


HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL		
Issue Date January 2024	Review Date January 2025	Directive Number 4.3.1
Accreditation Index: 4.3.1		Rescinds: Directive 4.1.3 of February 2021
Chapter: Four – Pennsylvania Legal Mandates	Section: Four – Pennsylvania Legal Mandates	
Chief of Police: <i>John F. Viola</i>		

SUBJECT: MISSING PERSONS

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and responsibilities for responding to and investigating reports of missing persons, to ensure the prompt and thorough completion of these investigations and the recording of appropriate entries into NCIC while complying with section 2908 (Missing Children) of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code (Title 18) and section 3701(a) Federal Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5779(a)).
(PLEAC 4.3.1)

II. POLICY

Reports of persons who are missing, overdue or runaways will be investigated by the Department with promptness, using care and concern for the welfare of the persons reported missing and the emotional distress of the relatives or friends who have reported the incident.

A report of a missing person shall be accepted from a relative, guardian, authoritative source or a responsible adult who has close contact with the missing person. A missing person report will be taken by an officer dispatched to conduct a personal interview with the reporting party. This report shall not be taken over the telephone except as the initial report to DelCom personnel of the missing person. Each report of a missing person will be investigated immediately, as if it were a first time incident, regardless of the age or circumstance of the missing person.
(PLEAC 4.3.1 a)

III. DEFINITIONS

A **Missing Person** is defined as:

Juvenile – A person who is missing and is under the age of eighteen years of age.

Disability – A person of any age who is missing and who is under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.

Involuntary - A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary. This classification is normally used when there are strong indications that an abduction has taken place.

Endangered – A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that their physical safety may be in danger. This classification may be used whenever a change of routine or habit indicates a person may be in danger.

Catastrophic – Persons of any age missing after a catastrophe.

Other – A person not meeting the criteria for entry in any other category, who is missing & for whom there is a reasonable concern for his / her safety.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Reporting Officers Responsibilities

1. Shall prepare an incident report with full information on the person making the report, to include their relationship to the missing person. Obtain a complete physical description of the missing person. Ascertain clothing when last observed, possible destination, friends or associates and any other pertinent information which may assist in locating the person missing.
2. Shall complete a CLEAN/NCIC “Missing Person Report – Record Entry Form” for all persons that are to be entered into CLEAN/NCIC. That form must be signed by the reporting party. The first box of the report “Message Key” MUST be completed to indicate the category the missing person was assigned.
 - a) A “Caution” can be attached to any of the above definitions in the “Message Key”. If a Caution warning is used, the officer must state the reason for the caution. These include, but not limited to; need for medicine(s), violent behavior, disability requirements, suicidal tendencies, drug use, etc.
(PLEAC 4.3.1 b)
3. Shall complete a “Missing Person Declaration” for a person 18 years of age or older. This written documentation will aid in the protection of the individual’s right to privacy.

4. When the circumstances of a missing person are not clearly defined by one of the definitions as outlined in paragraph III of this Directive, request instructions from the patrol supervisor or an on-duty detective.
5. Upon completion of forms the reporting officer shall notify his/her supervisor, and have all forms approved by the supervisor. The officer shall then fax these forms to Delcom for NCIC/CLEAN entry.
6. Immediately advise an on-duty detective of the Missing Person Report and forward to the Detective Division copies of the missing person CLEAN/NCIC entry information and the Missing Persons Declaration. The detective shall conduct a follow-up investigation. In the event a detective is not available and not immediately required, the reporting officer shall perform the preliminary steps such as; a regional scope message, local contacts, etc.
7. The missing person forms for a person under 18 years of age MUST be faxed to DelCom for immediate entry into CLEAN/NCIC by the reporting officer as soon as reports are completed. Missing children investigations will be conducted in accordance with Title 18 Pa. C.S. Section 2908.
(PLEAC 4.3.1 c)
8. The missing person forms for a person between 18 years of age and 21 years of age MUST be faxed to DelCom for immediate entry into NCIC to comply with 3701(a) Federal Crime Control Act of 1990 (Suzanne's Law)
(PLEAC 4.3.1 f)
9. In the event that a missing juvenile incident is a possible abduction and may fall within the guidelines for an "Amber Alert" (see paragraph X of this directive), the reporting officer shall notify his/her supervisor immediately and ensure the "Amber Alert Plan" is activated as soon as possible.

B. Patrol Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Ensure the reporting officer has complied with all reporting responsibilities.
2. In the event that circumstances require an immediate follow-up investigation and a detective is unavailable, the supervisor shall notify necessary personnel to report for duty and conduct the investigation.
3. When children of tender age are reported missing, notify the Detective Division lieutenant and the duty lieutenant. Ensure that all necessary steps are taken to locate the missing child. Ensure that the "Amber Alert Plan" is activated if the applicable factors are present.
4. Shall be responsible for ensuring that a CLEAN entry is made immediately upon taking custody of an unidentified living child,

such as an infant or a physically or mentally disabled child, or upon discovering an unidentified deceased child
(PLEAC 4.3.1 d)

5. Shall ensure that upon the discovery of an unidentified deceased child a CLEAN entry is made into the Unidentified Deceased Persons File.
6. Shall ensure that any returned or located child is cancelled by DelCom from CLEAN as soon as reasonably possible.
(PLEAC 4.3.1 e)

C. Detective Division Responsibilities

1. The Detective Division Commander shall assume command of all police personnel when children of tender age are missing. The Detective Division Commander shall coordinate and direct all efforts of police department personnel in locating the missing child.

Note - In the absence of the Detective Division Commanding Officer, the Duty Commander shall be notified and shall take charge of the investigation. The supervisors of the Detective Division shall assist the Duty Commander.

2. Investigations Unit Responsibilities
 - a) Detectives shall conduct a follow-up investigation of all missing persons reports.
 - b) Shall interview the person who reported the disappearance and obtain any additional information concerning the circumstances, reason for leaving, probable whereabouts, etc.
 - c) If a CLEAN/NCIC entry has not been made, the detective shall ensure the entry of the missing person into the CLEAN/NCIC system.
 - d) Where the investigation discloses that a person reported missing is not a missing person, as defined in Paragraph III of this directive, the detective shall explain courteously that the absentee is not a missing person as defined in the official policy of the Haverford Township Police Department and the CLEAN/NCIC system; and that under these circumstances, further investigation will not be conducted. Information obtained, action taken, and advice given shall be incorporated in the detective's report.
 - e) Shall conduct an intensive investigation to locate missing persons. Interview relatives, employers, school teachers, co-workers, fellow students, friends, associates or neighborhood associates; check places habitually patronized or frequented. Interview the family physician or medical advisor to determine status of the subject's

physical or mental health; make contact with any other person who may aid in locating the subject.

- f) Shall obtain a photograph of the person missing, and distribute to police personnel. At the conclusion of the investigation, be responsible for the safe return of photos or any other property obtained during the course of the investigation.
- g) Shall prepare all necessary follow-up reports on the investigation.
- h) Collection of DNA
 - 1) When a missing person is deemed to be “high-risk” or involves a missing child, the assigned detective shall, within seven days of the receipt of a missing persons report or within seven days of the commencement of a missing person investigation, whichever is earlier, collect a DNA sample from available personal articles belonging to the missing person or missing child for identification purposes.
 - 2) In the case of unidentified decedents, the department shall collect or have the coroner collect DNA samples from the unidentified decedent for identification purposes within 24 hours of discovery.
 - 3) Within 48 hours of the collection, the DNA sample shall be delivered to the Pennsylvania State Police for submission to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.
 - 4) Collection and submission of DNA will follow the procedures outlined by the PSP NamUS Guideline.

D. Missing Person Located

- 1. Upon location or return of a missing person, a patrol officer shall add a supplement to the original report detailing the circumstances of the return. The officer shall attempt to ascertain where the missing person went and the reason for leaving. This information shall be noted on the incident report prepared by the officer handling the return of the subject.
- 2. When a follow-up investigation is deemed necessary a detective shall be assigned to interview the subject and ascertain the reason for leaving, where the subject stayed, who was with them, possible criminal activity during absence, etc.
- 3. Assigned detective shall return all photographs or property obtained during the investigation.

4. DelCom shall be notified by the assigned detective to cancel all CLEAN/NCIC messages.

E. Out of Town Missing Person Reports

1. A supervisor of the Detective Division shall take such action as he/she deems necessary on a request from an out-of-town law enforcement agency or other individuals seeking information or action in connection with a missing person. An example of such a request: An individual who is en route to Haverford Township has not arrived and is presumably missing.

Note – The Haverford Township Police Department does not have the authority or facilities to detain persons reported missing by other agencies.

F. Pennsylvania Amber Alert Plan

1. The Pennsylvania Amber Alert Plan is fully operational and available to assist with investigations of missing children. Some key points about the plan are:
2. Criteria for Activation:
 - a) The abducted child must be under eighteen (18) years of age
 - b) The abducted child is believed to be in imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury
 - c) Additional factors are considered in the decision making process as to whether or not to activate the PA Amber Alert Plan. These factors include, but are not limited to: availability of descriptive information which could assist in the recovery of the child, time elapsed since the child was last seen, and reliability of witness(es).
3. How the Plan Works
 - a) The Haverford Township Police Department receives a report of an abducted child and initiates an investigation.
 - b) The responding (investigating) officer confirms the abduction meets the above criteria.
 - c) The responding (investigating) officer will notify the Pennsylvania State Police by telephone [REDACTED] and through the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (C.L.E.A.N.) computer by transmitting the victim's information to the Delaware County Communications Center personnel for entry into CLEAN/NCIC system requesting an Amber Alert.
 - d) Using the CLEAN missing persons involuntary entry screen the Communications Center personnel transmits the request for an Amber Alert to the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

- e) PSP activates the Emergency Alert System through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency who transmits all pertinent information regarding the abduction.
- f) The PSP will post the abduction information to the Amber Alert website at <http://www.amber.state.pa.us/>.
- g) Investigating law enforcement agency will notify the Pennsylvania State Police at [REDACTED] of critical updates / recovery / cancellations.
- h) If you have any questions, contact the Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Criminal Investigations at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE