

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the reporting of missing person incidents.

Policy

It is the policy of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to ensure proper operating procedures during the reporting of missing person incidents.

I. Introduction

- A. The Uniform Maryland Missing Person Report Form, (CCSO # 79 & 79a) were designed as a general law enforcement form to standardize the reporting of data about any incident involving missing persons.
- B. This policy ensures that personnel understand the need for uniformed and timely reporting of any missing persons to Cecil County Sheriff's Office.

II. Procedure

The Uniform Maryland Missing Person Report Form will be used in conjunction with an Incident Report (Sungard) to record the following:

- A. A missing child under the age of eighteen (18) years, as required by the Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland
- B. An adult who is missing under the following circumstances:
 - 1. An adult who is documented as suffering from a mental or physical disability or is considered senile.
 - 2. An adult documented as being in the company of another person under circumstances indicating a danger to their physical safety.
 - 3. An adult missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, i.e. kidnap or abduction.
- C. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office will accept, without delay, a report of a missing person who was last seen in this jurisdiction, whether such a report is made in person, via telephone or other electronic means.
- D. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office will require anyone reporting a missing person by telephone or other electronic means, to complete the report in person, if possible, as soon as practical.

- E. The Cecil County Sheriff's Office will inform all interested parties of missing persons that no mandatory waiting period is necessary before accepting and investigating a report of a missing person.
- III. Reporting Procedures
- A. Deputies will submit a completed Uniform Maryland Missing Person Report Form (MPR) CCSO Form CCSO 79 & 79A, as well as a copy of the incident report prior to ending their tour of duty. It is vital that the required signatures for the complainant and the authoring person for the release of medical and/or dental information are obtained. The MPR must be completed in its entirety with N/A, unknown in open fields.
 - B. The complainant will be given a copy of the Missing Person Report by the investigating deputy. The investigating deputy will also provide the complainant with their name, agency and agency telephone number
 - C. Insure that all pertinent information pertaining to the missing person/child is entered into NCIC/METERS, within the two hour limit and prior to submission of CCSO 79 & 79A forms for supervisor review.
 - D. Determine if one or more of the following criteria exists:
 - 1. The missing person has not been the subject of a prior Missing Persons Report.
 - 2. The person suffers from a mental or physical handicap or illness.
 - 3. The disappearance of the missing person is of suspicious or dangerous nature.
 - 4. The person filing the report of a missing child has reason to believe the person may have been abducted.
 - 5. The missing person has ever previously been the subject of a child abuse report filed with state or local law enforcement agency. A check will be made with the local Department of Social Services.
 - 6. The missing person is under fourteen years of age.
If any of the above factors exist, the person will be designated as "Critically Missing".
 - 7. If any person is considered "Critically Missing" refer to Section I of this chapter for the Amber Alert protocol and/or Section III of this chapter for Silver Alert protocol.

IV. Critically Missing Person/Children

- A. For critically missing person/child, the deputy, in addition to the above, will:
1. Notify the on-call Criminal Investigations Supervisor.
 2. Institute appropriate intensive search procedures outlined by agency policy.
 3. The Department of Social Services will be contacted to determine if the child/family has a case history of abuse or neglect and obtain any records thereof.

V. Non-Critically Missing Person/Children

- A. If the person/child is not critically missing, the following procedures will be implemented:
1. The investigating deputy will immediately seek to determine the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the missing person/child. This includes, but not limited to, locating and inspecting the scene where the person/child was last observed and interviewing family members, friends, teachers, or other sources of information.
 2. The investigating deputy will ensure a description of the missing child is broadcast to local area law enforcement agencies, and a copy of the CCSO Form CCSO 79 & 79A will be left for the Duty Officer pending follow-up.
- B. The reviewing supervisor will ensure the legibility, accuracy and completeness of the Missing Persons Report, (CCSO 79 & 79A) and that the information entered in METERS/NCIC is an accurate representation of the information documented in the Missing Persons Report, (CCSO 79 & 79A).
1. Any discrepancies or errors noted in the MPR or the METERS/NCIC entry will be corrected before the completion of the investigating deputy's tour of duty.
- C. Duty Officer will provide a follow-up contact with the complainant no later than 12 hours after the filing of the initial report to determine whether the person/child has been located. If the person/child has not been located within 12 hours, the additional procedures outlined for "Critically Missing Person/Child" will be implemented. The investigating deputy will document his/her contact with the complainant and any additional information he/she obtains on a supplemental report.

- VI. Follow-up Investigation
- A. The completed Missing Persons Report, (CCSO 79 &79A), including a copy of the METERS/NCIC entry will be reviewed by the Criminal Investigation Division Supervisor or his/her designee. A determination will be made if the investigating deputy will continue with the investigation or if the case will be referred to a criminal investigator for follow-up investigation.
- B. When a missing child has been located or the agency notified by the family or other source, it shall be the responsibility of the Unit or Squad Supervisor assigned to the case to:
1. Confirm the recovery of the missing person/child and circumstances of the return, including condition of person/child and nature of the closure.
 2. Immediately cause the missing person to be removed from NCIC/METERS.
 3. Arrange, whenever possible, a personal interview of the missing person/child to determine the circumstances surrounding the disappearance
 4. The follow-up interview should include, but not limited to:
 - a. Nature of closure, i.e. returned home voluntarily, parents/family contacted by person/child, located by law enforcement, etc.
 - b. Condition of missing person/child, i.e. physically abused, unharmed, deceased, etc.
 - c. Reasons for disappearance, i.e. family argument, abuse, no reason given, etc.
 - d. Activities while missing, i.e. food, shelters, associates, etc.
 - e. Indication of abuse, exploitation, involvement in criminal activity.