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Effective Date	January 1, 2010		



Wilkesboro Police Department

Electronic Written Directives Document

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the reporting of missing persons, juveniles and how each is to be entered as missing along with how they are to be investigated.

II. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Wilkesboro Police Department to thoroughly investigate all missing persons, both children and adult. This department holds that every person reported missing, and especially children, will be considered **at risk** until significant information to the contrary is confirmed. Missing children include abandoned, abducted, and other status of missing persons such as endangered, or missing due to catastrophic occurrence. Chapter 7 B of the North Carolina General Statutes and DCI guidelines for entering runaways shall be followed in incidents involving runaway juveniles.
- B. The department shall also thoroughly investigate all unidentified children with the safety, care, and welfare of the child as top priority.
- C. Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided when a person is reported missing. If a missing person either resides in, or was last seen in this jurisdiction, but the law enforcement agency covering that jurisdiction chooses not to take a missing-person report, this agency will assume reporting and investigative responsibility.
- D. Questions concerning parental custody occasionally arise in relation to missing-child reports. It is the policy of this agency to accept the report of a missing child even if custody has not been formally established. Reporting parties shall be encouraged to obtain legal custody as soon as possible; however, since the safety of the missing children is paramount members of this department will open a case when it can be shown that the child has been removed, without explanation, from his or her usual place of residence.
- E. Missing person reports will be investigated through application of the same procedures established for other incidents. Depending upon the circumstances of an individual situation, additional requirements may be involved.

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- F. Reports of missing persons will normally be assigned to patrol officers, unless compelling circumstances indicate an investigator should handle the case initially.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Missing Persons Initial Description and Information to be gathered

Initial description and information to be gathered shall include, but is not limited to; full name, race, sex, place of birth, date of birth, height, weight, eye color, hair color, skin tone, scars, marks and tattoos. Last known clothing, items and money carried. Social Security number, driver's license or ID card number with state & year of expiration. Notations should be made indicating any medical problems or disabilities and medication if known. If the missing person was last seen with another person(s), the name, address, description, mode of travel and possible destination should be listed. Vehicle information should include make, model, year, color, license number, license year and license type. If the missing person is thought to be endangered, a reason must be given for the endangerment.

B. Dissemination of Collected Information

All information collected should be given out immediately to all local agencies through radio and through the Division of Criminal Information computer for a minimum of a 50 mile radius. If the destination is known or suspected, that information will be sent to all agencies in those areas for broadcast.

C. Entry of Information into the Criminal Justice Information System

All reported missing persons that meet the National Crime Information Center criteria for missing persons should be entered into the NCIC missing persons file. If the missing person is under age 21, the information will be entered within two hours of the time the report information was obtained.

D. Removal of Information from Criminal Justice Information System

All persons reported missing and entered into the NCIC file who are located or for some reason should have never been entered shall immediately be removed from the NCIC missing persons file.

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E. Follow-up Contact with the Reporting Persons

Contact with the reporting person(s) shall be made after 24 hours of the report and then at least every five days to determine if that person(s) has had any contact with the missing person, to determine if the person is still missing. Reporting persons should be advised to contact the police department if they do not have any contact with the missing person or if the status of the missing person should change.

F. Follow-up Investigation and Search

A follow-up investigation shall be initiated immediately and any possible location of the missing person shall be searched for the presence of that person.

G. Special Procedures Applicable To Juveniles and Critical Missing/At-Risk Persons

All criteria for meeting the NCIC requirements for entering a runaway juvenile, endangered missing juvenile, critical missing and at-risk persons shall apply. When entering a critical/at-risk missing person or endangered juvenile into NCIC, the entering person shall indicated the reason for endangerment or other critical situation, using the proper DCI screen. The Officer shall request a radio broadcast of the information and send a PIN message over DCI to all surrounding agencies. Critical/At-risk persons will include but not be limited to persons with special medical needs, handicaps, mental disorders or other special needs.

IV. MISSING CHILDREN

The purpose of this section of the policy is to establish policy and procedure for the handling of missing children, including runaways, abandoned children, abducted and other missing status children. This section refers to any child under the age of 18. Initially the patrol officer takes a missing child report and begins the process of attempting to locate the missing child. The following methods shall be utilized.

A. Initial Description and Information to be gathered:

The initial officer taking a missing child report will obtain a complete description of the missing child, the time they were last seen, any information indicating foul play, past behavior and history, known associates, hangouts, and any other information that will be useful in locating them. In unusual circumstances of a missing child, cases of suspected foul play, abandonment

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or abduction, or cases of public interest, the on duty Captain and the Patrol Lieutenant should be contacted to conduct any special search operations that might be needed.

B. Dissemination of Collected Information:

The initial report taker will cause a statewide broadcast to all law enforcement agencies advising them to be on the lookout for the individual by preparing basic information and giving same to a telecommunicator for broadcast. The missing juvenile information will also be forwarded to CID for dissemination. If the specified victim criteria are met, the AMBER Alert Notification System will be activated.

C. Entry of Information into the Criminal Justice Information System

The initial report taker will give the information to the Lieutenant to be entered into N.C.I.C. Anyone under the age of 21 will be entered into NCIC within two hours from the time the information was obtained.

D. Removal of Information from Criminal Justice Information System

Any employee who receives information from the complainant or other responsible person that the missing juvenile has been located will cause that individual's name to be cleared from N.C.I.C. that was used to enter the individual.

F. Follow-up Contact with Supervisor and CID Investigator

The initial report taker should complete the missing child report as soon as possible and forward it to records division. The initial report taker should notify an Investigator of the missing child by contacting the CID Commander. In the event of an unusual circumstance is verified and a missing child is in need of prompt location search the officer will immediately notify the on-duty supervisor.

G. The on-duty supervisor will:

1. Determine if additional officers should be dispatched to the scene in order to conduct a physical search
2. Determine if other personnel, special equipment, or other agencies are needed for assistance
3. Notify the on-duty Captain and an Investigator

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- a. The initial missing child report will be forwarded to the Investigations Section where the report will be assigned to a follow-up investigator who will make contact with the complainant.
- b. In addition to the missing juvenile report, a separate computer generated juvenile contact report will be written including all parent or guardian contact information. Reports concerning missing juveniles will be handled in compliance with G.S. 7B-3001(b).

H. Follow-up Investigation and Search:

The follow-up investigator will seek additional information in the case that was not included in the initial report to include the background of the individual, past habits, information of mental illness, medications, etc. and make an effort to locate the individual. In cases where foul play or abduction is suspected, a search of the suspected area will be conducted. Either initially or at a later date, outside sources may be called to assist with any search such as the Wilkesboro Fire Department, Wilkes County Rescue, Wilkes County Emergency Medical Services, North Carolina Highway Patrol, React, Boy Scouts, Search Groups and others.

V. AMBER ALERTS

- A. North Carolina General Statute 143B-499.7 established an Amber Alert System to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding abducted children.
- B. The following guidelines and procedures shall be used to determine when an Amber Alert is to be issued and the steps to follow when an alert is issued.
- C. The AMBER Alert System shall make every effort to disseminate information on missing children as quickly as possible when the following criteria are met:
 1. The child is 17 years of age or younger;
 2. The abduction is not known or suspected to be by a parent of the child, unless the child's life is suspected to be in danger of injury or death;
 3. The child is believed:
 - a. To have been abducted, or
 - b. To be in danger of injury or death;

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4. The child is not a runaway or voluntarily missing; and
 5. The abduction has been reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.
- D. If the abduction of the child is known or suspected to be by a parent of the child, the Center, in its discretion, may disseminate information through the AMBER Alert System if the child is believed to be in danger of injury or death.

VI. SILVER ALERTS

- A. To help protect an increasing population of individuals that suffer from dementia or other cognitive impairment, the Wilkesboro Police Department will participate in North Carolina's **Silver Alert** program. Officers must gather as much information about the missing person for reporting purposes.
- B. All of the following statutory criteria must be met before the NC Center for Missing Persons will activate a Silver Alert.
 1. The person is believed to be suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairment regardless of age and
 2. The person is believed to be missing-regardless of circumstance and
 3. A legal custodian of the missing person has submitted a missing person's report and
 4. Law enforcement reports the incident to the NC Center for Missing Persons
- C. When a family member or care giver calls local law enforcement to report their missing loved one, officers shall investigate the case and determine if the criteria warrants a request for a Silver Alert.
- D. After completing the investigation and determining the case meets the criteria, officers will call the NC Center for Missing Persons at 1-800 522-5437 to request a Silver Alert. Officers shall complete and forward to the Center Amber Alert forms with all pertinent information.
- E. Officer will work together with the NC Missing Persons Center to notify the surrounding communities about the missing person.

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- F. Officers shall enter the missing person into the National Criminal Information Center system, complete a bulletin to all appropriate law enforcement agencies, provide the agencies 24 hour number to receive calls during the investigation, using **A child is Missing** program activate reverse phone calling to alert local businesses and residents if available and notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children if the person is below the age of 21.

VII. REFERENCES

N.C.G.S. 7B
N.C.G.S. 143B-499.7
CALEA 41.2.5 AND 41.2.6