

## Missing Persons

### 330.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for handling missing person investigations.

#### 330.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Endangered** - A person the Department 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 for 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) The person has been diagnosed with dementia, a traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's disease, or other cognitive impairments.
- (i) The person has been diagnosed with autism.
- (j) There is evidence that a non-custodial parent may have abducted the person.
- (k) The person has been the subject of past threats or acts of violence.
- (l) 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.
- (m) Any other factor the Department 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.

**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).

**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 National Missing and Unidentified

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Persons System (NamUs), the Minnesota Justice Information Services (MNJIS), the Minnesota Missing and Unidentified Persons Clearinghouse, and the Minnesota Crime Alert Network.

#### **330.2 POLICY**

The Airport Police Department 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.

#### **330.3 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)).

##### **330.3.1 INVESTIGATIVE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

Additional support, investigative and supervisory assistance should be requested as reasonably necessary. Any support assistance should be properly briefed and updated on the investigation status.

##### **330.3.2 INVESTIGATION OF MISSING AND ENDANGERED PERSONS**

If it is determined the person is missing and endangered, the handling officer shall immediately:

Ensure that identifying and descriptive information about the person and involved suspects and vehicles is immediately entered into the NCIC system for persons under 21 years of age (42 USC. 5779 (a)).

Ensure the information is broadcast regionally, statewide and nationally, or solicit the assistance of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to make the broadcasts.

Consult with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and request assistance as necessary.

Secure the crime scene and/or last known position of the missing person and, if not already completed, attempt to identify and interview persons in the area at the time of the incident.

Implement coordination and mutual aid plans when necessary.

For cases involving missing children the investigator shall comply with federal laws regarding the reporting and investigation of missing children cases.

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#### **330.4 INITIAL INVESTIGATION**

Officers 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.
- (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 (34 USC § 41308).
- (j) Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely and initiate a search as applicable according to 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).
  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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- (l) When circumstances permit and if appropriate, attempt to determine the missing person's location through their 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. 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.

#### **330.5 MINNESOTA REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONS MISSING MORE THAN 30 DAYS**

If a person remains missing for more than 30 days, "Brandon's Law" (Minnesota Statutes §299C .535) requires an attempt to obtain the following:

- (a) DNA samples (for DNA Collection Kits, contact the BCA Missing and Unidentified Persons Clearinghouse)
- (b) Dental information and x-rays
- (c) Additional photos
- (d) Fingerprints

A review of the case file to determine whether additional information indicates that the person is endangered - if determined to be endangered, change status in NCIC.

Forward a recent photo of the individual to the BCA Missing and Unidentified Persons Clearinghouse. Enter the photo into NCIC.

#### **330.6 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.