



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



533.02

MISSING PERSONS CASES-REPORTING/INVESTIGATING

09-30-2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for receiving and investigating reports of missing persons.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) to accept, review, and investigate reports of missing persons. This order was developed using the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) "Guidelines for Handling Missing Persons Investigations" in compliance with Penal Code § 13519.07 PC.

PROCEDURE

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **MISSING PERSON (MP)** – Any person who is reported missing to a law enforcement agency until the person is located or the person is determined to be a voluntary missing adult.
 - a. Penal Code §14215(a) defines the term "missing person" as including, but not limited to:
 - (1) An "at-risk" adult.
 - (2) A child (under 18 years of age) who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent in violation of Penal Code §§ 277-280 related to child abduction.
 - (3) A child under 18 years of age who is missing voluntarily or involuntarily, or under circumstances not conforming to his or her habits or behavior, and who may need assistance.
2. **REPORTING PARTY (RP)** – A reporting party may be:
 - a. A parent.
 - b. A guardian.
 - c. A roommate.
 - d. A spouse.
 - e. An employer.
 - f. A traveling companion.
 - g. Any person who should reasonably know the MP's whereabouts.
3. **AT-RISK MISSING PERSON** – Penal Code § 14215(b) and SPD policy define "at-risk" as those who fall into any one of the following categories:
 - a. Persons who are victims of a crime or foul play.
 - b. Persons who need medical attention.
 - c. Persons having no pattern of running away or disappearing.
 - d. Persons who may be the victim of parental abduction.
 - e. Persons who are mentally impaired, including cognitively impaired or developmentally disabled.
 - f. SPD policy also requires that any child 0-15 who is reported missing be treated as "at-risk".
4. **HIGH-RISK MISSING PERSON** – Penal Code § 14250 (a)(4) PC defines a "High-Risk" MP as a person missing as a result of a stranger abduction, a person missing under suspicious circumstances, a person missing under unknown circumstances, or where there is reason to assume that the person is in danger or deceased; and that person has been missing more than 30 days, or less than 30 days in the discretion of the investigating agency.
5. **NATIONAL CRIME INFORMATION CENTER (NCIC) REPORT TYPE**

NOTE: MPs under 21 or those who are "at-risk" must be entered into NCIC within two (2) hours of being reported as missing per Penal Code § 14211(e).

 - a. **VOLUNTARY MISSING** – Adults reported missing who have left of their own free will.
 - b. **DEPENDENT ADULT** – Adults reported missing who have physical or mental limitations that restrict their ability to carry out normal activities.
 - c. **PARENT/ FAMILY ABDUCTION** – Minors who are taken, detained, concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent or non-parent family member (Penal Code §§ 277, 278, 278.5, 278.7).
 - d. **RUNAWAY** – Minors who have left of their own free will or have been rejected/abandoned by their



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



families.

- e. CATASTROPHIC MISSING – Persons who are assumed to be victims of some type of disaster (e.g., flood, earthquake, fire, etc.).
- f. LOST- Persons who have strayed away and whose whereabouts are unknown.
- g. STRANGER ABDUCTION – Persons taken against their will by an unknown person or known person who is not a family member.
- h. SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES – Circumstances which give rise to the belief that foul play may be involved, the person is a danger to self or others (due to mental, physical, or emotional condition), or the disappearance is out of character for the individual and no known reasons can be determined.
- i. UNKNOWN MISSING – Insufficient facts to determine the circumstances.

B. GENERAL

- 1. SPD employees shall, without delay, accept any report, by any party, including any telephonic report, of an MP, including runaways, and shall prioritize these reports over reports relating to crimes involving property in accordance with Penal Code §14211(a).
- 2. In cases of reports involving MPs, including, but not limited to, runaways, SPD employees shall immediately take the report and assess reasonable steps to be taken to locate the person.
- 3. If the MP is not a resident of Sacramento, a copy of the MP report shall, without delay, or, in the case of persons under 21 years of age or if there is evidence that the MP is at-risk, within no more than 24 hours, be forwarded to the police or sheriff's department or departments having jurisdiction of the residence address of the MP or runaway and of the place where the person was last seen.
- 4. All MP reports shall be taken by using a report form that includes the reporting criteria contained in the Attorney General's Missing Person Report (CJIS 8568) and include a statement authorizing the release of dental or skeletal X-rays, or both, and treatment notes of the person reported missing, and authorizing the release of a recent photograph of a person reported missing who is under 18 years of age in accordance with Penal Code § 14212 PC.
- 5. The SPD employee completing an MP report shall provide the reporting party, in person or by mail, a Department of Justice (DOJ) form (BCIA 4048) authorizing the release of dental or skeletal X-rays or both, and photograph(s), including instructions to the reporting party on when to obtain these and submit them to the investigating agency.
- 6. ALL MP reports shall be entered into the Missing Unidentified Persons System (MUPS).
 - a. A File Control Number (FCN) shall be obtained and documented in the Versadex Reporting System. If a vehicle is associated with the MP, the vehicle shall be entered into the Stolen Vehicle System (SVS) as a vehicle associated with an MP.
 - b. If the MP is under 18 years of age and is determined to be with a known adult, such as in a parental abduction case, the adult shall also be entered into MUPS and a separate FCN for the adult obtained and documented in Versadex.
 - c. For MPs under the age of 21, or where there is evidence that the MP is at-risk, the Records Division shall enter MP information into MUPS within two hours of the MP being reported as missing.
 - d. If an MP is located prior to their information being entered into MUPS but after a report number is obtained, an MP report must still be made into the MUPS systems and submitted to DOJ, in accordance with Penal Code § 14213(c).
 - e. If an MP is located after they have been entered into MUPS and an FCN is received, employees shall complete the MP report and cancel the MP FCN.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Communications Division:
 - a. Upon receiving notification of an MP, the Communications Division shall determine the age and status of the MP (e.g., at-risk, or not).
 - b. If the MP is identified as under 21 years of age or "at-risk," the Communications Division shall, without delay:
 - (1) Enter a 972 incident for Records Report Writers (RRW) to complete the MP report.
 - (2) Generate a 972 incident for dispatch, using the FUP command.
 - (3) Change the priority from a 7 to 3 and change the queue from a T to R.



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



- (4) Make an all units broadcast and dispatch officers without delay.
 - (5) If RRWs are unavailable to complete the MP report, generate a 972 incident for officers to be dispatched. NOTE: When dispatched to a 972 call, officers shall take the MP report and contact the Records Division to complete the MUPS entry within two hours of the MP being reported as missing.
 - (6) Notify the district sergeant of the details of the incident, including if the MP has been reported missing in the past.
 - c. If the MP is determined not to be at-risk, the Communications Division shall:
 - (1) Enter a 972R incident for RRWs or a call expeditor to take the MP report.
 - (2) Dispatch a unit to take the report when a call expeditor or an RRW is unavailable.
 - d. Communications Division personnel shall ensure that an MP clear-up is generated when notified of an MP's return by transferring callers to the Records Division Vehicle Update (VU) desk. During hours that the Records Division is unavailable, Communications personnel shall enter a 972R that will advise the Records Division of the circumstances of the MP locate.
2. Records Division:
- a. RRWs shall complete MP reports when:
 - (1) A unit is not required to respond.
 - (2) Notified via fax by the Children's Receiving Home, Sacramento Children's Home, Child Protective Services, or any other reporting agency.
 - (3) MP reports are referred by the Communications Division.
 - b. If the RRWs determine there is a need for an immediate police response (e.g., cases of violence, abductions, at-risk MPs, etc.), the RRWs shall notify the Communications Division.
 - c. If after starting an MP report, it is determined that the MP is at-risk, the RRWs shall:
 - (1) Generate a Versadex general offense report with any related entities.
 - (2) Enter the MP into MUPS.
 - (3) Contact the following facilities by phone to inquire about the MP. Inquiries should be made using the MP's name, and by using the MP's physical description, to determine if any unidentified patients ("John or Jane Doe") matching the MP's description are present.
 - (a) Sacramento County Mental Health Center (SCMHC).
 - (b) Sutter Center for Psychiatry.
 - (c) University of California at Davis Medical Center (UCDMC).
 - (d) Mercy General Hospital.
 - (e) Mercy San Juan Medical Center.
 - (f) Sutter Medical Center.
 - (g) Kaiser North Medical Center.
 - (h) Kaiser South Medical Center.
 - (i) Methodist Hospital.
 - (j) Sierra Vista Hospital.
 - (k) Heritage Oaks Hospital.
 - (l) Sacramento County Jail.
 - (m) Sacramento County Youth Detention Facility
 - (n) Children's Receiving Home (if applicable)
 - (o) Sacramento County Coroner's Office
 - i. Calls to the coroner's office shall be made, including cases of "chronic runaways".
 - (4) Request the Communications Division dispatch a unit to conduct an investigation.
 - d. When there is a doubt whether the circumstances warrant taking a report, the RRWs shall notify their immediate supervisor, who shall consult with the district sergeant.
 - e. RRWs shall identify the vehicles associated with an MP and enter the vehicles into MUPS and SVS. When the MP is at-risk or under 21, employees shall make these entries within two hours or receiving the notice from the responding officer.
 - f. When a report of a located MP is received, the RRWs shall:
 - (1) Advise the district sergeant who shall determine, based on the circumstances, if it is necessary to send a unit to confirm that the MP has been located.
 - (2) Clear all MUPS and SVS entries for MPs with vehicles.



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



- (3) Send a locate notification via teletype if the located MP is from an outside jurisdiction.
- g. Digital photographs of MPs can be forwarded to the Office of Investigations (OOI) Missing Persons Unit (MPU) via email to missingpersons@pd.cityofsacramento.org. If a photo is unavailable at the time of report, the email address can be provided to the RP to provide a photo when available.
- h. In cases where the MP is at-risk, employees shall (within 24) hours notify and forward a copy of the MP report to the agency having jurisdiction over the MP's place of residence and the agency having jurisdiction where the MP was last seen.
- i. When an MP is located, the jurisdiction in which the MP was located shall complete a clear up report and locate notification.
- j. Personnel working the VU desk shall send a locate notification to the outside agency via teletype.
- 3. Office of Operations (OOO) – At-risk MPs:
 - a. Officers dispatched to an MP call shall:
 - (1) Respond to the scene and contact the RP.
 - (2) Obtain a description of the MP and circumstances surrounding the disappearance.
 - (3) With consent, conduct an initial search of the MP's residence. If the MP is not located after the initial search, broadcast a description of the MP, and notify the district sergeant.
NOTE: If the RP is not the child's parents or legal guardian, immediately attempt to contact the child's parents or legal guardian and advise them of the situation.
 - (4) Contact friends or relatives with whom the MP was last seen.
 - (5) Contact the Records Section VU desk to ensure the appropriate MUPS and SVS entries are made within two hours of the MP being reported missing.
 - (6) If the Records Division is unavailable, call all sources listed in this order in an effort to locate the MP.
 - (7) Complete all observations and supplements and update the status page of the MP report with any additional witness information.
 - (8) If available, obtain photographs of the MP and upload into evidence.com with the report number attached.
 - (9) Forward available photographs of the MP to the MPU with the report number attached.
 - b. Officers clearing an MP call shall:
 - (1) Call VU desk to cancel the MUPS entry when notified of an MP's return.
 - (2) Complete a supplemental report if necessary to document the circumstances of the MP's return.
 - c. Officers clearing an outside agency MP shall:
 - (1) Complete an incident/information Report via Versadex.
 - (2) Notify the VU desk.
 - d. When a vehicle associated with an MP is located, officers shall:
 - (1) Take appropriate investigative follow-up action based on the circumstances of the MP report and the condition of the vehicle.
 - (2) Ensure that the Records Division immediately removes the vehicle information from MUPS and SVS.
 - (3) Complete a supplement noting the circumstances under which the vehicle was located.
 - e. When available, an expeditor shall complete MP reports. Expeditors shall:
 - (1) Notify the Communications Division if a unit is needed to respond.
 - (2) Complete the initial report.
 - (3) Notify the Records Division to make appropriate computer entries and verify that all appropriate phone calls were made.
 - f. The district sergeant shall:
 - (1) Monitor the investigation and direct the operation as necessary.
 - (2) Notify the watch commander of at-risk MPs.
 - (3) Ensure that all follow-up phone calls were made.
 - (4) In cases of chronic runaways, contacts to the medical facilities shall be made at the discretion of the sergeant.
 - g. The investigation shall not be terminated until the approved by the district sergeant, after they have received and considered all the pertinent facts.



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



- h. Additional Resources:
 - (1) Based on the circumstances surrounding the disappearance, the district sergeant (with watch commander approval) may consider the using following additional resources:
 - (a) SPD Air Unit.
 - (b) SPD Canine.
 - (c) SPD Community Emergency Notification System activation in accordance with General Order 510.03 (Public Alerts and Warnings).
 - (d) Media release: The SPD PIO has the ability to send out press releases to numerous news stations and has contacts for local news channels.
 - (e) Supervisors may consider setting up a command post if the search requires large numbers of personnel.
 - (f) Outside Agency Resources:
 - i. All requests for resources from outside agencies shall be made with approval from the watch commander.
 - ii. Air Operations of SSD or CHP.
 - iii. SSO dispatch:
 - [1]. SSO Search and Rescue, tracking dogs.
 - [2]. Drowning Accidents Rescue Dart Team (D.A.R.T) – Search, Rescue, and Recovery.
 - i. Emergency Alert System Broadcast
 - (1) EAS is a public warning system used to deliver emergency information to the public. EAS use shall be in accordance with General Order 510.03 Public Alerts and Warnings.
 - (2) Prior to requesting any type of EAS Alert the watch commander or designee shall confer with the OOI Major Crimes Division Lieutenant.
 - j. After all field leads have been investigated, the watch commander or designee should contact OOI and request their involvement.
 - k. The responding OOI supervisor or designee shall be fully briefed by the watch commander or designee prior to taking over the investigation.
 - l. The OOI shall take primary responsibility for the investigation.
 - m. Patrol officers shall continue to assist with the investigation as requested.
- 4. OOI MPU Investigation:
 - a. An MPU detective shall review all cases as soon as possible and provide assistance to OOO when necessary.
 - b. MPU detectives is responsible for conducting conduct follow-up investigations and shall:
 - (1) Produce and distribute information bulletins on at-risk MPs and coordinate with DOJ to produce and distribute MP flyers when necessary.
 - (2) Send be-on-the-look-out (BOLO) teletypes when necessary.
 - (3) If necessary, request DOJ construct a missing child poster for statewide transmission to law enforcement agencies and media outlets through the DOJ Missing and Exploited Children's Recovery Network containing the information specified in Penal Code § 14206(b).
 - (4) Notify the parents or other appropriate relatives of a high-risk MP within 30 days of the initial report that they have the right to provide a voluntary DNA sample or collect a DNA sample from a personal article belonging to the MP.
 - (a) If the MP is still missing after 30 days, collect DNA samples if requested and submit to the DOJ.
 - (5) Execute a written declaration, stating that an active investigation seeking the location of the MP is being conducted, and that the dental or skeletal X-rays, or both, and treatment notes, are necessary for the purpose of furthering the investigation, if the MP is determined be an at-risk person, and has not been found within 30 days, and the X-rays or treatment notes have not been released by a family member or next of kin.
 - (6) Send dental and skeletal records when available to DOJ as required by Penal Code §14212.
 - (7) In the case of a missing child under the age of 18, notify the MP's school, in writing, of the child's disappearance with 10 days per Education Code § 49068.6.
 - (8) Clear all MUPS and SVS entries within 24 hours for located at-risk MPs or within 72 hours for located MPs not at-risk.



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



NOTE: At-risk MUPS AND SVS entries may also be cleared by the Records Division.

- c. If a reported MP is determined to have legal residence outside the City of Sacramento, the MPU shall:
 - (1) Send a notification letter to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in that location.
 - (2) Make a follow-up phone call to ensure that the proper agency has been advised of the MP.
 - (3) Complete a supplement to the original report identifying the employee of the outside agency who was notified.
- d. Upon receiving the locate notification from the agency with jurisdiction, an SPD employee shall attach it to the SPD MP report via Versadex.
5. The MPU shall review all supplemental investigation reports and ensure the appropriate cancellations have been made in MUPS and SVS.

D. ASSIGNING MISSING REPORTS

1. MPU detectives shall ensure that the MPU sergeant is notified when any of the following circumstances are present:
 - a. The MP is at at-risk or 0-15 years of age.
 - b. The MP is the victim of a crime or suspected foul play.
 - c. The MP needs medical attention for a condition that may be life threatening.
 - d. The MP is mentally impaired and unable to care for themselves or may pose a threat to themselves or others.
 - e. The MP has no pattern of running away coupled with questionable circumstances.
 - f. The MP is a victim of parental or family abduction. MPs who are victims of parental or family abduction may be referred to the Sacramento County District Attorney's Parental Abduction Unit.
 - g. When assistance is requested by a patrol supervisor or other investigative units.