



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

TITLE: REPORTS OF MISSING AND ENDANGERED INDIVIDUALS	GENERAL ORDER NUMBER: 607
REFERENCES: M.S. § 299C.52, AMBER Plan	EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/01/2016
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It shall be the policy of the Columbia Heights Police Department to take every precaution available to protect the lives of children within the City of Columbia Heights from becoming victims of either abduction or exploitation.

The Columbia Heights Police Department recognizes that there is a critical need for immediate and consistent response to reports of missing and endangered children. This General Order establishes responsibilities and guidelines for the investigation of missing and endangered children. All officers shall be informed of, and comply with this directive.

607:1 Definitions

Child

"Child" means any person under the age of 18 years or any person certified or known to be mentally incompetent (M.S. § 299C.52 (a)).

Missing Child

"Missing" means the status of a child after a law enforcement agency that has received a report of a missing child has conducted a preliminary investigation and determined that the child cannot be located (Minnesota Statutes § 299C.52 (c)).

Endangered

"Endangered" means that a law enforcement official has received sufficient evidence that the child is with a person who presents a threat of immediate physical injury to the child or physical or sexual abuse of the child (M.S. § 299C.52 (e)).

Sufficient Evidence

Articulate facts and circumstances that would induce a reasonably prudent peace officer to believe that a crime has been, or is about to be committed.

NCIC

"NCIC" means National Crime Information Center (M.S. § 299C.52 (d)).

CJIS

"CJIS" means Minnesota criminal justice information system (M.S. § 299C.52 (b)).

AMBER Plan (<http://www.missingkids.com>)

America's missing: Broadcast Emergency Response is a voluntary partnership between law-enforcement agencies and broadcasters to send out an emergency alert to the public when a child has been abducted, and it is believed that the child's life is in grave danger.

A Child Is Missing Alert Program

A program which offers additional tools to law enforcement in situations where there is a missing, endangered or disabled person who needs to be located.

607:2 Guidelines

607:21 Initial Response

After an employee of the Department receives a report of a missing child and a determination has been made that the missing child is endangered, the Department shall respond accordingly. The facts surrounding each missing and endangered child report shall dictate what investigative actions will occur.

607:211

The responding officer shall determine the facts as quickly as possible, and assess whether immediate action is necessary. The investigating officer shall initiate actions as follows, utilizing those techniques that are appropriate:

607:2111

Interview parents/complainants, conducting interviews separately whenever possible, determine custody status, and get accurate identifying information on the child, including clothing and physical description.

607:2112

If possible, interview the individuals who last had contact with the child.

607:2113

Obtain a description of vehicle(s) involved, if known.

607:2114

Send appropriate broadcasts via Dispatch to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

607:2115

Treat as crime scene, including:

- Seal/protect scene and area of child's home, including child's personal articles, so that evidence is not destroyed during or after the initial search;

- Ensure that everyone at the scene is identified, and does not leave until interviewed; and
- Note and attempt to identify anyone who may have left just prior to the incident, or upon the arrival of law enforcement.

607:2116

Request a supervisor to the scene if available. The supervisor, if available, shall determine level of response required. If appropriate the supervisor shall:

- Request a CHPD or CID detective to the scene;
- Contact appropriate command staff; and
- Set up a command post where appropriate.

607:2117

Contact the dispatch center, and direct them to enter information in NCIC Missing Person Hot File -- involuntary category. Provide for entry, complete descriptive and critical information regarding the missing/endangered child.

607:2118

If a suspect is known, provide complete descriptive information to the dispatch center, and direct them to enter suspect information into the NCIC system.

607:2119

Obtain names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's friends, associates, and relatives.

607:2120

Factors to consider when determining level of response are:

- Victim's age;
- Location of incident (residential, wooded, shopping mall, etc.);
- Time of day; and

- Information received from parents or family.

607:2121

Unusual circumstances to consider in assessment:

- If child is under 13 years of age;
- If child is out of safety zone for age;
- If child mentally or physically challenged;
- If child drug or medically dependent;
- If child potential victim of foul play;
- If report of child's absence delayed;
- If child believed to be with an adult that could endanger his/her health/welfare; and
- If child's absence a significant deviation from established patterns/behavior.

607.2122 A Child is Missing Alert Program

As a part of the response to a missing child, and/or endangered/missing vulnerable adult, the police officer or investigator should consider the A Child is Missing Alert program as an additional tool. The criteria set forth for the A Child is Missing Alert Program shall be followed and require authorization from a Sergeant, the Captain or Chief.

607.2123 A Child is Missing Criteria

Tel: 954-763-1288

Pager: 954-492-4778

Toll Free: 1-888-875-2246

Call with:

- Name and description of missing person
- Location last seen and search area
- Time and Date last seen
- A number for the public to call and report sightings

607:22 Initial Investigation

Where appropriate, the initial investigation shall include:

- An area/neighborhood canvas;
- Activation of protocols for working with the media; and
- Updating additional responding personnel, and coordinating efforts.

607:23 Investigation

607:231 Command Post/Operation Base

The purpose of the command post/operation base is to provide a point for critical investigative decisions and procedures, liaison between other investigative agencies, and coordination of media contacts and releases. Suggested staffing of the command post/operation base includes:

- Command post supervisor;
- Public information officer;
- Search coordinator;
- Investigative coordinator; and
- Liaison officer assigned to family.

607:232

The Criminal investigative Division will be responsible for the investigation and a CHPD detective will be assigned as a liaison.

607:2321

The detective supervisor shall assign and direct the necessary number of trained investigators and crime lab personnel.

607:2322

The Chief, Captain and/or scene supervisor shall work with CID investigative personnel to determine if outside help is necessary, and utilize local and state resources.

607:2323

The Criminal Investigative Division shall determine when it is appropriate to contact the National Center for

Missing and Exploited Children for photo dissemination.

607:2324

The Chief, Captain, scene supervisor or CID are all authorized to make direct contact with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension regarding the incident, in accordance with M.S. § 229C.52, Subdivision 1.

607:233

The CHPD and/or CID shall take the following actions where appropriate for the investigation:

- Obtain consent and/or search warrant(s) to search the home/building associated with the incident and all surrounding areas;
- Establish the ability to "trap and trace" all incoming calls to appropriate phone lines;
- Compile a list of known sex offenders in the region;
- Obtain child protection records for reports of maltreatment on the child or siblings;
- Review records for previous incidents related to missing child, and prior police activity;
- Obtain the child's medical and dental records;
- Conduct all interviews of family members, neighbors, known associates, witnesses, potential suspects, and persons who have any direct knowledge of the incident;
- Establish a time-line, and other visual exhibits;
- Make use of any investigative resources, including polygraph, profiling/behavioral analysis, Minnesota Sex Crimes Analysis Program (MNSCAP), forensic artistry, etc.;
- Coordinate and conduct neighborhood or area investigation or canvas;
- Review, prioritize, and follow up on leads; and

- Update and disseminate case information to appropriate sources as needed.

607:24 Prolonged Investigations

Actions to be considered during prolonged investigations include:

- Reread all reports and transcripts of interviews, and reexamine all collected evidence;
- Review all potential witness and suspect information obtained in the initial investigation, as well as secondary lead information;
- Critique results of the ongoing investigation;
- Update NCIC Missing Person file as necessary;
- Utilize Crime Stopper programs and rewards;
- Maintain contact and rapport with family; and
- Downsize command post/base of operation.

607:25 Recovery and Case Closure

Actions to be taken or considered during recovery and case closure include;

- Arrange for a comprehensive physical examination of the child;
- Conduct a forensic interview of the child following established protocol;
- Remove case from NCIC and other information systems;
- Refer family to support sources and/or victim services, and
- Conduct post-case critique to re-assess procedures, and update any Department policies and procedures as needed.

607:3 AMBER Plan

607:31 AMBER Plan

The AMBER Plan is only activated by law enforcement, and is only used for serious child abduction cases as described in section 607:33 of this General Order.

607:32 Information to be Gathered

All missing child information is gathered by Dispatch, and provided to the patrol division. This information shall include:

- Name, age, and physical description of the child;
- Description of the child’s clothing;
- Location and time the child was last seen;
- Description of possible suspects and vehicle(s) involved in the abduction;

607:321

Patrol consults the shift supervisor and the Captain or Chief to determine if the situation fits the criteria for an Amber alert.

607:33 AMBER Criteria

The AMBER Plan should not be used for runaways, or most custody dispute/parental abduction cases, unless the circumstance is life threatening to the child. To activate an Amber Alert, the following criteria must be met:

- The child should be 15 years of age or younger, or have a proven mental or physical disability;
- Law enforcement must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death;
- Law enforcement confirms the child has been abducted; and
- There must be enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and suspect’s vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help;

607:331

Although each case has its own set of circumstances, law enforcement must follow the abduction criteria as closely as possible. It is important for law enforcement agencies to clearly understand the criteria, and not feel pressured from the community to trigger an alert. A plan that continues to be activated in an environment of being “better safe than sorry” can erode public and law-enforcement confidence in the system.

607:34 Notification to BCA

If it is determined that the situation meets with AMBER Plan Criteria, the Chief, Captain, scene supervisor, or assigned CID detective shall notify the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) to authorize an AMBER alert. The BCA will require the following information:

- Name, age, and physical description of the child;
- Description of the child’s clothing;
- Location and time the child was last seen;
- Description of the vehicle involved in the abduction;
- Description of possible suspects;
- Last known direction of travel, and possible destination;
- The investigating law enforcement agency and telephone number the public should call if they have information about the case;
- Name and telephone number of the contact person for the media; and
- A recent photograph of the abducted child from the family.

607:4 Accepting Reports of Missing Persons

As required by Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 299C.53, Subd. 1(a), Law Enforcement shall accept, without delay, any report of a missing person. Law enforcement shall not refuse to accept a missing person report on the basis that:

- (a) The missing person is an adult;
- (b) the circumstances to not indicate foul play;
- (c) the person has been missing for a short period of time
- (d) the person has been missing for a long amount of time;
- (e) there is no indicating that the missing person was in the jurisdiction served by the law enforcement agency at the time of the disappearance;

- (f) the circumstances suggest that the disappearance may be voluntary;
- (g) the reporting person does not have personal knowledge of the facts;
- (h) the reporting person cannot provide all of the information requested by the law enforcement agency;
- (i) the reporting person lacks a familial or other relationship with the missing person, or
- (j) for any other reason, except in cases where the law enforcement agency has direct knowledge that the person is, in fact, not missing and the whereabouts and welfare of the person are known at the time the report is filed.

BY ORDER OF:
Scott Nadeau, Chief of Police

Immediate entry: Within two hours.
The two hour clock will start when the minimum information for entry is received.