

# Truro Police Department

## MISSING PERSONS

*Policy Number: OPS-6.03*

*Effective*

*Date: April 14, 2008*

*Revision Date:*

*REFERENCE: Amber Alerts*

*Accreditation Standards: 41.2.6*

*Mass. Gen. Law: Chap. 22A, Sec. 4 & 5 & 6 & 9, Chap. 119, Sec. 51A, Chap. 265, Sec. 26A, & Chap. 38, Sec. 6*

*Other:*

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### **BACKGROUND**

A missing person is someone who is absent with no apparent reason or under circumstances that may indicate involuntary disappearance. Missing persons are not fugitives and may have voluntarily left home for personal reasons. Department members should be aware that the person making the report might be reluctant to relate those personal reasons to the police. Despite the fact that many of these reports are unfounded, the Department cannot ignore them and must respond to all missing persons complaints.

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Truro Police Department to ensure that reports of missing persons are promptly recorded, assessed and investigated. Department members involved in the investigation of a missing person age 18 or over shall follow the procedures described in this policy. Cases regarding the investigation of missing children (age 17 or younger) shall be subject to the provisions of *Policy and Procedure "Missing & Abducted Children"*.

#### **A. TELEPHONE CONTACTS**

When a complaint of a missing person is received at Communications via telephone, the receiving person shall:

- In cases where the reporting party is located within the Town, Communications a police unit to meet the reporting party, or
- In cases where the reporting party is outside the Town and cannot come to the station, take a missing person report over the telephone.

**B. PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS**

Officers assigned to perform the initial investigation of a missing person shall perform the following activities:

- 1 Obtain the following information from the reporting party:
  - The name and address of the person making the report and his/her relationship with the missing person
  - A description of the missing person, including the name, age, sex, physical description, and description of clothing
  - The time and place where the person was last seen, the names and relationships of anyone who may be with the person, and any likely destination
  - The extent of any search already performed by the caller or other parties, including a list of friends, co-workers, and associates who have been contacted, and a list of any who have not been reached
  - Details regarding any known mental, emotional or physical impairment of the missing person, and whether he/she requires any medications; if medications are required, the type, frequency, and last administration, if known
  - Whether the person has been reported missing on previous occasions
  - Other information that may be useful in locating the person (for example, particular habits or personal interests, places frequented, location of out-of-town relatives or friends, etc.) and determining whether the person is a potential victim of foul play
  - Whether the person is drug dependent (prescribed medication or illegal substances), and
  - The reason for any delay in reporting the person missing.
- 2 Complete a *Missing Person Report form*
- 3 Provide Communications with the information necessary for the recognition and identification of the missing person, and ensure that it is broadcast to on duty personnel.
- 4 Obtain a photograph of the missing person, if possible.
- 5 Communicate any needed information to Communications personnel for entry into the LEAPS/CJIS computer system. Communications personnel shall enter such information promptly, record the NCIC, LEAPS, and OCA numbers, and shall contact the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office communications center to request a GBC to area agencies.
- 6 Determine if the aid of outside agencies or special equipment will be helpful; requests for these services shall only be made after consultation with the Officer in Charge
- 7 Complete an incident report.

**C. INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES**

Any missing person case that is not resolved by the end of the assigned officer's tour of duty shall be forwarded to the Investigator.

The investigator will conduct appropriate follow-up activities and shall file progress reports on the status of the investigation with the Lieutenant at least every 30 days for as long as the case remains open.

**D. FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES**

The Investigator will perform the following procedures:

- 1 Thoroughly interview the reporting party to verify information already available and obtain further facts that may be helpful.
- 2 Obtain a photograph of the missing person, if one has not been previously obtained. Such photographs and an accompanying description should be posted in the station and disseminated to all officers.
- 3 When applicable, attempt to locate and/or perform searches for the missing person in appropriate locations.
- 4 Request from a family member or next of kin (regardless of age of the missing person):
  - Written authorization for the release of medical and dental records as well as a copy of such records, and
  - A copy of the missing person's fingerprints, if available.
- 5 Review Department records for any further information about the missing person.
- 6 Consider notification to the general public through the news media. Any decision to release information to the media shall be made only after consultation with the family of the missing person and with the approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.
- 7 Maintain contact with the family members and/or the reporting party, reporting any new developments in the case as soon as practical and making at least weekly contact.
- 8 Complete any required follow-up reports. The investigating officer shall file an initial follow-up report within 10 days of the filing of the missing person report.

**E. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

If a missing person is considered to be “at risk” due to such factors as his/her medical condition, mental impairment, or suicidal thoughts, or the person is considered “critically missing” due to possible abduction or indications of violence or criminal activity related to the disappearance, additional steps shall be taken to attempt to locate him/her.

The Officer in Charge shall respond to all “at risk” and “critically missing” incidents, and will request that the Investigator be assigned to assist in the investigation.

Other actions may include the use of additional resources, including Canine Units, to conduct searches, and requests for assistance from outside agencies such as the FBI to aid in the investigation.

**F. ALZHEIMER’S PATIENTS**

When a person with Alzheimer’s is reported missing, an investigation shall be initiated immediately. A search of potential locations where the person may be found will occur under the direction of the Officer in Charge. Patrol officers shall periodically recheck the area where the person was last seen.

The investigating officer shall telephone *Safe Return* (1-800-572-1122), a national Alzheimer registry, to report the disappearance. The investigating officer shall notify *Safe Return* when the person is located.

**G. LOCATING PERSONS IN OUR JURISDICTION**

Whenever a missing person is located within our jurisdiction, officers shall ensure that appropriate medical attention is provided to the person.

The Shift Commander shall ensure:

- All agencies notified of the situation or involved in the recovery effort are advised that the person has been located
- Removal of the information from data bases which had been previously contacted, and
- Reporting party is notified, bearing in mind the missing person's right to privacy.

The Shift Commander shall cause for the removal of information from NCIC and shall cause a Department-wide message advising of the location of the person.

Officers locating a missing person shall complete a supplemental report (under the original incident number) detailing the circumstances surrounding the finding of the person. Any difficulties encountered (for example, reluctance or refusal to return home) should be noted, as this may signal neglect or abuse in the family. Any other appropriate follow-up action, including the filing of criminal charges, should be taken.

If a missing person is reported via phone to have been located or returned home, an officer assigned to Communications shall complete a supplemental report (under the original incident number) detailing the circumstances surrounding the finding of the person.

If a missing person is found dead, the procedures outlined in applicable statutes and Departmental *Policy and Procedure "Sudden Deaths"*, requiring notification of the Medical Examiner and the District Attorney, or his/her representative, shall be followed.

#### **H. PERSONS REPORTED MISSING IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

If a missing person is originally reported missing through another community's law enforcement agency but located in Truro, Department personnel are responsible for ensuring that:

- Appropriate medical attention is provided to the person
- The person's status as a located person is entered into NCIC, and
- The issuing law enforcement agency is contacted and advised of the situation.

The officer locating the person will submit an incident report outlining the circumstances of the location.

#### **I. LOCATION PERSONS OUTSIDE OUR JURISDICTION**

Upon notification that a missing person has been found outside the Department's jurisdiction, the Officer in Charge shall ensure:

- Notification to all agencies previously notified or involved
- Removal of the information from data bases which had been previously contacted, and
- Reporting party is notified, bearing in mind the missing person's right to privacy.

The person responsible for the removal of information from NCIC shall also cause a Department-wide message advising of the location of the person.

The officer who received the recovery information shall complete a supplemental report (under the original incident number) detailing the circumstances surrounding the finding of the person.

#### **J. REVIEW**

The S/SGT will forward a copy of all missing people's reports to the Investigator for appropriate review.

MISSING PERSON REPORT

COMPLAINT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

Name - Missing person \_\_\_\_\_

AGE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

Address - street \_\_\_\_\_

town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

HGT \_\_\_\_\_ WEIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

COLOR \_\_\_\_\_ SEX \_\_\_\_\_

EYES \_\_\_\_\_ COMP \_\_\_\_\_ BUILD \_\_\_\_\_ IDENT. MARKS \_\_\_\_\_

CLOTHING \_\_\_\_\_

HAD IN POSSESSION; \_\_\_\_\_  
*money - articles - etc.*

OPERATING VEHICLE REG ~~77~~ \_\_\_\_\_ YR \_\_\_\_\_ MAKE \_\_\_\_\_ COLOR \_\_\_\_\_

MISSING SINCE \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION LAST SEEN \_\_\_\_\_

WAS IN COMPANY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
*names and addresses*

CLOSE FRIENDS \_\_\_\_\_  
*names and addresses*

CLOSE FRIENDS \_\_\_\_\_

POSSIBLE DESTINATION OF PERSON \_\_\_\_\_ TO SEE \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR LEAVING \_\_\_\_\_

REPORTED MISSING BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
*name address tel number*

RELATIONSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ WILL GO AFTER YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER INFO: \_\_\_\_\_

NETWORK NOTIFIED \_\_\_\_\_  
*date time officer*

TEL TYPE MESSAGE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICER RECEIVING REPORT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON LOCATED DATE \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT GUARDIAN NOTIFIED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

TEL TYPE CANCELLED BY \_\_\_\_\_ MESSAGE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NETWORK BROADCAST CANCELLED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE COMMANDING OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_