



Office Of The Sheriff
Allegany County
Maryland

GENERAL ORDER NO: **4-200.00**

TO: All Patrol and Judicial Personnel

RE: **MISSING PERSONS**

PURPOSE: To define and establish operating policy for Missing Persons investigations conducted by the Allegany County Sheriff's Office.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2004

REVISION DATE: 3/1/2016

4-201.00 Missing Children

- .01 The Family Law Article, Section 9-402, establishes mandated standards for all Law Enforcement agencies within the State of Maryland, to ensure prompt and thorough police action in response to reports of missing children. This Order defines departmental policy and procedures in accordance with Section 9-402.
- .02 Missing Child is defined as a person who is under the age of 18 years, the subject of a missing persons report, and whose whereabouts are unknown.
- .03 Initial Investigation: Upon receipt of a report of a missing child, a missing person's investigation shall be immediately opened. The initial investigation shall be conducted by uniformed patrol personnel. The initial investigating deputy will immediately determine if one or more of the following criteria exist:
 - A. The reported missing child has not been the subject of a prior missing persons report.
 - B. The missing child suffers from a mental or physical handicap or illness.
 - C. The disappearance of the missing child is of a suspicious or dangerous nature.

- D. The person filing the report of a missing child has reason to believe the missing child may have been abducted, (including non-custodial parental abduction).
- E. The missing child has ever previously been the subject of a child abuse report filed with a law enforcement agency.
- F. The missing child is under 14 years of age.

If any of the above factors exists, the child will be designated as CRITICALLY MISSING child.

.04 Critically Missing Children Cases: For Critically Missing children cases, the initial investigating deputy will:

- A. Complete a State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form.
- B. Complete a CIR for suspected abduction cases, (including non-custodial parental abduction).
- C. Institute intensive search procedures, which will include an Attempt to Locate broadcast to all area police agencies.
- D. Cause all available information pertaining to the missing child to be entered into NCIC via MILES prior to the submission of the State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form, for supervisory review.
- E. Obtain a recent photograph of the missing child. If possible, obtain several photographs of the child taken from different angles.
- F. Notify the Maryland Center for Missing Children (MCMC), by forwarding a copy of the State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form, to the Center by U. S. Mail. (The mandated notification of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and State Clearinghouse for Missing Children will be made by MCMC).
- G. Notify the local Department of Social Services to determine if the child/family has a history of abuse or neglect, and obtain any information that may assist in locating the missing child.

- H. Submit a completed Initial Report to the Patrol Division Duty Officer prior to the investigating deputy securing from duty. The Initial Report shall include:
 - 1. State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form and narrative.
 - 2. Photo(s) of the missing child.
 - 3. Copies of any NCIC entries.
 - 4. Any other written documentation pertaining to the case obtained during the initial phase of the investigation.
- .05 The Criminal Investigator or C3I Unit will be assigned the follow-up investigation of any Critically Missing Child case, upon receipt of the Initial Report from the responding deputy.
- .06 A CIU Investigator or C3I ' s Responsibilities for Critically Missing Children Cases
 - A. Ensure the initial investigation is handled properly.
 - B. Conduct immediate follow-up investigation in an attempt to locate the Missing Child.
 - C. Maintain a Missing Persons Working Case File in the Communications Center.
- .07 Non-Critically Missing Children Cases
 - A. If the reported missing child case does not meet the criteria of Critically Missing, the assigned initial investigating deputy will:
 - 1. Complete a State of Maryland A Missing Persons Report form.
 - 2. Institute intensive search procedures, which will include an Attempt to Locate broadcast to all area police agencies.

3. Obtain a recent photograph of the missing child. If possible, obtain several photographs of the child taken from different angles.
4. Submit a completed Initial Report to the Patrol Division Duty Officer prior to investigating deputy securing from duty. The Initial Report shall include:
 - a. State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form and narrative.
 - b. Photo(s) of the missing child.
 - c. Any other written documentation pertaining to the case obtained during the initial phase of the investigation.

.08 Patrol Division Duty Officer Responsibilities - Non-Critically Missing Children Cases

- A. Ensure the initial investigation is handled properly.
- B. Cause immediate follow-up investigation if the initial investigating patrol deputy ends his tour of duty and develops any investigative leads.
- C. Provide for follow-up contact with the complainant or reporting person no later than 12 hours after the filing of an Initial Report of a missing child to determine if the child has been located.
- D. Maintain a Missing Persons Working Case File, in the Communications Center.
- E. If the child has not been located within a 12 hour period, the Duty Officer will reclassify the case to Critically Missing and implement the additional procedures as directed for Critically Missing Child cases.

- .09 Twenty-four (24) Hour Time Period: If a missing child has not been located within 24 hours of the filing of a Missing Persons Report, and there is reason to believe the missing child may be located in a jurisdiction outside of Allegany County, it shall be the responsibility of the assigned Criminal Investigator to:
- A. Contact the appropriate police agency by telephone and teletype within the jurisdiction it is believed the missing child is located, and provide the necessary information with a request for assistance in the case. To satisfy legal mandate, a copy of the message will be sent to the Maryland Center for Missing Children (MCMC) and the Maryland State Police.
 - B. If the jurisdiction where the missing child may be located is outside Allegany County and within the State of Maryland, contact will be made with the appropriate police agency. The contact will be made by teletype containing the necessary information and request for assistance. A copy of the teletype will be sent to the Maryland Center for Missing Children (MCMC).
 - C. Maintain copies of the teletypes, and replies, for the case files, (Master and Working Files - See 4-205.00" and 4-206.00" of this Order).
- .10 Three Day Time Period-If a missing child has not been located within three (3) calendar days of the filing of a Missing Persons Report, it shall be the responsibility of the assigned Criminal Investigator to:
- A. Ensure a comprehensive news release is prepared.
 - B. Disseminate the news release to the media in accordance with existing departmental media relations directives.
 - C. Provide a photograph for publication to the local newspapers along with the news release.
 - D. Ensure a copy of the news release is placed in the missing person's case file.

- .11 Extended Missing Children Investigations: If a child has been missing for 30 calendar days after the filing of a missing persons report, it shall be the responsibility of a Criminal Investigator or C3I Unit to ensure:
 - A. A NCIC Missing Persons Packet is completed and forwarded to the Maryland Center for Missing Children (MCMC).
 - B. All additional information, including Dental Records, is entered into MILES/NCIC.
 - C. The investigation is continued, and the complainant is periodically contacted.
- .12 Missing Child Case Closure-Whenever a missing child has been located, it shall be the responsibility of either the Patrol Division Duty Officer or CIU Investigator to ensure:
 - A. The recovery of the missing child is confirmed.
 - B. The circumstances of return or nature of closure is ascertained and recorded. The circumstances shall include the condition of the child.
 - C. The missing child is immediately removed from MILES/NCIC following confirmation.
 - D. Arrange, whenever possible, a personal interview of the missing child. The interview should be conducted with the following considerations:
 - 1. Treat the child as a victim.
 - 2. Explore the possibility of physical or sexual abuse in the home.
 - 3. Attempt to learn what the child did to survive during the absence.

(Appropriate interview of the child can reveal other forms of exploitation or other criminal activity. Getting the child to talk may provide valuable intelligence, as well as leads to other cases.)
 - E. The Working Case File is completed and forwarded to the Records Section for inclusion with the Master Case File.

F. Notify the CIU Investigator assigned to the case that the child has been located.

1. Once the missing child has been interviewed and the interviewer is satisfied the child has provided enough information, and the child will not be endangered if allowed to remain or return home until the case can be closed.

.13 Non-Waiting Period/Non-Discouragement Action-Maryland Law prohibits a waiting period before an investigation to locate a missing child is initiated after receipt of the complaint. The same law prohibits discouragement of the filing of a report or the taking of any action on a report a child is believed to be missing.

4-202.00 Missing Adults

.01 Missing Adult is defined as a person who is 18 years of age or older, and the subject of a missing persons report, and whose whereabouts are unknown.

.02 Initial Investigation: Upon receipt of a report of a missing adult, a missing person's investigation shall promptly be opened. The initial investigation shall be conducted by uniformed patrol personnel. The investigating deputy will immediately determine if one or more of the following criteria exist:

- A. The missing adult suffers from a mental or physical handicap or illness.
- B. The disappearance of the missing adult is of a suspicious or dangerous nature.
- C. The person filing the report of a missing adult has reason to believe the missing adult may have been abducted.
- D. The missing adult is 70 years of age or older.

If **any** of the above factors exist, the adult will be designated as CRITICALLY MISSING.

- .03 Critically Missing Adult Cases: For Critically Missing Adult Cases, the assigned deputy will:
- A. Complete a State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form.
 - B. Complete a Criminal Investigation Report for suspected abduction cases.
 - C. Institute appropriate intensive search procedures, which will include an Attempt to Locate broadcast to all area police agencies.
 - D. Cause all available information pertaining to the missing adult to be entered into NCIC via MILES prior to the submission of the State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form for supervisory review.
 - E. Obtain a recent photograph of the missing adult. If possible, obtain several photographs of the adult taken from different angles.
 - F. Submit a completed initial report to the Patrol Division Duty Officer prior to the investigating deputy securing from duty. The initial report shall include:
 1. State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form and narrative.
 2. Photo(s) of the missing adult.
 3. Copies of any NCIC entries.
 4. Any other written documentation pertaining to the case obtained during the initial phase of the investigation.
- .04 The Criminal Investigator or C3I Unit shall immediately enter and supervise the investigation of a Critically Missing Adult case.
- .05 A Criminal Investigator or C3I Unit ' s Responsibilities for Critically Missing Adult Case.
- A. Ensure the initial investigation is handled properly.
 - B. Conduct immediate follow-up investigation on the case to locate the Missing Person.
 - C. Maintain a Missing Persons Working Case File, in the Communications Center.

- .06 Non-Critically Missing Adult Cases: If the reported missing adult case does not meet the criteria of Critically Missing, the assigned initial investigating deputy will:
- A. Complete a State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form.
 - B. Institute appropriate search procedures, which will include an Attempt to Locate broadcast to all area police agencies.
 - C. Obtain a recent photograph of the missing adult. If possible, obtain several photographs of the adult taken from different angles.
 - D. Submit a completed initial report to the Patrol Division Duty Officer prior to the investigating deputy securing from duty. The initial report shall include:
 - 1. State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form and narrative.
 - 2. Photo(s) of the missing adult.
 - 3. Any other written documentation pertaining to the case obtained during the initial phase of the investigation.
- .07 Patrol Division Duty Officer Responsibilities - Non-Critically Missing Adult Cases:
- A. Ensure the initial investigation is handled properly.
 - B. Cause immediate follow-up investigation, if the initial deputy ends his tour of duty and develops any investigative leads.
 - C. . Provide for follow-up contact with the complainant or reporting person no later than 24 hours after the filing of the initial report of a Missing Adult to determine if the adult has been located.
 - D. Maintain a Missing Person Working Case File in the Communications Center.
 - E. Maintain a Missing Persons Log in the Communications Center.
 - F. If the adult has not been located within a 24 hour time period, the Duty Officer will reclassify the case to Critically Missing and implement the additional procedures as directed for Critically Missing Adult cases.

- .08 Three (3) Day Time Period: If a missing adult has not been located with three (3) calendar days of the filing of a missing persons report, it shall be the responsibility of the Criminal Investigator or C3I Unit:
- A. Ensure a comprehensive news release is prepared.
 - B. Disseminate the news release to the media in accordance with existing departmental media relations directives.
 - C. Provide a photograph for publication to the local newspaper along with the news release.
 - D. Ensure a copy of the news release is placed in the missing person's case file.
- .09 Extended Missing Adult Investigations: If an adult has been missing for 30 calendar days after the filing of a Missing Persons Report, it shall be the responsibility of a Criminal Investigator or C3I Unit to ensure:
- A. A NCIC Missing Persons Packet is completed.
 - B. All additional information, including Dental Records, is entered into MILES/NCIC.
 - C. The investigation is continued, and the complainant is periodically contacted.
- .10 Missing Adult Case Closure: Whenever a missing adult has been located, it shall be the responsibility of either the Duty Officer or the assigned Criminal Investigator to ensure:
- A. The location of the missing adult is confirmed.
 - B. The location or nature of closure is ascertained and recorded. The report shall include the condition of the adult.
 - C. The missing adult is immediately removed from MILES/NCIC following confirmation.
 - D. The working case file is completed and forwarded to Central Records for inclusion with the Master Case File.

4-203.00 CIU Missing Persons Investigations

- .01 If the Criminal Investigation Unit is assigned a missing persons case due to criteria set forth by this Order, it shall be the CIU Supervisor's responsibility to ensure the Duty Officer's Working Case File is kept up to date.

4-204.00 Interaction with Other Law Enforcement Agencies

- .01 Assistance Request for Other Agencies: When a request for assistance pertaining to a Missing Persons case, child or adult, is received from another agency, it shall be the responsibility of the Duty Officer to ensure:
 - A. If the request is received by teletype, an immediate reply confirming receipt shall be sent to the originating agency with assurance of cooperation; and,
 - B. An immediate investigative response to the request is conducted; and,
 - C. A message is sent to the originating agency upon completion of the investigative response advising results.
 - D. The investigative response is recorded via CIR Assist Other P.D. (Or other agency) - Missing Person (Child) or (Adult).

4-205.00 Missing Persons Working Case File

- .01 A Missing Persons Working Case File shall be maintained by the Duty Officer. This will ensure:
 - A. Information concerning the investigation is constantly available and accessible.
 - B. Duplication of effort is eliminated if more than one deputy is assigned to follow-up on the case at different time periods.
 - C. The case is being properly handled.

- .02 The Missing Persons Working Case File shall consist of:
 - A. State of Maryland Missing Persons Report@ and narrative.
 - B. Copies of the rough supplement reports of follow-up investigation.
 - C. Copies of all teletypes, news releases, letters, posters, and any other written documentation available concerning the case.
- .03 The Missing Persons Working Case File shall be arranged in chronological order.
- .04 Upon closure of a Missing Persons Case, the Working Case File will be forwarded to Central Records for placement in the Master Case File. (See 4-206.00" of this Order)

4-206.00 Missing Persons Master Case File

- .01 A Missing Persons Master Case File shall be maintained by Central Records.
- .02 The Missing Persons Master Case File shall consist of:
 - A. Copy of the W.C.S.O. CAD Event.
 - B. Original copy of State of Maryland Missing Persons Report
 - C. Final (typed) originals of the Initial Report filed with the State of Maryland Missing Persons Report.
 - D. Final (typed) originals of all follow-up reports of investigation.
 - E. Original copies of all teletypes, news releases, letters, posters, and any other written documentation available concerning the case.
 - F. The Working Case File upon case closure.

4-207.00 Additional Investigative Procedures

- .01 The only exception to changing time periods mandated by this Order are to shorten the periods between investigative steps.

- .02 A copy of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Investigator 's Guide to Missing Child Cases, is provided as an investigative guide.
 - .03 The identities, name, address, etc., of all persons interviewed and the information they provide, helpful or not, will be recorded in the report during a Missing Persons investigation. Occasionally, false or misleading information is given to authorities for a variety of reasons during missing person investigations, and it may be necessary to re-interview persons previously contacted.
 - .04 In order to reduce the possibility of incorrect information being disseminated through the NCIC Computer from a report of a Missing Person or a Runaway, the Missing Person Documentation Form will be used in conjunction with the State of Maryland Missing Persons Report form.
 - A. The Missing Person Documentation Form will be given to the complainant, along with an explanation as to the purpose of the form as follows:
 - 1. By having the complainant fill out the Missing Person Documentation Form, (a relative or guardian), descriptive information on the missing person is enhanced thereby decreasing the chances that someone, (other than the missing person), might be detained through incorrect identifying traits.
 - 2. By having the complainant complete the Missing Person Documentation Form, they are agreeing to notify the Department of the return of the person(s) missing or runaway as required by Article 27, Section 9-402 (f). Timely notifications of returns of missing subjects decreases the chances of their being detained after returning, due to still being carried in NCIC as missing or runaway.
- Reporting Deputy will ensure that the Missing Person Documentation Form@ is completed accurately and in its entirety before conclusion of interview with complainant.
- .05 A report of a missing person, due to a domestic circumstance, can be accepted. In these instances, the code to be utilized on the Missing Person Documentation Form in the Missing Person category caption will be D.

By Order Of:

Craig A. Robertson, Sheriff