
	<b>MESQUITE POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>
	<b>237.00 HANDLING MISSING PERSONS</b>
	<b>Effective Date: March, 2013</b>
	<b>Approved:</b> _____ <div style="text-align: center;">   <b>Chief of Police</b> </div>

**I. Policy Statement**

Reports of missing persons, especially children or the elderly, are a priority in our own community and also nationwide. Many resources exist to help locate individuals who are missing, and the following procedures are to be followed by Department personnel in order to expedite the investigation. Deviations from this policy must be at the direction of the Chief of Police or his designee.

**II. Procedures**

**A. Reporting/classification of missing persons:**

1. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person.
2. All missing persons should be entered on NCIC within two hours of first report.
3. A person may be declared missing when their whereabouts are unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the subject's behavior patterns, plans or routines.
4. An individual may be considered missing/critical if they meet the aforementioned criteria and one of the following conditions:
  - a. Appears to be missing under circumstances that suggest they may be the subject of foul play,
  - b. Because of their age (young or old),
  - c. Suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated/unattended,
  - d. Is a patient of a mental institution and considered potentially dangerous to themselves or others,
  - e. Has demonstrated the potential for suicide.

**B. Preliminary investigation**

1. The initial call taker must gather as much pertinent information as possible to properly classify a missing person report and initiate a proper response.
2. If the missing person is a child, especially a young child missing from the home or near the home, every effort should be made by the initial responding units to thoroughly search the child's home and closets, garage, vehicles, bushes, shed and any other area of the premise.
3. As soon as it appears that a person is missing, the assigned officer will complete a missing person report.
4. A complete description of the missing person and a recent photograph should be collected along with any other information required by current NCIC/TCIC policy.
5. In the case of missing children, officers will be particularly cognizant of information that may suggest the potential for parental abduction or the possibility of a stranger abduction, as well as:
  - a. The presence of behavioral problems,
  - b. Past instances of running away,
  - c. Signs of an abusive home environment or dysfunctional family situation,
  - d. Whether the child is believed to be with adults who may pose a danger,

- e. Name and location of the school attended by the child and any persons who may be responsible for the private transportation of the child to and from school.
  - C. In the case of a person designated as missing/critical, the initiating officer or supervisor will:
    1. Notify the appropriate investigations supervisor,
    2. Notify the Watch Commander,
    3. Ensure all available information regarding the subject is broadcast to all officers on duty, and to other area jurisdictions via TLETS,
    4. Investigations personnel will utilize the Amber Alert System if appropriate circumstances exist,
    5. Investigations personnel will utilize the Silver Alert System if appropriate circumstances exist.
  - D. Recovery of a missing person and case closure
    1. Competent adults, having left home for personal reasons, cannot be forced to return home. Officers locating such individuals will:
      - a. Advise them that they are the subject of a missing person investigation;
      - b. Ask if they desire the reporting party or next of kin to be notified of their whereabouts;
      - c. Make provisions to transmit this information to the reporting party or next of kin, if permitted by the missing person.
    2. In all cases, reporting parties will be informed of the well-being of located missing persons. Unless criminal matters necessitate other action, the desire of a missing person not to reveal his whereabouts will be honored except in cases involving juveniles.
    3. Missing persons will be questioned to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and whether criminal activity was involved.
    4. Parents, guardians, and/or the person reporting the missing youth will be notified in a timely manner.
    5. Upon locating a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified.
- III. AMBER ALERT
- A. In order to activate the AMBER ALERT plan the officer should notify the on-duty Watch Commander and the following criteria must be met:
    1. The abducted child must be 17 years of age or younger.
    2. The local law enforcement agency must believe that the child has been abducted; that is, unwillingly taken from their environment without permission from the child's parent or legal guardian or by the child's parent or legal guardian who committed an act of murder or attempted murder during the time of the abduction.
    3. The local law enforcement agency must believe that the missing child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death.
    4. The local law enforcement agency must confirm that an investigation has taken place that verifies the abduction and has eliminated alternative explanations for the missing child.
    5. Sufficient information is available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the child, the suspect or the vehicle used in the abduction.
  - B. Notifying the Governor's Division of Emergency Management
    1. The primary method of notifying the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to activate an Amber Alert will be by faxing an "Amber Alert Request Form" to DEM.
    2. Backup methods for notification include phone, TLETS and e-mail.

- C. Amber Alert request form
  - 1. All requests for activation must include a point of contact and telephone number for confirmation and verification of any request. Fill in "Authentication Password" with the password from your Amber Alert Network access card.
  - 2. Faxed and e-mailed requests for activation should be placed on the Amber Alert Request Form. The form may be downloaded at [www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem).
  - 3. Requests made by TLETS should include the same information on the Amber Alert Request Form, including a point of contact, phone number and agency password.
- D. Transmitting an Amber Alert Activation Request
  - 1. Preferred method: Fax the Amber Alert Request Form to (512)424-2281 or (512) 451-2291.
  - 2. Secondary method: Send a TLETS message to AZAA, the DEM Communications Group in Austin.
  - 3. Backup methods: E-mail the Amber Alert Request Form to [soc@txdps.state.tx.us](mailto:soc@txdps.state.tx.us).
  - 4. Call (512)424-2277 or (512)424-2208
- IV. SILVER ALERT
  - A. In order to activate the SILVER ALERT plan the officer should notify the on-duty Watch Commander and all five (5) of the following criteria must be met:
    - 1. The missing person is 65 years of age or older.
    - 2. The person lives in Texas.
    - 3. The person has been diagnosed as having an impaired mental condition and does pose a credible danger to their safety. Documentation from a medical professional is required.
    - 4. The notification was made within 72 hours of the person becoming missing or in danger.
    - 5. There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that can assist the department in finding the individual.
  - B. Officers wanting to activate the system should complete the following:
    - 1. Gather as much information about the missing person as possible,
    - 2. Notify a supervisor,
    - 3. Check all possible locations first,
    - 4. Notify the Watch Commander.
- V. BLUE ALERT
  - A. In order to activate the BLUE ALERT plan the officer should contact the on-duty watch commander.
  - B. The following criteria must be met:
    - 1. A law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured by an offender.
    - 2. The department has determined the offender poses a serious risk or threat to the public or other officers.
    - 3. A detailed description of the offender's car or license plate is available for broadcast to the public.
    - 4. The department must issue a broadcast request. This request must be approved by the Chief of Police or his designee.

EFFECTIVE: March, 2013