



# Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

Pursuant to Connecticut Public Act 07-151, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council has developed a policy concerning the acceptance of missing person reports by law enforcement agencies in this state and such agencies' response thereto. Further included are amendment issues substituted into this statute by Connecticut Public Act 11-102. The Council intends this policy to be a resource for law enforcement agencies in the development of additional training and departmental policies for responding to missing persons cases.

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this protocol is to provide policy to all law enforcement agencies within the state of Connecticut regarding the authorized requirements and approved procedures associated with the investigation of Missing Person cases:

- A law enforcement agency shall accept without delay any report of a missing person. No law enforcement agency may refuse to accept a missing person report.
- The law enforcement agency that receives a report of a missing person shall be the lead law enforcement agency in charge of the missing person investigation, and shall continue in that capacity unless another law enforcement agency assumes primary responsibility over the investigation. The lead law enforcement agency shall be entitled to the cooperation of any other law enforcement agency in the State.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

(1) "Missing Person", means any person who is reported missing to a law enforcement unit until the person is located or determined to be a voluntarily missing adult. It also includes any child who is missing voluntarily or involuntarily, or under circumstances not conforming to his or her ordinary habits or behavior and who may be in need of assistance per CGS Section 46b-120.

(2) "Adult Missing Person" means an individual who has attained the age of 18 years.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(3) "Missing Child" means any person who is under the age of eighteen years, whose temporary or permanent residence is in Connecticut or is believed to be in Connecticut, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency CGS-29-1e(b)(1).

(4) "Reporting Myth" means it is an incorrect assumption that 24 hours, or any other time frame, must pass before a law enforcement unit will accept a missing person report. There is NO waiting period for acceptance of a report of a missing person.

(5) "Missing child report" is a report prepared on a form designed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection for the use by private citizens and law enforcement agencies to report missing children information to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse. (CGS Sec 29-1e)

The DPS 81 C, *AMBER ALERT/ MISSING CHILD / SILVER ALERT REQUEST* form must be immediately transmitted to the State Police Message Center to request alert activation. This form is for use by private citizens and law enforcement agencies to report missing children information to the Missing Person Information Clearinghouse (CGS Sec 29-1e). Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under eighteen years of age shall immediately accept such report for filing, inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies.

(6) **"Missing Person Clearing House" is established** within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The clearinghouse establishes services deemed appropriate by the department to aid in the location of missing children. The clearinghouse is established as a central repository of information regarding missing children and other missing persons. Such information shall be collected and disseminated to assist in the location of missing children. The clearinghouse responsibilities include:

- Establish a system of intrastate communication of information relating to children determined to be missing by the parent, guardian or legal custodian of the child, or by a law enforcement agency.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

- Provide a centralized file for the exchange of information on missing children within the state;
- Interface with the National Crime Information Center for the exchange of information on children suspected of interstate travel;
- Collect, process, maintain and disseminate information on missing children and shall strive to maintain or disseminate only accurate and complete information;
- Conduct investigations concerning missing children in this state and cooperate with local law enforcement agencies and other state and federal agencies in investigations concerning missing children.

(7) "At Risk" means regardless of age, a missing person is at risk when missing under circumstances in which the individual is in danger of serious physical injury or death. This policy presumes that every missing person or missing adult person will be considered at **high risk** until a reasonable and articulable basis to conclude otherwise exists.

(8) "Missing/NOT At-Risk Adult" means an adult will NOT be considered At-Risk if any of the following criteria are met:

- (a) "Absent Spouse": An absent spouse has committed no crime and is legally free to come and go. (Caution should be exercised both in preserving the privacy rights of the spouse in their wish to keep their whereabouts unknown and in making sure that the "absent spouse" is not, in fact, the victim of foul play related to domestic abuse.)
- (b) An adult who has left a note and/or told a credible person that they are intentionally absent. (An exception would be a suicide note.)
- (c) An adult who simply has not been in touch with the reporting party for an extended period of time, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- (d) Fugitives from justice including AWOL service personnel.
- (e) Adult who is being sought for business or social purposes such as debt collections or school reunions.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(9) "Family with service needs" means a family that includes a child who is at least seven years of age and is under eighteen years of age who

- (a) has without just cause run away from the parental home or other properly authorized and lawful place of abode
- (b) is beyond the control of the child's or youth's parent, parents, guardian or other custodian
- (c) has engaged in indecent or immoral conduct
- (d) is a truant or habitual truant or who, while in school, has been continuously and overtly defiant of school rules and regulation, or
- (e) is thirteen years of age or older and has engaged in sexual intercourse with another person and such other person is thirteen years of age or older and not more than two years older or younger than such child or youth; (*Effective October 1, 2012*)

\* **"Youth in Crisis" no longer exists and is replaced by the above**

(10) "AMBER Alert" (*America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Alert*) is defined as a nationally recognized program used by law enforcement to help find children under the most serious life threatening conditions. This is a rapid notification to the public, which utilizes all available technology during the critical period after a child/missing person has been abducted. Any police department in the state can request an Amber Alert. The State Police Message Center will then determine if the alert meets the guidelines of AMBER and activate the alert. The Message Center is also the clearinghouse for all AMBER Alert information and has set procedures for activating, broadcasting and deactivating the system. Amber Alert creates an emergency notification system for law enforcement agencies to broadcast local, regional, or statewide public alerts via radio, television and electronic highway signs. The specific criteria of AMBER are:

- The child must be under 18 years of age, unless there are special circumstances such as a proven mental or physical disability.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

- Law enforcement must believe the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- There must be enough descriptive information to believe a broadcast will help.
- The information must be received in a timely manner.

(11) "SILVER Alert" is an alert system for persons who are under the age of 18 but do not meet the criteria of AMBER, adult persons with a mental impairment or medical condition and any person over the age of 65. The request for activation of a silver alert is the same procedure as AMBER, utilizing DPS 81-C. Once the criteria has been determined to meet the standard, the information is disseminated to media outlets in the state of Connecticut in an effort to public for assistance in locating the missing person. The plan alerts the public as quickly as possible to the disappearance so everyone may assist in the search for the safe return of the individual.

(12) "Locater" is a web-based poster-creation program that provides law enforcement agencies with access to create and distribute their own posters to include Missing Children, Missing Adults, AMBER Alert, Wanted, Crime Alert, and other additional titles. The program allows agencies to distribute posters electronically and transmit the information to other agencies, media outlets, and the general public via Email distribution. It is initiated by contacting State Police Message Center or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

(13) "DNA" is defined as a material that is found in the nucleus of white blood cells and some structures outside the nucleus called mitochondria. Known as the "blueprint of life," it acts as a genetic code that distinguishes one person from another.

(14) "DNA Data Base" is the Department of Justice DNA data base for all cases involving the report of an unidentified deceased person or a high-risk missing person. The DOJ data base is called CODIS, an acronym for "Combined DNA Index System. The system is similar in concept to that of the fingerprint index



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

process, in attempting to identify offenders by their unique genetic substance and link them to the crime.

(15) "NCIC" is the National Crime Information Center. This is a nationwide, on-line computer telecommunications system that is maintained by the FBI. NCIC's Missing Person File was implemented in 1975. Records in the Missing Person File are retained indefinitely, until the individual is located or the record is canceled by the entering agency.

(16) "UPS" is the Unidentified Persons System, an automated database maintained by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

(17) "NCIC Number" is the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Number. A computer generated number automatically assigned by NCIC to each accepted record usually noted on the reporting agency's Missing Person Report.

(18) "CODIS" is the Combined DNA Index System for Missing Persons. Generates investigative leads in cases where biological evidence is recovered from the crime scene.

(19) "NamUs" is the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, serves as a searchable online repository for missing and unidentified persons records that includes case data and circumstances, agency information, dental records and NCIC coding, fingerprint classifications and DNA testing status.

(20) "Family reference samples" are samples collected from the immediate family members of the reported missing person. These collected samples provided by family members of missing persons can only be searched against the unidentified human remains index and can also be entered as an identifier in NAMUS.

(21) "Family Reference Sample Collection Kit" is a standardized collection kit that provides a safe and effective, noninvasive means for obtaining DNA reference samples from appropriate family members of a missing person. Family reference samples are entered into the FBI's Missing Persons DNA Database Program for comparative purposes.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(22) "IAFIS" is the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System a national fingerprint and criminal history system maintained by the FBI, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division.

(23) "ViCAP" is the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program. This national data center is designed to collect, collate, and analyze information on crimes of violence.

(24) "Runaway" is any child who is voluntarily missing.

(25) "Stranger Abduction" is a missing person taken/kidnapped by a stranger (includes cases of a known abductor who is not a family member).

(26) "Lost" is a missing person who has strayed away and whose whereabouts are unknown.

(27) "Alzheimer's Disease" A progressive, degenerative disease of the brain in which brain cells die and are not replaced. It results in impaired memory, thinking, and behavior.

(28) "Suspicious Circumstances" is circumstances which give rise to the belief that "foul play" may have been involved; the disappearance is out of character for the individual and no known reason can be determined.

(29) "Parent/Family Abduction" is a child who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent or non-parent family member.

(30) "Dependent Adult" is an adult who has physical or mental limitations which restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, mentally handicapped).

(31) "Voluntary Missing Adult" is a missing adult who has left on his/her own free will.

(32) "Catastrophic Missing person" is possibly a victim of a disaster (i.e., boating accident, plane crash, earthquake, flood, fire, terrorist act, etc.).



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(33) “Law Enforcement Agency” is the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection or any municipal police department.

(34) “Adult Person” is an individual who has attained the age of eighteen years.

(35) “**CART**” is comprised of specially trained investigators, with representation from State Police Major Crime Squads. They are utilized as a resource in an effort to coordinate an immediate and quick response to the report of a missing child. They will assist the investigating agency. The team also consists of members from other state agencies and/or local law enforcement, who will respond based upon the team’s needs.

### III. BACKGROUND

Missing Persons Investigations are frequent law enforcement assignments which may be solved in a short period of time with the officer quickly locating the subject near by, or extend over a long period of time often involving large pools of resources and sometimes, becoming a national event. Throughout law enforcement history, there has been an ever growing number of missing person complaints lodged with police departments. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as of December 31, 2010, NCIC contained 85,820 active missing person records. Juveniles under the age of 18 account for 38,505 (44.9 percent) of the records and 10,248 (11.9 percent) were for juveniles between the ages of 18 and 20. For Connecticut alone, there are almost 500 missing person cases. These statistics change on a daily basis.

Because of the increasing amount of cases along with the life or death severity attached to many of the scenarios, the nations Law Enforcement community, government forensic investigative agencies and private organizations have continually worked to create a sophisticated investigation and communications system which allows interoperability between all concerned groups allowing for the best possible chances to locate a victim. A thorough investigation may find a person, save a life or give closure to a grieving family.

Over the years, the Connecticut Law Enforcement community saw missing person cases grow in number as well. Also observed was the gravity attached to





## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

the more complex, long term investigations. Connecticut Law Enforcement leaders researched the situation and determined that all missing person cases needed to be promptly investigated and that officers were to be provided with a written guide of investigative steps to be taken. A resource list of supporting agencies and organizations should be afforded to all police investigators.

At a Special Meeting of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council on December 13, 2007, the Council adopted the document entitled "Guidelines for Handling Missing Persons Investigations and Acceptance of Reports" pursuant to Public Act 07-151 Section 1. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council, as a matter of policy has developed these guidelines and distributed them to all agencies under POST purview in concert with Public Act 07-151. In recent legislation under Public Act 11-102, the Connecticut General assembly decided to ensure that this information would no longer be considered a guide but now a policy to which all law enforcement must adhere.

### **IV. APPLICABILITY**

As of January 1, 2012, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall develop and implement a policy concerning the acceptance of missing person reports, including, but not limited to, adult missing person reports, by law enforcement agencies in this state and such agencies' response thereto. Such policy shall include, but not be limited to, (1) procedure for the acceptance of a missing person report, (2) the types of information that a law enforcement agency should seek to ascertain and record concerning the missing person or missing adult person that would aid in locating the missing person or missing adult person, (3) the circumstances that indicate that a missing person or missing adult person is a high risk missing person, (4) the types of information that a law enforcement agency should provide to the person making the missing person report, to a family member or to any other person in a position to assist the law enforcement agency in its efforts to locate the missing person or missing adult person, and (5) the responsibilities of a law enforcement agency in responding to a missing person report and the manner of such response, including preferred methods of response that are sensitive to the emotions of the person making such report.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

Each police basic or review training program conducted or administered by the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council or a municipal police department shall include training in the policy developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and training in the use of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System created by the Office of Justice Program's National Institute of Justice.

### **V. POLICY/ RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF INITIAL CALL.**

(A) Determination of missing person case and sensitivity to the reporting party.

1. Officers, dispatchers or other designated personnel who take the initial call, by telephone, in person, or by electronic media, shall determine if the call is a missing person case according to the definition of a missing person – see References: Missing Persons Terms Definitions.
2. Reporting parties and families of missing persons often experience feelings of helplessness and anxiety. Dispatchers, officers or other designated personnel dealing with these persons should be sensitive to those feelings and respond appropriately.
3. There are two dimensions to a missing person investigation:
  - a. Locating and determining the well-being of the missing person:
  - b. Supporting the person initiating the report and the loved ones who were left behind.
4. Officers need to act in a swift, organized and efficient manner. These investigations must be initiated immediately. Studies



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

show the majority of abducted children are killed within the first three hours of the abduction.

(B) Confirmation of responsibility for acceptance of report, priority in handling and agency notification.

1. It is the duty of all law enforcement agencies to immediately assist any person who is attempting to make a report of a missing person or runaway and a report shall be accepted regardless of jurisdiction. A Law Enforcement Agency shall accept without delay any report of a missing adult person.
  - a. The law enforcement agency that receives a report of a missing person shall be the lead law enforcement agency in charge of the missing person investigation, and shall continue in that capacity unless another law enforcement agency assumes primary responsibility over the investigation. The lead law enforcement agency shall be entitled to the cooperation of any other law enforcement agency in the State.
2. Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under 18 years of age shall immediately accept such report for filing and inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies
3. When dealing with missing person or adult missing persons jurisdictional issues, it is not uncommon for multiple agencies to be involved in the same case. It is essential that agencies work closely together in order to enhance, and not impede, the investigation of the case. The policy requires that the law enforcement unit taking the initial missing person or adult missing person report “promptly notify,” and send copies of the report to, the law enforcement unit that has jurisdiction over the missing person’s or adult missing persons resident address and to the law enforcement unit where the missing person or adult



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

missing person was last seen. It may also be appropriate to notify the law enforcement unit having jurisdiction of the missing person or adult missing person's intended destination.

4. The intent of this policy is to ensure that missing person or adult missing person cases are given appropriate priority over property related cases. Special attention should be given to reports of missing children or for persons with physical or mental limitations. These persons are at greater risk of harm.
5. Each law enforcement unit receiving notification of jurisdiction over any aspect of a missing person or adult missing person investigation should promptly give appropriate assistance in the active investigation, follow-up as requested by the law enforcement unit making the request, and provide all reports, records and assistance appropriate to the investigation.

### **RESPONDING OFFICER'S INITIAL CONTACT AT THE SCENE AND MAKING AN ASSESSMENT AT THE SCENE.**

- (A) Responding Officers or other designated personnel shall interview, with sensitivity, the reporting party and any witnesses to determine
  - (1) that this is a missing person or adult missing person case,
  - (2) if the person may be at risk – or the existence of any suspicious circumstances, and
  - (3) if there are any potential crime scene areas and/or potential witnesses.
- (B) Many times, parents or guardians are anxious to assist law enforcement in the initial phase of the investigation and they will want to provide additional documents to assist in the location of their loved one. Besides obtaining photographs of the missing person, additional items such as fingerprint cards obtained through community fair projects, items containing DNA samples of the missing person, or other related documents may be offered voluntarily by the family. The



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

responding officer shall accept these items and properly document their collection in their reports. These items shall be treated, submitted and stored as evidence. Officers shall also inform the follow-up investigators that these items have been collected.

- (C) This policy requires that the following information be obtained to aid in the search for the person and completion of the reports:
- (1) Name, age and physical description of the missing person, and relationship of the reporting person to the missing person;
  - (2) Time and place last seen and the identity of anyone accompanying the missing person;
  - (3) The extent of any search already conducted for the missing person;
  - (4) Whether the missing person has been reported missing before and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits or plans;
  - (5) Whether the missing person has been involved recently in domestic problems; suffered emotional trauma or life crises; demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior; has talked about running away or committing suicide; is dependent on drugs or alcohol; or has a history of mental illness;
  - (6) The physical condition of the missing person and whether the person is currently on prescription medication. Find out if the person took the needed medication with them;
  - (7) Any information about a vehicle or other form of transportation;
  - (8) Whether the missing person or adult missing person has taken anything with them (e.g., food, clothing, money, weapons, personal items). If they have bank accounts, charge cards or debit cards, check them for recent activity;



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

- (9) If at the missing person's home, check for notes, travel folders, newspaper articles or like items in the person's room. If there is a computer, try to view his/her social networking sites and consider appropriate safeguards for later analysis;
  - (10) At the earliest possible moment, notify dispatcher and inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child or missing person report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies.
  - (11) Whether the missing person has a cell phone, pager or any other form of electronic communication or Global Positioning System(GPS) enabled device. Determine the cell phone carrier and consider contacting their Law Enforcement assistance department for help. Record and call the number. Leave a message if voice mail picks up;
  - (12) Whether the missing person has relatives, friends or neighbors whom he/she may visit or otherwise contact, and;
  - (13) Whether the missing person has failed to perform some important task (e.g., pick-up children, feed pets?)
- (D) When a child is reported missing, regardless of reason, the responding officer will immediately notify a supervisor.
- (E) Make a further assessment to determine what reasonable steps should be taken to locate the missing person. Appropriate actions minimally include:
- (1) Obtain a complete description of missing person or adult person, notifying dispatch and all on-duty officers;
  - (2) Enter information into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) and N.C.I.C. within two hours;



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(3) Lay groundwork for neighborhood or area canvass. Determine what personnel and resources are required for this search;

(4) Determine if there is any area or property to be protected as a crime scene;

(5) The investigating officer shall determine if the missing person fits the mandatory criteria for an **AMBER Alert**. The criteria are:

- The child must be under 18 years of age, unless there are special circumstances such as a proven mental or physical disability.
- Law enforcement must believe the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
- There must be enough descriptive information to believe a broadcast will help.
- The information must be received in a timely manner.

(6) If above criteria are met, and there is no extenuating investigative need that dictates otherwise, the DSP 81-C AMBER ALERT/ MISSING CHILD / SILVER ALERT REQUEST form must be immediately transmitted to the State Police Message Center to request alert activation. The Message Center will then determine if the alert meets the guidelines of AMBER and activate the alert.

**MESSAGE CENTER**  
**Phone – 860 685-8190**  
**Toll Free 800-842-0200**  
**Fax- 680-685-8346**  
**Dps.messagecenter@ct.gov**

(7) If the missing person does NOT fit the above criteria, officers should continue to exercise discretion in determining which of the



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

many other tools available would be the most appropriate for transmitting information and photographs to other officers, the media and the public. Determine if the missing person fits the mandatory criteria for a SILVER Alert. The Criteria are:

- (a) persons who are under the age of 18 but do not meet the criteria of AMBER,
  - (b) adult persons with a mental impairment or medical condition,
  - (c) any person over the age of 65.
  - (d) The request for activation of a silver alert is the same as AMBER, by transmitting the DPS 81-C to the State Police Message Center. Once the criteria has been determined to meet the standards. The information is disseminated to media outlets in the state of Connecticut in an effort to public for assistance in locating the missing person. The plan alerts the public as quickly as possible to the disappearance so everyone may assist in the search for the safe return of the individual.
- (8) A supervisor and/or investigator to should respond to the location. The supervisor should assist in determining the scope and area of search operations. Call for any other assistance or support required. Protect all crime scenes. Identified search areas and ensure that they have restricted access. Set up staging areas to control and organize a large number of searchers.
- (9) Thoroughly search the immediate and surrounding area in a logical and systematic manner. For children, search the house first (even if the parents said they already have done so);
- (10) Process any potential crime scene for evidence.
- (11) Identify and interview potential witnesses.





## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(12) Consider using a standardized search checklist which should include the last known location of the missing person and any likely locations where the person may have gone.

(13) Consider using additional resources to assist in the search:

- a) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- b) Department of Justice (DOJ)
- c) Critical Reach, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
- d) National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA)
- e) Child Abduction Response Team (CART)
- f) A Child is Missing Alert
- g) Everbridge Statewide Reverse 911

(14) Examine court orders regarding custody matters, if applicable;

(15) Consider notifying other agencies for assistance in locating the missing person in their related jurisdiction, the agency where the missing person was last seen may initiate the investigation. It is essential that agencies work together to enhance the success of the investigation.

(16) Request voluntary assistance from the family or reporting party in obtaining initial items of evidence belonging to the missing person such as:

- (a) Recent photograph(s) of missing person, (Also try to obtain photos depicting the person smiling with their teeth showing. This is beneficial for assisting in dental comparison and identification;



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

- (b) Personal electronic devices (cell phones, or cell phone number for tracking purposes, pagers, credit cards, ATM cards, toll passes, computers and any online resources such as: screen names, email sources, websites they may frequent, etc.).
  - (c) Information regarding the last dental examination received by the missing person. This information is often purged after a certain number of years, based on the state that the examination was conducted in. In the state of Connecticut, this information may be purged after 7 years, therefore increasing the expediency needed to acquire the records.
- (17) In high risk, at risk or high priority cases where canine assistance will be requested:
- (a) To ensure best results, dogs should be requested and used as early in the search as possible.
  - (b) Contamination at the point where a missing person was last seen must be minimal. While awaiting dogs, troopers should protect the scene and Keep persons from where the missing person was last seen.
  - (c) Shut off car engines. If an engine needs to run to use the radio or during cold weather, park some distance away as exhaust fumes destroy human scent.
  - (d) Identify but do not touch any "scent article." Allow the dog handler to take possession of the article. (Vehicles can be scent articles in a search). Suggested items include pillow case, hat, comb/brush, sock, razor, toothbrushes, under garments, etc., that were recently worn by the missing person and not handled by anyone else. Such "scent articles" should be placed in a clean paper bag using a



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

clean glove or a clean stick. Items taken from a family laundry hamper, containing a mix of family member's clothing, will not be beneficial.

(18) Collect personal clothing, bedding, personal hygiene items, etc., that may contain DNA with evidentiary value (direct all questions about DNA collection to the State Forensic Laboratory, biology).

(19) Obtain a list of persons known by the missing person's friends, co-workers, acquaintances, associates, etc.

(20) Obtain a list of locations frequented by the missing person; hobbies, interests, preferences and predilections.

(21) All missing persons cases **SHALL** be entered into "NamUs" (the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System) with all **practicable speed**.(PA11-102)

(a) Registered NamUs users can enter missing persons into the system. Registration requests can be made by following the registration link:

[https://www.findthemissing.org/users/new\\_confirm](https://www.findthemissing.org/users/new_confirm)

- or by selecting the "Register" button on the left navigation bar of the [www.findthemissing.org](http://www.findthemissing.org) Web site.

(b) A National Crime Information Center (NCIC) number or law enforcement case number must be in place before the case is published on the NamUs site (both are preferred).

(c) This will require the Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) to register in the system (see #1 above). Registration allows the LEO to have direct involvement with the case and the assigned NamUs Regional Services Specialist (RSS) to obtain case details and biometric data.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(d) Once the case is entered in NamUs, the submitting LEO should request to be included as a local contact on the case, if they are not already. The RSS will facilitate obtaining the biometric data, which includes dental records for the NamUs Forensic Odontologist to code and upload to the NamUs case file. Additionally, the RSS will facilitate a fingerprint classification request and a request for DNA on a Family Reference Sample (FRS).

(e) NamUs has a “Missing Persons to Unidentified Persons (Remains)” (MP to UP) case-matching feature that should be monitored by the LEO for potential matches. When a match of interest is discovered, the officer should bring it to the attention of the RSS for expediting the comparison.

### **POLICE RESPONSIBILITIES AT DEATH SCENE INVESTIGATIONS WHEN HOMICIDE IS SUSPECTED OF AN UNIDENTIFIED UNKNOWN BODY**

(A) Performing a complete death scene investigation when homicide is suspected. The official with custody of the human remains shall ensure that the human remains are delivered to the office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

(B) The Chief Medical Examiner shall obtain from the human remains

- (1) Samples of tissue suitable for DNA typing, or
- (2) Samples of whose bone or hair suitable for DNA typing.

(C) The Chief Medical Examiner shall immediately submit the samples obtained to the Division of Scientific Services within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

### **GUIDELINES FOR POLICE INTERACTION WITH COMPLAINANTS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND OTHERS**

(A) It is important that officers remain in open contact with the family of all missing persons or adult missing persons and with any other associated person.

(B) In missing person or adult missing persons investigations, law enforcement agencies should consider appointing and assigning an officer as a “family liaison”. The family liaison should;

- (1) keep families updated on the progress of the investigation
- (2) assist with the preparation and distribution of missing person or adult missing persons posters
- (3) provide support and coordination with all missing person organizations
- (4) focus the point of contact for communications.

(C) All officers, investigators and supervisors involved in missing person or adult missing persons investigations need to be particularly sensitive to the interests, concerns and needs of the family or other reporting persons and, to the fullest extent possible, continually communicate relevant and appropriate information on the handling of the case. It is not uncommon for the reporting persons or those left behind to experience significant emotional responses. They are dealing with a situation which is at the very highest stress level possible. Medical support, including consultation with a therapist is advisable, however law enforcement should advise the reporting party of two clearing houses to which they may also report a missing person:

- (1) For a missing person under the age of 17, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children;
- (2) For a missing person over the age of 18, contact the National Center for Missing Adults.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

### **INITIATE FOLLOW-UP CONTACTS WITHIN 30 DAYS.**

(A) Officers or other designated personnel should re-contact the reporting party within 30 days of the initial report to determine if any additional information may have become available.

(B) Other agencies involved in this case should also be contacted to determine if any additional information is available and also to determine which agency should take the lead agency role so as to provide the most optimal investigative resources.

(C) When a missing person is found, the law enforcement unit must report this event through all formal channels.

(1) When any person reported missing is found, the officer, dispatcher or other designated personnel shall prepare a formal report of that event.

(2) The reporting party and other involved agencies shall be notified and the notification recorded on the law enforcement unit's reporting form.

(a) Any automated systems entries shall be cancelled.

(b) Information regarding any found, unidentified persons, alive or deceased, should be entered into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system and NCIC.

(D) Investigate the details relative to the return of the missing person. These details can reveal valuable information about the reasons for going missing, where the missing person has been, with who they have been and what they have been doing. In many cases, the missing person will refuse to cooperate.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(E) Consideration must be made that sometimes the reason for running away is to escape abuse by a family member or care giver. If the interview is conducted in their presence, the aggrieved is unlikely to reveal that and the person will simply have returned to the place of abuse.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR CLOSURE OF MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATION**

Careful consideration should be made concerning clearing a missing person investigation.

(A) Closure is obviously appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned or evidence has matched an unidentified person or body.

(B) Inability to move forward in the investigation should not be a reason for closing a case.

(1) By closing a case in such a manner, all evidence may be lost for the future identification of a deceased person.

(2) An unidentified body may be discovered several years later, after the missing person report had been filed and prematurely closed. In such a case, there may be no relevant evidence that may assist in identifying the body, further hindering a death investigation.

(3) When the reported missing person is under the age of eighteen (18), the missing person should remain classified under their actual age as when originally reported missing, regardless of their current age. A missing child report should not be cancelled and re-entered simply because the child has reached adulthood. The missing child report should not be removed or cancelled from any automated system due to emancipation or reaching adulthood.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

### VI. LIMITATION

(A) A common myth that 24 hours (or any other time frame) must pass before law enforcement will accept a missing person \*or adult missing person report is incorrect. A delay in reporting may indicate the existence of neglect or abuse within the family.

(B) Reporting persons must also know that for adults, being a missing person is not a crime. Once the person is located and found not to be at risk, police cannot divulge information about them without the person's consent.

(C) Other limiting circumstances.

(1) "Missing/NOT At-Risk Adult" means an adult will NOT be considered At-Risk if any of the following criteria are met:

(a) "Absent Spouse": An absent spouse has committed no crime and is legally free to come and go. (Caution should be exercised both in preserving the privacy rights of the spouse in their wish to keep their whereabouts unknown and in making sure that the "absent spouse" is not, in fact, the victim of foul play related to domestic abuse.)

(b) An adult who has left a note and/or told a credible person that they are intentionally absent. An exception would be a suicide note

(c) An adult who simply has not been in touch with the reporting party for an extended period of time, unless extenuating circumstances exist.

(d) Fugitives from justice including AWOL service personnel.

(e) Adult who is being sought for business or social purposes such as debt collections or school reunions.





## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

### VII. FORMS AND REPORTS

#### (A) Reporting Responsibilities

(1) Law Enforcement Agencies shall accept without delay any report of a missing adult person.

(a) All law enforcement agencies shall submit to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse all missing child reports received by any such agency CGS 29-1e(d).

(b) All law enforcement agencies shall submit to the clearinghouse any missing person reports when the missing person is :

(1) is eighteen years of age or older and has a mental impairment, or

(2) is sixty-five years of age or older, provided a missing person report prepared by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection has been filed by such missing person's relative, guardian, conservator, attorney-in-fact appointed by the missing person in accordance with chapter 7, any health care representative appointed by the missing person in accordance with section 19a-576 or a nursing home administrator.

(3) Subject to available resources, the clearinghouse established by section 29-1e may collect, process, maintain and disseminate information to assist in the location of missing persons other than children and those persons who are eligible for assistance under subsection (a) of this section.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

(c) Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under eighteen years of age, or a missing person who is eighteen years of age or older and has a mental impairment, or a person who is sixty-five years of age or older shall immediately accept such report for filing and inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child or missing person report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies.

(2) All law enforcement agencies shall submit appropriate information into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system, within two hours.

(3) All law enforcement agencies shall require written reports to be completed by investigating officers. Officer reports on missing person or missing adult person cases will be reviewed contemporaneously by supervisors.

(4) Any department receiving a report of a missing child under eighteen years of age, or who is eighteen years of age or older and has a mental impairment, or a person who is sixty-five years of age or older must complete the DPS 81-C, the AMBER ALERT/MISSING CHILD / SILVER ALERT REQUEST as soon as possible. This form must be immediately transmitted to the State Police Message Center to request alert activation.

(B) SPECIAL NOTE: A report of a missing person under the age of 21 must be reported to the U.S. Department of Justice National Crime Information Center (NCIC) per Federal Law.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

### VIII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**1. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).** NCMEC was established in 1984 as a private, nonprofit, and tax exempt organization to provide services nationwide for families and professionals, to prevent the abduction, endangerment and sexual exploitation of children. NCMEC's national office is:

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
699 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(800) 843-5678  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

**2. Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" Program.** This is a nationwide identification registry program designed to assist law enforcement agencies with information to quickly identify and return those individuals who have wandered off. It offers a 24 hour hotline service, provides names, photographs, identifying characteristics and emergency contact information, and offers a Law Enforcement Officer's Pocket Response Guide that describes the best ways to recognize, communicate with and respond to a person with Alzheimer's. The Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" program may be contacted as indicated below:

Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" Program  
(800) 272-3900  
[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

**3. US Department of State, Child Custody Division.** This agency is the central authority for providing assistance regarding international parent/family abduction.

Bureau of Consular Affairs, US State Department  
(202) 736-7000

**4. US Department of State, Office of Passport Services.** Authorized to revoke passports of citizens who are subject to federal arrest warrants. This office can be reached by calling (202) 955-0307.



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

**5. US Postal Service.** Access to databases of the names of all individuals within the nation who filed “Change of Address” forms will provide law enforcement agencies with return address and postmark information on mail destined for a specific address. The U.S. Postal service can be reached by calling (202) 268-4267.

**6. US Department of Defense.** Information about current and past assignments of active duty members of the Armed Forces can be obtained by calling (800) 336-4592.

**7. US Office of Personnel Management.** Address information about retired members of Armed Forces or retired federal civil service employees Address information of where retiree’s federal pension payments are mailed can be obtained by calling (202) 606-2424.

**8. Fisher Scientific Catalog** (FTA Collection Cards and Sponges). Call

(800) 766-7000  
[www.fishersci.com](http://www.fishersci.com)

**9. MedTech Forensics Catalog** (FTA Collection Cards and Sponges). Call:

(800) 596-6420  
[www.medtechforensics.com](http://www.medtechforensics.com)

**10. National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA).** A division of Nation’s Missing Children Organization. It can be reached as follows:

4641 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
(800) 690-FIND  
[www.theyaremissd.org](http://www.theyaremissd.org)

**11. National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).** (This involves a DNA data base):

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs;



## Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Policy for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

810 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531,  
[www.questions@findthemissing.org](mailto:www.questions@findthemissing.org)