

East Haven Police Department 	Type of Directive: Policies & Procedures	No. 425.4
	Subject/Title: Missing Persons	Issue Date: December 20, 2022
		Effective Date: December 31, 2022
	Issuing Authority: Honorable Board of Police Commissioners	Review Date: Annually
References/Attachments: Connecticut General Statutes § 29-1e(b)(1), 46b-120, and 7-282c	Rescinds: 425.3	Amends: N/A

I. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this directive is to set forth the policies and procedures of the East Haven Police Department (EHPD) regarding the response and follow-up of missing persons complaints.

II. POLICY

- A. It shall be the policy of the East Haven Police Department to respond promptly to all reports of missing persons and to conduct the highest quality initial and follow-up investigations.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response Alert (AMBER Alert): A nationally recognized program used by law enforcement to help find children under the most serious life-threatening conditions. This is a rapid notification to the public, which utilizes all available technology during the critical period after a child/missing person has been abducted.
- B. At Risk: The person missing is the victim of a crime or foul play, is in need of medical attention, has no prior pattern of running away or disappearing, is the victim of a parent/family abduction, or is mentally impaired. The missing person is to be considered at risk until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.
- C. Catastrophic Missing: Missing person is possibly a victim of a disaster (i.e., boating accident, plane crash, earthquake, flood, fire, terrorist act, etc.).

- D. Dependent Adult: Adult who has physical or mental limitations which restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, mentally disabled).
- E. Family with Service Needs: A family that includes a child who is at least seven (7) years of age and is under eighteen (18) years of age who:
 - 1. Has without just cause, run away from the parental home or other properly authorized and lawful place of abode.
 - 2. Is beyond the control of the child's parent, parents, guardian or other custodian.
 - 3. Has engaged in indecent or immoral conduct.
 - 4. Is a truant or habitual truant or who, while in school, has been continuously and overtly defiant of school rules and regulation.
 - 5. Is thirteen (13) years of age or older and has engaged in sexual intercourse with another person and such other person is thirteen (13) years of age or older and not more than two years older or younger than such child or youth.
- F. Lost/Missing: A person who has strayed away and whose whereabouts are unknown.
- G. Missing Child: Any person who is under the age of eighteen (18), whose temporary or permanent residence is in Connecticut or is believed to be in Connecticut, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to the East Haven Police Department (Connecticut General Statute § 29-1e(b)(1)). For the purposes of this directive, missing child or juvenile are synonymous and mean the same thing.
- H. Missing but not At-Risk Adult: An adult will NOT be considered at-risk if any of the following criteria are met.
 - 1. Absent Spouse: An absent spouse who has committed no crime and is legally free to come and go. Caution should be exercised both in preserving the privacy rights of the spouse in their wish to keep their whereabouts unknown and in making sure that the "missing spouse" is not, in fact, the victim of foul play related to domestic abuse.
 - 2. An adult who has left a note and/or told a credible person that they are leaving. An exception would be a suicide note.
 - 3. An adult who simply has not been in touch with the reporting party for an extended period of time, unless extenuating circumstances exist.
 - 4. Fugitives from justice including AWOL service personnel.
 - 5. Adult who is being sought for business or social purposes such as debt collections or school reunions.

- I. Missing Persons: Any person who is reported missing to the East Haven Police Department until the person is located or determined to be a voluntary missing adult. It also includes any child who is missing voluntarily or involuntarily, or under circumstances not conforming to his or her ordinary habits or behavior and who may be in the need of assistance. (Connecticut General Statute § 46b-120).
- J. Parent/Family Abduction: A child who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent or non-parent family member.
- K. Runaway: Any child who is voluntarily missing.
- L. SILVER Alert: An alert system for persons who are under the age of eighteen (18) but do not meet the criteria of an AMBER Alert, adult persons with a mental impairment or medical condition, and/or any person over the age of sixty-five (65).
- M. Stranger Abduction: Missing persons taken/kidnapped by a stranger (includes cases of known abductor who is not a family member).
- N. Unknown Missing: Child or adult who is reported missing, but there are insufficient facts to determine the circumstances.
- O. Voluntary Missing Adult: Missing adult who has left on his or her own free will.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Acceptance of Initial Call
 - 1. Dispatchers, and/or police officers shall take a missing persons complaint either by telephone, in person, or by electronic media and enter the complaint in the CAD system.
 - 2. The dispatcher shall dispatch the first available officer to the complaint without delay.
 - a. This is a top priority call.
 - b. Persons do not have to be missing 24 hours prior to making the complaint.
 - c. Department personnel will immediately assist any person who is attempting to make a report of a missing person; the complaint shall be accepted without delay.
 - 3. When the Department receives a complaint of a missing person, the dispatcher/police officer shall accept the report immediately and inform all on-duty personnel of the existence of the missing person, and any other agency that has jurisdiction of the complaint.
 - a. It is essential that all agencies work closely together in order to enhance the investigation of the case (Connecticut General Statute § 7-282c).
 - b. The investigating officer of the Department shall promptly notify and send copies of the report to the jurisdiction that the missing person was last seen and/or the jurisdiction of the intended destination.

B. Initial Investigations

1. All missing person complaints reported to the Department will cause the immediate assignment of one or more officers to the case. The investigating officer may, in addition to the usual incident report, employ the investigative assistance of a missing person form, reverse 911, and a Child is Missing Program.
2. The investigating officer will interview the person who is reporting the missing person, and the officer shall complete a missing person report. All data relative to the missing person, which may include but is not limited to the following items, will be recorded for investigative leads and subsequently documented in an incident report.
 - a. Name, age, a description, and a picture of the missing person.
 - b. The relationship of the reporting person to the missing person.
 - c. Time and place last seen and the identity of anyone accompanying the missing person.
 - d. Whether the missing person has been reported missing before and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits or plans.
 - e. Physical and mental condition when last seen.
 - f. Any medication that is taken by the missing person.
 - g. Description of vehicle or mode of transportation used by the missing person.
 - h. Bank account numbers and ATM cards.
 - i. Check the missing person's home for travel bulletins.
 - j. Cell phone number or pager number or e-mail address.
 - k. Examine and/or request copies of court orders.
 - l. Any tendencies toward self-injury or suicide.
 - m. Possible reasons for disappearance, i.e. family, drug, alcohol, financial, business problems.
 - n. Whether the missing person has been involved recently in domestic problems, suffered emotional trauma or life crisis.
 - o. Local and distant friends, acquaintances, relatives including their names, addresses, phone numbers, and relationships.

- p. Description of any vehicle possibly in use by missing person.
- q. Current and past employment for investigative leads.
- r. Whether the missing person has failed to perform some important tasks.

3. If applicable, the investigating officer on scene shall thoroughly search the scene in a logical and systematic manner.
4. The investigating officer shall inform Dispatch and all on-duty officers of the missing person's information.
 - a. Dispatch shall ensure an immediate entry of the missing person into COLLECT/NCIC at the request of the investigating officer.
 - b. When applicable, Dispatch shall initiate a regional broadcast to all appropriate law enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for the missing person.
5. The patrol supervisor shall be promptly notified if foul play is suspected, or the missing person is classified as critically missing or at risk.
6. The investigating officer will make attempts to locate the missing person using information gained through interviews and personal information described above.
 - a. Under the direction of an on-duty supervisor, a neighborhood canvas and a search of the area in a logical and systematic manner should be conducted in order to locate the missing person.
 - b. The patrol supervisor will notify the shift commander if additional public safety and emergency response agencies are required to assist in a search.
7. The investigating officer should consider using the following technologies to assist in locating the missing person:
 - a. COLLECT/NCIC.
 - b. AMBER Alert.
 - c. SILVER Alert.
 - d. Technology to Recover Abducted Kids (Connecticut General Statute 29-1e).
 - e. National Missing Children Hotline 1-800-843-5678.
 - f. DNA Evidence.
 - g. Unidentified Persons System maintained by the Department of Justice.
 - h. CODIS - Combined DNA Index System for Missing Persons.

- i. IAFIS - Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System.
- j. ViCAP - Violent Criminal Apprehension Program.

8. Supervisory Notifications

- a. In the event foul play is suspected, or a person is classified as critically missing or at risk, the investigating officer shall notify an on-duty supervisor. The patrol supervisor shall then promptly notify the shift commander.
- b. The shift commander will notify the supervisor of the Detective Division and make the determination as to further personnel needs, special equipment needs, search patterns, notification of outside emergency agencies for search and rescue etc.
- c. The Detective Division shall assume responsibility for the criminal case.

C. Ongoing Investigations

- 1. For the first seven (7) days, the investigating officer shall follow-up with the complainant at least once every tour of duty, and make arrangements with the on-duty supervisor for follow-up on the officer's days off.
 - a. A supplemental report will be filed after each follow-up under the original incident case number.
 - b. After following up with the complainant, the officer will update the on-duty supervisor of the status.
 - c. After being apprised by the officer of the status, the on-duty supervisor will determine if the Detective Division supervisor should be made aware immediately.
 - d. The Detective Division supervisor may designate an investigator from the Detective Division to assist in the investigation at any time.
 - e. If at the end of seven (7) days from the initial report of a missing person the subject has not been located; a meeting consisting of the Detective Division supervisor and the investigating officer(s) shall be held to explore all aspects of the case and determine future action to be taken. The Detective Division may then be assigned the missing persons investigation.
 - 1) If the Detective Division takes over the case, the Detective Division supervisor will be responsible for assigning a member of the Detective Division to communicate with family members of the missing person to keep them informed of the status of the investigation.
- 2. The officer who handled the original call will maintain responsibility for the case and contact the complainant, at a minimum weekly after the first seven (7) days, to determine the status of the missing person unless the Detective Division has taken over the case.

- a. A supplemental report will be filed after each weekly follow-up under the original incident case number.

D. Missing Juveniles

- 1. When the Department receives a complaint of a missing child, the Department shall immediately accept the complaint and inform all on-duty personnel of the existence of the missing child and communicate the complaint/report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies pursuant to Connecticut General Statute § 7-282c.
 - a. The Department shall submit all reports to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse pursuant to Connecticut General Statute § 29-1e(d).
- 2. Upon receipt of the complaint, officers shall complete the following, in addition to procedures outlined above, or based on the totality of circumstances:
 - a. Notify all units within the Department of any specific information that might assist in locating the missing child.
 - b. Inform the reporting person to call the Department as soon as possible, should the missing child return, or if additional information becomes available.
 - c. If the missing child is unidentified, collect pertinent information as to the child's age, name, circumstances of disappearance, permanent residence, etc. to disseminate among on-duty personnel and other appropriate agencies.
- 3. Information regarding missing persons under eighteen (18) years of age or where there is evidence that the person is at risk shall be entered into COLLECT/NCIC within four (4) hours of taking the complaint.
- 4. The above listed technologies including the AMBER Alert should be utilized to assist in locating a missing child. The following is the mandatory criteria for an AMBER Alert:
 - a. The child must be under 18 years of age, unless there are special circumstances such as proven mental or physical disability.
 - b. It is believed the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.
 - c. There must be enough descriptive information to believe a broadcast will help.
 - d. The information must be received in a timely manner.
- 5. If an officer locates a child who has either been reported missing or is unidentified, the locating officer shall complete the following:
 - a. Attempt to locate and/or contact the reporting person or parent/guardian of the child.
 - b. If there are circumstances which lead the officer to believe that releasing the juvenile to their parent, guardian, legal custodian etc. would not be in the child's

best interest, then the officer shall contact the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF).

6. If an officer locates a missing or unidentified child and, during his/her investigation, determines or suspects unusual circumstances, the officer shall handle the child in accordance with Policies and Procedures # 505 – Juvenile Offenders.
 - a. The officer will take the child into protective custody and notify their immediate supervisor if they identify one or more of the following or based on the totality of circumstances.
 - 1) The child is incapacitated or not able to care for themselves.
 - 2) The child appears to be the victim of foul play, violence, or abuse.
 - 3) The child is determined by officers to be at risk.

E. Case Closure

1. Missing person cases shall not be closed administratively without the written permission of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
2. Missing person investigations shall not be closed by the investigating officer and/or the Detective Division supervisor until an officer has physically viewed the reported missing person and/or identification has been positively verified. Once the return of the missing person has been verified by an officer, the officer and the dispatcher will ensure that the missing person is cleared from COLLECT/NCIC.
 - a. The officer shall document in a supplemental report under the original incident case number that the missing person has been located.
 - 1) The locate and/or cancellation message from COLLECT/NCIC will be filed with the report.
 - b. The officer will also attempt to interview the located person to document the circumstances surrounding the person's disappearance, and where the person went between the time he/she went missing and the time he/she was located.
 - c. In the event a missing person is located in another jurisdiction, the case may be closed when this Department receives written verification from the locating agency that the missing person has been located and their safety has been assured.