.
- (c) Collect and preserve any evidence at the scene.
- (d) Depending on the circumstances, consider the need for intervention, counseling or other services for the family/reporting party.
- (e) Cancel alerts and remove the case from NCIC and other information systems; remove posters and other publications from circulation.
- (f) Perform a constructive post-case critique. Reassess the procedures used and update the office policy and procedures as appropriate.

314.9 CASE CLOSURE

The Detective Bureau supervisor may authorize the closure of a missing person case after considering the following:

- (a) Closure is appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned or evidence matches an unidentified person or body.

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- (b) If the missing person is a resident of Freeborn or this office is the lead agency, the case should be kept under active investigation for as long as the person may still be alive. Exhaustion of leads in the investigation should not be a reason for closing a case.
- (c) If this office is not the lead agency, the case can be made inactive if all investigative leads have been exhausted, the lead agency has been notified and entries are made in the applicable missing person networks, as appropriate.
- (d) A missing person case should not be closed or reclassified because the person would have reached a certain age or adulthood or because the person is now the subject of a criminal or civil warrant.

314.10 TRAINING

Subject to available resources, the Chief Deputy should ensure that members of this office whose duties include missing person investigations and reports receive training that includes:

- (a) The initial investigation:
 - 1. Assessments and interviews
 - 2. Use of current resources, such as Mobile Audio Video (MAV)
 - 3. Confirming missing status and custody status of minors
 - 4. Evaluating the need for a heightened response
 - 5. Identifying the zone of safety based on chronological age and developmental stage
- (b) Briefing of office members at the scene.
- (c) Identifying NCIC Missing Person File categories (e.g., disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile and catastrophe).
- (d) Verifying the accuracy of all descriptive information.
- (e) Initiating a neighborhood investigation.
- (f) Investigating any relevant recent family dynamics.
- (g) Addressing conflicting information.
- (h) Key investigative and coordination steps.
- (i) Managing a missing person case.
- (j) Additional resources and specialized services.
- (k) Update procedures for case information and descriptions.
- (l) Preserving scenes.
- (m) Internet and technology issues (e.g., Internet use, cell phone use).

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(n) Media relations.

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315.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance and responsibilities regarding this agency's response for handling missing person investigations.

315.2 DEFINITIONS

At Risk – Includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) A victim of a crime or foul play.
- (b) A person missing and in need of medical attention.
- (c) A missing person with no pattern of running away or disappearing.
- (d) A missing person who may be the victim of parental abduction.
- (e) A mentally impaired missing person.

At Risk Missing Child – In addition to the above, a missing child will be considered "at risk" when one or more of the unusual circumstances below are present:

- (a) 13 years of age or younger, or
- (b) Believed or determined to be experiencing one or more of the circumstances noted below:

1. Is out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.

The zone of safety will vary depending on the age of the child and his or her developmental stage. In the case of an infant, for example, the zone of safety will include the immediate presence of an adult custodian or the crib, stroller, or carriage in which the infant was placed. For a school-aged child the zone of safety might be the immediate neighborhood or the route taken between home and school.

2. Has mental or behavioral disabilities. If the child is developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed/behaviorally challenged, he or she may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address. The disability places the child in danger of exploitation or other harm.

Law enforcement is presented with several unique challenges when responding to, searching for, and recovering a missing Autistic child, such as:

- Children often seek bodies of water.
- A tendency for the child to wander or elope.
- A tendency to seek small enclosed spaces which may be overlooked during initial searches.
- Eluding or hiding from searches.

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- Some children may have a diminished sense of fear.
- Being unable to respond to search teams.
- Some children are very resilient. • Unique behaviors (No children are alike).
- Very specific interests or fascinations to the child (active roadways, road signs, trains, fire trucks, etc.)

3. Is drug dependent, including both prescribed and/or illicit substances, and the dependency is potentially life-threatening. Any drug dependency puts the missing child at risk. The diabetic or epileptic child requires regular medication or his or her condition may become critical. The abuser of illegal drugs, on the other hand, may resort to crime or become the victim of exploitation.

4. Has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing. While some parents may incorrectly assume that 24 hours must pass before law enforcement will accept a missing-person case, a delay in reporting might also indicate the existence of neglect or abuse within the family.

5. Is in a life-threatening situation. The environment in which the child is missing may be particularly hazardous. Examples of a dangerous environment could be a busy highway for a toddler, an all-night truck stop for a teenager, or an outdoor environment in inclement weather for a child of any age.

6. Is in the company of others who could endanger his or her welfare. A missing child in such circumstances is in danger not only of sexual exploitation, but also of involvement in criminal activity such as burglary, shoplifting, robbery and other violent crimes.

7. Is absent in a way inconsistent with established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained. Most children have an established and reasonably predictable routine. Significant, unexplained deviations from that routine increase the probability of risk to the child.

8. Is involved in a situation causing a reasonable person to conclude the child should be considered at risk. Significant risk to the child can be assumed if investigation indicates a possible abduction, violence at the scene of an abduction, or signs of sexual exploitation.

Missing Person – Any person who is reported missing to law enforcement when the person's location is unknown. This includes a child who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away or kept by a parent in violation of the law. It also includes any child who is missing voluntarily, involuntarily or under circumstances that do not conform to his/her ordinary habits or behavior, and who may be in need of assistance.

Missing Person Networks – Those databases or computer networks available to law enforcement and that are suitable for information related to missing persons investigations. These

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include the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Missing Person System (MPS) and the Unidentified Persons System (UPS).

Telecommunicator – For the purposes of this policy, the term “telecommunicator” shall apply to all personnel assigned, permanently or temporarily, to work in the Communications Center.

315.3 POLICY

The Freeborn County Sheriff's Office does not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and assumes that the missing person is in need of immediate assistance until the facts reveal otherwise. The Freeborn County Sheriff's Office gives missing person cases priority over property-related cases and will not require any time frame to pass before beginning a missing person investigation.

Additionally, this agency holds that every child reported as missing will be considered at risk until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.

Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided when a child is reported missing. If a missing child either resides in, or was last seen in this jurisdiction, this agency will immediately initiate the required reporting process. If a child resides in this jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, but the law enforcement agency covering that jurisdiction chooses not to take a missing child report, this agency will assume reporting and investigative responsibility.

Questions concerning parental custody occasionally arise in relation to missing child reports. It shall be the policy of this agency to accept the report of a missing child even if custody has not been formally established. Reporting parties shall be encouraged to obtain legal custody as soon as possible; however, since the safety of the missing children is paramount, members of this agency will open a case when it can be shown that the child has been removed, without explanation, from his or her usual place of residence. If custody has not been established by the Court, then the law-enforcement responsibility is to ensure the child is safe only.

315.4 ACTIONS UPON DETERMINATION OF UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES – MISSING CHILDREN

If it is determined that unusual circumstances are involved in the report of a missing child, the child will be considered at risk, and an expanded investigation, including the use of all appropriate resources, will immediately commence. While all incidents involving missing children should be investigated thoroughly, those involving unusual circumstances indicate a heightened likelihood of risk to the child and, therefore, require an intensive response.

If appropriate, existing inter-agency response protocols--including the AMBER Alert system and/or other immediate community notification methods, if available--should be considered (refer to Public Alerts Policy).

315.5 ENDANGERED MISSING ADVISORIES (EMA)

An EMA is an emergency notification system for people (adult and children) who have been reported missing and believed to be in danger. The EMA also provides a tool to law enforcement to safely recover missing children who do not fit the AMBER Alert criteria. Law enforcement can

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chose between AMBER and EMA based on the individual case and the appropriate criteria. EMA's are called "Silver Alerts" for missing persons 65 years of age or older.

Issuance of an EMA can help raise awareness of the dangers that missing persons face and reduce the pressure on police to issue an AMBER Alert in cases that do not fit the criteria. More important, the EMA provides a strategy for law enforcement to notify the public and save lives.

315.6 REQUIRED FORMS AND DNA COLLECTION KITS

The Investigations Division should ensure the forms and kits are developed and available in accordance with this policy, state and federal law, including:

- Department report form for use in missing person cases.
- Missing Person Investigation Checklist, providing investigation guidelines and resources available in the early hours of a missing person investigation.
- Missing Person School Notification Form.
- Medical Records Release Form.
- Minnesota BCA missing person forms as appropriate.
- DNA Missing Persons Specimen Collection Kits.

315.7 ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Any employee encountering a person who wishes to report a missing person or runaway shall render assistance without delay. This can be accomplished by accepting the report via telephone but it is recommended in-person, initiating an investigation. Those employees who do not take such reports or who are unable to render immediate assistance shall promptly dispatch or alert an employee who can take the report.

A report shall be accepted in all cases and regardless of where the person was last seen, where the person resides or any other question of jurisdiction.

315.8 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

As may be appropriate according to the circumstances, officers or other employees conducting the initial investigation of a missing person should take the following investigative actions, as applicable:

- (a) Respond to a dispatched call for service as soon as practicable.
- (b) Interview the reporting person, any witnesses, and parent(s) of missing children, to determine whether the person qualifies as a missing person and, if so, whether the person may be at risk.
- (c) Notify a supervisor immediately if there is evidence that a missing person is either at risk or may qualify for a public alert, or both (see the Public Alerts Policy).
- (d) Obtain a detailed description of the missing person including photo(s) and videos.

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- (e) Confirm the person is in fact missing by conducting an immediate and thorough search of the scene.
- (f) Verify custody status of missing children.
- (g) Identify the circumstances of the missing episode (risk factors).
- (h) Determine when, where, and by whom the missing person was last seen.
- (i) Identify the missing child's zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- (j) Make an assessment of the type of incident.
- (k) Interview individual(s) who last had contact with the missing person.
- (l) When applicable, obtain a description of the suspected abductor(s) and other pertinent information.
- (m) Provide detailed descriptive information to the Communications Center and Broadcast a "Be on the Look-Out" (Attempt to Locate or ATL) bulletin if the person is under 16 years of age or there is evidence that the missing person is at risk. The ATL should be broadcast as soon as practicable but in no event more than one hour after determining the missing person is under 16 or may be at risk.
- (n) Identify and separately interview everyone at the scene.
- (o) Seal/protect the scene, the missing person's home, and areas of interest as potential crime scenes.
- (p) Ensure that entries are made into the appropriate missing person networks as follows:
 - 1. Immediately, when the missing person is at risk.
 - 2. In all other cases, as soon as practicable, but not later than two hours from the time of the initial report.
- (q) Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely and initiate a search as applicable under the facts.
- (r) Collect and/or review the following:
 - 1. A photograph and a fingerprint card of the missing person, if available.
 - 2. A voluntarily provided biological sample of the missing person, if available (e.g., toothbrush, hairbrush).
 - 3. Any documents that may assist in the investigation, such as court orders regarding custody.
 - 4. Any other evidence that may assist in the investigation, including personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, computers).

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(s) When circumstances permit and if appropriate, attempt to determine the missing person's location through their telecommunications carrier, Internet provider, or Internet history.

(t) Contact the appropriate agency if the report relates to a previously made missing person report and another agency is actively investigating that report. When this is not practical, the information should be documented in an appropriate report for transmission to the appropriate agency. If the information relates to an at-risk missing person, the officer should notify a supervisor and proceed with reasonable steps to locate the missing person.

315.9 SEARCHES FOR MISSING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

While cases of missing children with special needs should be treated as critical incidents requiring elevated responses by law enforcement and first responders, children with autism have an unusually high mortality rate and are especially at risk. Certain exceptions may apply for those special-needs children who are considered high-functioning and therefore should be assessed accordingly weighing all risk factors.

Because children with autism often have an extremely high attraction to water, first responders and search teams should immediately check all nearby bodies of water in an effort to head-off the child. These include but are not limited to streams, ponds, lakes, rivers, creeks, storm-water retention/detention basins, and backyard and public swimming pools. The use of air units and/or canine teams should be used for the search.

315.10 REPORT PROCEDURES AND ROUTING

Employees should complete all missing person reports and forms promptly and personally delivered to the appropriate supervisor as soon as a missing person report is ready for review.

315.11 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

As may be appropriate according to the circumstances, the supervisor assigned to the report of a missing person should:

- (a) Obtain a briefing and written reports from the first responder(s) and other agency personnel at the scene.
- (b) Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed to assist in the investigation.
- (c) Consider activation of the AMBER Alert system and/or other immediate community notification methods such as an Endangered Missing Person Advisory (EMA) when appropriate.
- (d) Take reasonable steps to identify and address any jurisdictional issues to ensure cooperation between agencies.
- (e) Establish a command post.

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- (f) Organize and coordinate search efforts. Systematic searches are common features of missing-child investigations. A supervisor should appoint a search operation coordinator who can oversee the search effort while the supervisor remains available to manage the entire investigation.
- (g) The supervisor shall also ensure applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented and that records have been entered into the appropriate missing person networks.
- (h) Establish a liaison with the victim family.
- (i) Confirm that all agency policies and procedures are observed.
- (j) Review and approve missing person reports upon receipt and ensure resources are deployed as appropriate. The reports should be promptly sent to Records Division and entered into the appropriate missing person networks.
- (k) Notify the Watch Commander of a report of an at-risk missing child.
- (l) Manage media relations. Many missing-child investigations, especially those involving large- scale search efforts, are likely to draw media attention.

315.12 RECORDS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The receiving employee shall:

- (a) As soon as reasonable under the circumstances, notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the missing person's residence in cases where the missing person is a resident of another jurisdiction.
- (b) Notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency in whose jurisdiction the missing person was last seen.
- (c) Notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the missing person's intended or possible destination, if known.
- (d) Promptly enter descriptive information into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File and initial the original police report along with a copy of the signed Missing Children's Report.
- (e) Forward a copy of the report to the Investigation Division.

315.13 COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES-MISSING CHILDREN

Communications Center personnel receiving the report of a missing child shall:

- (a) **Determine if circumstances of the report meet the definition of a missing child.** By questioning the caller about the circumstances of the report, the call-taker can make a preliminary assessment about the level of risk to the missing child. This assessment shall also prepare the call-taker to promptly activate additional response protocols if needed.

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(b) **Promptly dispatch an officer to the scene of the report.** The officer who routinely patrols the vicinity of the report is best suited to handle the first response since he or she should be familiar with the area and is likely to have knowledge of unusual activities, suspicious people, known offenders, and other neighborhood dynamics.

Note: The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 mandates law enforcement's immediate response to reports of missing children and the prompt entry of descriptive information into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File. This may be accomplished through coordination with the Records Bureau.

(c) **Notify a supervisor.** Because of the complexity of some missing child cases, especially those requiring the immediate mobilization of investigative resources, telecommunicator should verify that a supervisor has been notified whenever officers respond to such an assignment.

(d) **Transmit the appropriate radio broadcasts and other notifications.** A critical responsibility of the telecommunicator is to obtain sufficient information from the reporting party to broadcast a radio message alerting other officers, and other agencies if necessary, about the circumstances of the missing episode. Information should include the child's height, weight, hair and eye color, clothing, and the location where the child was last seen as well as any dangers or special considerations unique to this missing child. Most importantly the radio alert should contain any information known about a possible abductor with special emphasis on the description of the suspect and vehicle used as well as direction of travel. Consideration should also be given to the use of highway surveillance or "road-block plans," including those involving surrounding agencies, to apprehend a fleeing abductor.

(e) **Search agency records for related information, specifically any records such as those pertaining to the family, the place where the child was last seen,** and the child's residence. It is essential for responding officers to know if the child or family has been the subject of previous reports that might have a bearing on this incident. Records should also be reviewed to learn if any incidents have been reported in the area that might have investigative value in this case. Complaints of or reports about incidents such as attempted abductions, prowlers, public lewdness, loitering, and suspicious people will be of particular interest. Access should also be made to Sex Offender Registries to determine if individuals designated as sex offenders reside, work, or might otherwise be associated with the area. All available background information is critical to responding officers and investigative personnel to help evaluate the incident and interview witnesses or possible suspects. If necessary, the Records Division may be utilized to assist in the search of agency records.

(f) **Safeguard all pertinent records.** The telecommunicator should also ensure records of all communication related to this incident, such as phone conversations with the reporting

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party and witnesses, including written notes regarding the discussion, radio broadcasts, and all subsequent notifications, are safeguarded for future investigative reference.

315.14 INVESTIGATION DIVISION FOLLOW-UP

As may be appropriate according to the circumstances, the investigator assigned to respond to a missing person scene or investigation:

- (a) Should obtain a briefing from agency personnel at the scene.
- (b) Should verify the accuracy of all descriptive information.
- (c) Should initiate a neighborhood investigation/canvass.
- (d) Should obtain a brief history of recent family dynamics.
- (e) Explore the basis of conflicting information.
- (f) Complete all remaining key investigative and coordination steps.
- (g) Implement effective case management.
- (h) Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services (Mutual Aid, FBI, NCMEC, Team Adam, etc.).
- (i) Update descriptive information.
- (j) Shall ensure that the missing person's school is notified within 10 days if the missing person is a juvenile.
 - 1. The notice shall be in writing and should also include a photograph.
 - 2. The investigator should meet with school officials regarding the notice as appropriate to stress the importance of including the notice in the child's student file, along with contact information if the school receives a call requesting the transfer of the missing child's files to another school.
- (k) Should re-contact the reporting person and/or other witnesses within 30 days of the initial report and within 30 days thereafter to determine if any additional information has become available via the reporting party.
- (l) Should consider contacting other agencies involved in the case to determine if any additional information is available.
- (m) Shall verify and update CLETS, NCIC and any other applicable missing person networks within 60 days of the original entry into the networks and every 45 days thereafter until the missing person is located.
- (n) Should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document these efforts at least every 45 days.
- (o) Shall maintain a close liaison with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® (NCMEC) if the missing person is under the age of 21.

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- (p) Should make appropriate inquiry with the coroner or medical examiner.
- (q) Should obtain and forward medical records, photos, X-rays and biological samples.
- (r) Shall attempt to obtain the most recent photograph for persons under 18 years of age if it has not previously been obtained and forward the photograph to Minnesota BCA.
- (s) Should consider making appropriate entries and searches in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).
- (t) Monitor media relations.

315.15 WHEN A MISSING PERSON IS FOUND

An officer assigned to the recovery or return of a missing child shall:

- (a) Verify the located child is, in fact, the reported missing child.
- (b) Secure intervention services, if appropriate.
- (c) Arrange the return of the child to his or her legal guardian or appropriate children's shelter in the case of a runaway or missing child from within department jurisdiction who has been located and who is not wanted on a warrant or other law violation.
- (d) Place the child in custody and transport him or her to the appropriate facility for admission in the case of a runaway from another jurisdiction or from out-of-state who has been located and for whom a warrant exists or for whom an NCIC missing-person "hit" is verified.
- (e) Complete the appropriate supplemental reports and cancel all outstanding notifications.

When any person reported missing is found, the assigned investigator shall document the location of the missing person in the appropriate report, notify the reporting party and other involved agencies and refer the case for additional investigation if warranted.

The Dispatch Supervisor shall ensure that, upon receipt of information that a missing person has been located, the following occurs:

- (a) Notification is made to Minnesota BCA.
- (b) The missing person's school is notified.
- (c) Entries are made in the applicable missing person networks.
- (d) When a child under 12 years of age or a person who is at risk is found, the report of finding shall be made within 24 hours to the Minnesota BCA Office.

Notification shall be made to any other law enforcement agency that took the initial report or participated in the investigation.

315.16 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS

Department members investigating a case of an unidentified person who is deceased or a living person who cannot assist in identifying him/herself should:

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- (a) Obtain a complete description of the person.
- (b) Enter the unidentified person's description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File.
- (c) Use available resources, such as those related to missing persons, to identify the person.
- (d) Cancel all notifications after identification is confirmed.

315.17 CASE CLOSURE

The Investigation Division supervisor may authorize the closure of a missing person case after considering the following:

- (a) Closure is appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned or evidence has matched an unidentified person or body.
- (b) If the missing person was a resident of Freeborn County or this department is the lead agency, the case should be kept under active investigation for as long as the person may still be alive. Exhaustion of leads in the investigation should not be a reason for closing a case.
- (c) If this department is not the lead agency, the case can be made inactive if all investigative leads have been exhausted, the lead agency has been notified and entries are made in the applicable missing person networks as appropriate.
- (d) A missing person case should not be closed or reclassified because the person would have reached a certain age or adulthood or because the person is now the subject of a criminal or civil warrant.

315.18 TRAINING

Subject to available resources, the Training Coordinator should ensure that members of this Department whose duties include missing person investigations and reports receive regular training that includes:

- (a) The initial investigation:
 - 1. Assessments and interviews.
 - 2. Use of current resources, such as Mobile Audio Video (MAV).
 - 3. Confirming missing status and custody status of minors.
 - 4. Evaluating the need for a heightened response.
 - 5. Identifying the zone of safety based on chronological age and developmental stage.
- (b) Briefing of Department members at the scene.
- (c) Identifying NCIC Missing Person File categories (e.g., disability, endangered, involuntary, and juvenile and catastrophe).
- (d) Verifying the accuracy of all descriptive information.

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(e) Initiating a neighborhood investigation.

315.19 AUDITS/QUALITY ASSURANCE

Dispatch Supervisor, Freeborn County Sheriff's Administration and local Police Chiefs, should conduct periodic audits of missing person calls and investigations to verify policy and procedure compliance. Audit reports shall be forwarded to the Sheriff, Chief of Police of their designee.