



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Law Enforcement

MISSING PERSONS

| GENERAL ORDER | EFFECTIVE DATE | RESCINDS/AMENDS | APPLICABILITY |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 57 | September 24, 2019 | November 17, 2010 | All Members |

REFERENCES

Ch. 937, F.S.; GO 34;
CFA 15.12M

1 POLICY

- A** It is the policy of the Division to assist other agencies in locating missing persons. Incidents involving missing persons shall be referred to the local agency having jurisdiction.
- (1) Florida State Statute 937.021(3) requires that a report that a child or adult is missing must be accepted by and filed with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the county or municipality in which the child or adult was last seen. If necessary, Division members shall facilitate the acceptance and filing of missing person reports with the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the county or municipality in which the child or adult was last seen.
- B** Incidents involving overdue hikers, hunters or boaters shall be handled in accordance with General Order 34, *Search and Rescue Operations*.
- C Definitions**
- (1) **Missing adult** means a person 18 years of age or older whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed to be in, this state, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.
- (2) **Missing child** means a person younger than 18 years of age whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed to be in, this state, whose location has not been determined, and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement agency.
- (3) **Missing endangered person** means:
- (a) A missing child;
- (b) A missing adult younger than 26 years of age; or
- (c) A missing adult 26 years of age or older who is suspected by a law enforcement agency of being endangered or the victim of criminal activity.

- (4) **Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearing House (MEPIC)** - A central repository of information regarding missing endangered persons within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Such information shall be collected and disseminated to assist in the location of missing endangered persons. As part of [MEPIC's](#) services, a toll-free telephone line (1-888-356-4774) is available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES

- A Any Division member who is being notified by a member of the public about a missing person is responsible for the following:
- (1) Immediately notify a sworn supervisor;
 - (2) Ensure that the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction is notified and then record basic information about the missing person as per the Procedures section of this General Order; and
 - (3) Ensure that the local agency having jurisdiction receives all relevant information recorded by Division personnel and attempt to confirm that the local agency has accepted and filed the missing endangered persons report in accordance with section 937.021 (3), F.S.

3 PROCEDURES

- A Any member being notified by a member of the public about a **missing adult** shall ensure the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction is notified immediately and should record as much of the following information as possible:
- (1) Personal data of the missing person.
 - (2) Mental Condition of the missing person:
 - (a) Is the person despondent?
 - (b) Does the person suffer from a mental disorder or illness (i.e., Amnesia, Alzheimer's, etc.)?
 - (c) Is the person suicidal?
 - (d) Is the person homicidal?
 - (3) Physical Condition of the missing person?
 - (a) Has the person been ill recently or suffer from a long-term (chronic) illness?
 - (b) Is the person under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs?
 - (4) Is this the first time the person has been missing?
 - (5) How much time has passed since the person was last seen or heard from? When was the last contact with the person?
 - (6) Are there any unusual/suspicious circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the missing person?
 - (7) Additional pertinent data:
 - (a) Please provide a complete physical description of the missing person.
 - (b) Does the person have any outstanding features, such as glasses or unusual physical features?
 - (c) What was the last location at which the person had been seen/observed?
 - (d) Does the person take any medication?
 - (8) Did the person take extra clothing, luggage, or money?

- (9) Does the person have any friends in the area?
- (10) Is the person in the company of anyone?
- (11) Is the person known to frequent a particular area or location?
- (12) Did the person take a vehicle? If yes, please provide the following:
 - (a) Description (make and model) of the vehicle?
 - (b) What is the vehicle's license plate number? Who is the vehicle's registered owner?
 - (c) What was the last known direction of travel of the vehicle?
- (13) Does the person carry any weapons or is the person known to possess weapons?
- (14) Additional critical points and considerations for members:
 - (a) The mental condition of the subject is very important. The member should attempt to determine if there are any circumstances which should change the status from a "routine" to an "urgent" missing complaint. Some factors to be evaluated include whether the subject is despondent, suicidal, homicidal, chronically ill, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of disappearance.
 - (b) The member should inquire as to the possibility of the subject having gone to a friend's home, and whether the person making the report has checked those locations.

B Any member being notified by a member of the public about a **missing child** shall ensure the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction is notified immediately and should record as much of the following information as possible:

- (1) Personal data concerning the missing child.
- (2) Is this the first time the child has gone missing?
- (3) How much time has passed since the child was last seen or heard from? When was the last contact with the child?
- (4) Please provide a complete physical description including:
 - (a) Any outstanding/unusual physical features.
 - (b) Clothing.
 - (c) Unusual dress (costume).
 - (d) Unusual vehicle (wagon, scooter or pedal car).
- (5) Does the child have a known destination?
- (6) Is the child known to frequent a particular area or location?
- (7) Does the child have any friends in the area?
- (8) Is the child in the company of anyone?
- (9) Were there any unusual/suspicious circumstances (Family fight)?
- (10) Additional critical points and considerations for members:
 - (a) Age is an important factor.
 - 1. Extremely young children (toddlers to approximately four or five years old) may be expected to be found within a relatively short distance from the place of occurrence due to the fact that they are usually not physically capable of walking long distances and their "sphere of experience" is somewhat limited.
 - 2. Older children may be expected to travel further, such as to nearby playgrounds or a friend's home.

- (b) Physical Description.
 - 1. Young children may be expected to wear unusual costumes.
 - 2. Information concerning unusual vehicles, such as a wagon or pedal car, may assist in locating the child.
- (c) Known Destination/Known to Frequent Particular Place.
 - 1. Extremely young children may be expected to be located within relatively short distances. Potential search sites should include:
 - a. The residence. Often children will hide inside their own residence. A search by someone other than a parent may locate the child in a place overlooked by the parent.
 - b. Playgrounds, recreation areas.
 - c. Schools, churches, other public buildings.
 - d. Homes of friends, schoolmates.
 - 2. Determine if the child was in the company of anyone at the time of the disappearance (playmate, baby-sitter or non-custodial parent).
- (d) Determine whether there has been anything out of the ordinary, such as suspicious vehicles or strange persons in the area.

C Notification of the local agency having jurisdiction and internal Division follow-up

- (1) Upon or while recording the information listed above for a missing adult or child, the member shall ensure the the local agency having jurisdiction is notified and request that this agency accept the missing person report and assume the investigation in accordance with section 937.021(3), F.S.
 - (a) The member shall submit all information regarding the missing person to the local agency having jurisdiction.
 - (b) If at all possible, the member shall ensure that the local agency made contact with the person reporting the adult or child missing before returning to other duties.
 - (c) The member, through his or her chain of command, shall ensure that the local agency is aware of any assistance the Division might be able to offer in the investigation of a missing person.
- (2) Sworn members shall complete an Incident Summary Report documenting the information on the missing person and submit the report to the Regional Commander through the chain-of-command. The report should be transmitted to the member's supervisor before the member goes off-duty, but no later than 72 hours after the initial notification.

D Assistance and cooperation with other agencies

- (1) Members on the scene where a missing endangered person report is being taken shall obtain a detailed description of the missing person and relay that information to the Regional Communications Center. The description should include the clothing the person was last known to be wearing, where the person was last seen, any vehicle that the person may be using, as well as other pertinent information. If criminal activity is suspected in the disappearance, the member shall consult with the agency taking the missing person report before broadcasting any information over the radio.
- (2) The Regional Communications Center shall not enter "BOLOs" using the Florida Administrative Message or Administrative Message function through FCIC/NCIC for any missing persons. The BOLO via FCIC/NCIC is the responsibility of the agency that enters the missing person.

- (3) Reports of missing persons received by communications personnel from other agencies will be broadcast as a "Be on the lookout" (BOLO) immediately and entered into CAD/MCT as (BOLO) record.
- (4) Upon receipt of a recent report of a missing child, a supervisor in the area in which the child was last seen will be notified immediately.
- (5) Upon a request for assistance from another agency, Division resources, such as personnel, aircraft, and canines, may be used to search for missing persons.
- (6) Upon request, members shall assist the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearing House within the Department of Law Enforcement in the dissemination of information on missing endangered persons.
- (7) When flyers or posters are received in a Division office, they shall be posted in an area frequented by members. Flyers and bulletins may also be reproduced in sufficient quantity so that each member receives a copy. Flyers and posters, not containing confidential information, shall also be posted in areas open to the general public.
- (8) Members may assist with the dissemination of flyers and posters to other public agencies and appropriate public areas.

E Locating missing endangered persons

- (1) Upon locating a person who has been reported missing, the locating member shall:
 - (a) Ensure the safety of the subject, requesting medical assistance if necessary.
 - (b) Notify the Regional Communications Center and an on-duty supervisor.
 - (c) Arrange for returning the missing person to the appropriate parent, guardian or agency.
 - (d) Complete an Incident Summary Report concerning the incident.
- (2) The Duty Officer Supervisor will ensure that communications personnel notify the originating agency in order to have the person's name removed from FCIC/NCIC and notify the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearing House.

4 FORMS

| FORM NUMBER | FORM TITLE |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| | Incident Summary Report |