# CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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**Testimony to the Committee on Public Safety**
**Submitted March 3, 2009 by**
**Chief Anthony J. Salvatore and Chief James Strillacci**
**Legislative Co-Chairs**
**Connecticut Police Chiefs Association**

Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Good Morning. We are here representing the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association (CPCA), to testify on a number of Bills.

1. **R.B. No. 985, AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AUTOMATED VEHICLE INSURANCE IDENTIFICATION AND ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM.** CPCA supports this Bill, as it would aid law enforcement officers in identifying motor vehicles that are being operated in violation without proper insurance.

2. **R.B. No. 986, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISCLOSURE OF A POLICE OFFICER'S ADDRESS ON A TOWN'S GRAND LIST.** CPCA supports this Bill, as it would specifically prohibit municipal assessors or board of assessors from publicly disclosing the name and residential address of a sworn member of a municipal police department or a sworn member of the state police.

3. **R.B. No. 1007, AN ACT REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS MATCHES.** CPCA supports this Bill.

4. **R.B. No. 1010, AN ACT CONCERNING EXPOSURE TO INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS.** CPCA supports this Bill, as we believe that should emergency service organization personnel come in contact with a patient/person who has been diagnosed with an infectious disease, the organization as well as the individual should be notified.

5. **R.B. No. 6562, AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POLICE OFFICER TRAINING FACILITY.** CPCA supports this Bill, as it is long overdue. Other than the skid pan at the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden, we really do not have an adequate driver's training facility. Our instructors over the years have been very innovative with providing our recruit officers with training. We have used vacant stretches of highway, airports and a test facility in Colchester to accomplish this goal. CPCA is, however, also aware of the financial condition of the State and urges that if this is not possible this year, at some point in the future, it be considered.

6. **R.B. No. 6563, AN ACT CONCERNING THE INVESTIGATION OF MISSING PERSONS REPORTS.** CPCA opposes this Bill. Last year, CPCA, as well as the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) were requested initially by the Co-Chair of the Judiciary Committee and the Co-Chair of this committee and eventually through a public act 07-151 to develop a policy concerning the acceptance of missing person reports by law enforcement agencies and their response to said reports. This was accomplished by POST and disseminated to all law enforcement agencies as required by the public act. As a result of a survey conducted by POST, all law enforcement agencies in the State of Connecticut have adopted, at a minimum, the POST guidelines for handling missing person investigations and reports. A lot of hard work went into the preparation of these guidelines that are now presently taught in each recruit training class, as well as to in-service training sessions of veteran officers. CPCA opposes this legislation as costly and unnecessary. For your information, we are providing a copy of the POST guidelines and, as you will see, this matter is thoroughly covered within this document. In addition, utilizing the AMBER ALERT system for non-abductions dilutes the value of the system. Other states that have diminished their requirements, have found that, as a result, citizens are ignoring the alert messages. Also, this is a protocol that was agreed upon and ultimately approved by the Connecticut Broadcasters Association of which governs the use of the alert on radio and television. CPCA again urges your opposition to this proposal.

7. **R.B. No. 6564, AN ACT CONCERNING A PERMIT FOR THE SALE AND CARRYING OF ELECTRONIC DEFENSE WEAPONS.** CPCA opposes this Bill, as it is not the legislation that was initially drafted. We are suggesting that this Bill be redrafted to allow for the issuance of a State Permit to Carry by the local Chief of Police, or appropriate person, as defined by law. Prior to the dangerous permit process being repealed, this was the process for the issuance of said permit. We believe that this can be accomplished in the manner of which we have suggested and meet the goals of public safety. Once again, we would be happy to meet with those persons responsible for redrafting this legislation and work with them.

*Police Officer Standards and Training Council*

# *Guidelines for Handling Missing Persons Investigations and Acceptance of Reports*

*January, 2008*

*Thomas E. Flaherty, Executive Director*

The Police Officer Standards and Training Council, a Connecticut State Agency, is empowered under Section 7-294a-e of the General Statutes.

Pursuant to Connecticut Public Act 07-151, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council has developed a suggested policy concerning the acceptance of missing person reports by law enforcement agencies in this state and such agencies' response thereto.

The Council intends this policy to be a resource for law enforcement agencies in the development of additional training and departmental policies for responding to missing persons cases.

The Police Officer Standards and Training Council's Policy for Law Enforcement Units in the State of Connecticut, concerning missing persons, is divided into the following categories:

1. Missing Persons: Terms and Definitions

2. Categories, Descriptions and Examples

3. Guidelines for Handling Investigations
    a. Acceptance of an Initial Report
    b. Officer's Initial Contact at the Scene
    c. Reporting Responsibilities
    d. Considerations for Closure

A final section provides Additional Resources: Agencies and Organizations

# Missing Persons: Terms and Definitions

| Term | Definition |
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| **Missing Person** | Any person who is reported missing to a law enforcement unit until the person is located or determined to be a voluntarily 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 need of assistance per CGS Section 46b-120. |
| **Missing Child** | Any person who is under the age of eighteen years, 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 a law enforcement agency CGS-29-1e(b)(1). |
| **Reporting Myth** | It is an incorrect assumption that 24 hours, or any other time frame, must pass before a law enforcement unit will accept a missing person report. There is NO waiting period for reporting a missing person. |
| **Missing Child Report** | A report prepared on a form designated by the Department of Public Safety for the use by private citizens and law enforcement agencies to report missing children information to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse. CGS Sec 29-1e.<br><br>Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under fifteen years of age shall immediately accept such report for filing and inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies. (Sec. 7-282c CGS). |
| **Evidence that a Missing Person is "At Risk"** | "At Risk" includes, but is not limited to, the person missing being the victim of a crime or foul play, in need of medical attention, has no pattern of running away or disappearing, the victim of a parent/family abduction, or mentally impaired. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council policy presumes that every missing person will be considered at high risk until significant information to the contrary is confirmed. |

**Missing/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 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 "absent 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.

**Evidence that a Missing Person is a "Youth in Crisis"**

"Youth in Crisis" per CGS Sec 46b-120 means any youth who, within the last two years, (A) has without just cause run away from the parental home or other properly authorized and lawful place of abode, (B) is beyond the control of parents, guardian or other custodian, or (C) has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences in any school year.

**AMBER Alert**

Defined as "America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response" Alert, it is 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. The system can be activated by any police unit in the state. The State Police Message Center is the clearinghouse for all AMBER Alert information and there is a set procedure for activating, broadcasting and deactivating the system.

**Technology Based Notification Systems**

A computer system known as TRAK (Technology to Recover Abducted Kids) is operated by the Connecticut Missing Person Clearinghouse, which is organized to assist with missing person investigations and to do research and planning. The clearing house can create, retrieve and distribute missing person color posters electronically through the TRAK system CGS 29-1e). Another major resource is the National Missing Children Hotline, accessible at (800) 843-5678. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) also offers the Lost Child Alert Technology Resource (LOCATER) which is also available to law enforcement at no cost.

The "Eagle Eye" network may be used whenever a child under the age of 16 is suspected or known to be abducted and cannot be located. It is initiated by contacting State Police CCIU to arrange for a missing person poster to be sent to the U.S. Postal Service for distribution. The information may also be posted on the SPIN electronic bulletin board.

**DNA**

Defined as a material that is found in the nucleus of white blood cells and some structures outside the nucleus called mitochondria. Known as the "blueprint of life," it acts as a genetic code that distinguishes one person from another.

**DNA Data Base**

The Department of Justice is responsible for the DNA data base for all cases involving the report of an unidentified deceased person or a high-risk missing person. The DOJ data base is called CODIS, an acronym for "Combined DNA Index System. The system is similar in concept to that of the fingerprint index process, in attempting to identify offenders by their unique genetic substance and link them to the crime.

**NCIC**

National Crime Information Center. Nationwide, on-line computer telecommunications system that is maintained by the FBI.

NCIC's Missing Person File was implemented in 1975. Records in the Missing Person File are retained indefinitely, until the individual is located or the record is canceled by the entering agency.

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| **UPS** | Unidentified Persons System, an automated database maintained by the Department of Justice (DOJ). |
| **NCIC Number** | National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Number. A computer-generated number automatically assigned by NCIC to each accepted record. Usually noted on the reporting agency's Missing Person Report. |
| **CODIS** | Combined DNA Index System for Missing Persons Generates investigative leads in cases where biological evidence is recovered from the crime scene. |
| **IAFIS** | Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System a national fingerprint and criminal history system maintained by the FBI, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division. |
| **ViCAP** | Violent Criminal Apprehension Program<br>This national data center is designed to collect, collate, and analyze information on crimes of violence. |
| **Runaway** | Any child who is voluntarily missing. |
| **Stranger Abduction** | Missing person taken/kidnapped by a stranger (includes cases of a known abductor who is not a family member). |
| **Lost** | Missing person who has strayed away and whose whereabouts are unknown. |
| **Suspicious Circumstances** | Circumstances which give rise to the belief that "foul play" may have been involved; the disappearance is out of character for the individual and no known reason can be determined. |
| **Parent/Family Abduction** | A child who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent or non-parent family member. |
| **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 handicapped). |
| **Voluntary Missing Adult** | Missing adult who has left on his/her own free will. |
| **Unknown Missing** | Child or adult who is reported missing, but there are insufficient facts to determine the circumstances. |

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| **Catastrophic Missing** | Missing person is possibly a victim of a disaster (i.e., boating accident, plane crash, earthquake, flood, fire, terrorist act, etc.). |

# Categories/Descriptions/Examples

| Category | Description | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **Runaway** | A child who is reported missing but has left on their own free will or has been rejected or "thrown-away" by their family | A 15 year old child, who was angry about the parent's strict rules, is reported missing after leaving home without telling the parents and fails to return. |
| **Stranger Abduction** | Child or adult who is taken or abducted against their will by an unknown person or a known person who is not a family member. | A 10 year old child is reported missing when the child fails to come home from school and a neighbor reports seeing the child being physically forced into a van by an unknown individual. |
| **Lost** | Child or adult who is reported to have strayed away and whose where-abouts is unknown | A teenager is reported missing after leaving a group of friends at their camp site to hike in a nearby wooded area and has failed to return before dark. |
| **Suspicious Circumstances** | Child or adult who is reported missing, and the circumstances give rise to believe that:<br>■ foul play may be involved,<br>■ the person is a danger to self or others (due to mental, physical or emotional condition) or<br>■ the disappearance is out of character for the individual and no known reasons can be determined | A woman who is eight months pregnant and lives with her parents is reported missing when she does not return home from a shopping trip and is last seen getting into a vehicle and leaving the parking lot with two men. |
| **Parent/Family Abduction** | Child who is taken, detained | A seven year old child is |

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| | concealed, enticed away, or retained by a parent or other family member | reported missing by the child's mother (who is the custodial parent) after the child is picked up from school by the child's father and taken to an undisclosed location. |
| **Dependent Adult** | Adult who is reported missing and who has physical or mental limitations which restrict their abilities to carry out normal activities | A 46 year old adult with memory impairment who resides at a care facility is reported missing after leaving the facility with a group of unknown visitors and then boards a city bus. |
| **Voluntarily Missing Adult** | Adult who is reported missing, but who has left of their own free will | A person who is otherwise very dependable is reported missing by the person's employer after the person failed to report to work for three consecutive days and did not answer the phone. It is later determined that the person moved out of the apartment without telling anyone or leaving a forwarding address. |
| **Unknown** | Child or adult who is reported missing, but there are insufficient facts to determine the circumstances | A person is reported missing after failing to return home in a reasonable amount of time after taking the family dog out for a walk. |
| **Catastrophe** | Child or adult who is reported missing and assumed to be a victim of disaster (fire, flood, earthquake, terrorist act, etc.) | A person last seen in an apartment building is destroyed by fire and the person cannot be located. |

## Guidelines for Handling Missing Persons Investigations

The Police Officer Standards and Training Council guidelines for handling complaints and investigations are divided into four sections:

**Acceptance of Initial Call,**

**Officer's Initial Contact at the Scene,**

**Report Responsibilities, and**

**Closure of Investigation**

# A. Acceptance of Initial Call

**Guideline 1:** **Determination of missing person case and sensitivity to the reporting party.**

1) Officers, dispatchers or other designated personnel who take the initial call, by telephone, in person, or by electronic media, shall determine if the call is a missing person case according to the definition of a missing person – **see References: Missing Persons Terms and Definitions.**

2) Reporting parties and families of missing persons often experience feelings of helplessness and anxiety. Dispatchers, officers or other designated personnel dealing with these persons should be sensitive to those feelings and respond appropriately. There are two dimensions to a missing person investigation:

   A. locating and determining the well-being of the missing person
   B. supporting the person initiating the report and the loved ones who were left behind.

3) Officers need to act in a swift, organized and efficient manner. In cases of child abductions, studies show the majority of children are killed within the first three hours of the abduction.

**Guideline 2:** **Confirmation of responsibility for acceptance of report, priority in handling and agency notification.**

a. It is the duty of all law enforcement agencies to immediately assist any person who is attempting to make a report of a missing person or runaway and a report shall be accepted regardless of jurisdiction.

b. Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under fifteen years of age shall immediately accept such report for filing and inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies. (Sec. 7-282c CGS).

c. When dealing with missing person jurisdictional issues, it is not uncommon for multiple agencies to be involved in the same case. It is essential that agencies work closely together in order to enhance, and not impede, the investigation of the case.

   The Police Officer Standards and Training Council recommends that the law enforcement unit taking the initial missing persons report "promptly notify," and send copies of the report to, the law enforcement unit that has jurisdiction over the missing person's resident address and to the law enforcement unit where the missing person was last seen. It may also be appropriate to notify the law enforcement unit having jurisdiction of the missing person's intended destination.

d. Dispatchers, officers or other designated personnel should consider the intent of these guidelines is to ensure that missing person cases are given appropriate priority over property related cases.

   1. Special attention should be given to reports of missing children or for persons with physical or mental limitations. These persons are at greater risk of harm.
   2. Law enforcement units should define, through their department policies, the words "without delay" with a specific time frame that conveys urgency with the understanding that a child/adult may potentially be in danger.
   3. A common myth that 24 hours (**or any other time frame**) must pass before law enforcement will accept a missing person report is **incorrect**. A delay in reporting may indicate the existence of neglect or abuse within the family.

e. Each law enforcement unit receiving notification of jurisdiction over any aspect of a missing person investigation should promptly give appropriate assistance in the active investigation, follow-up as requested by the law enforcement unit making the request, and provide all reports, records and assistance appropriate to the investigation.

## B. Officer's Initial Contact at the Scene

**Guideline 3: Officer's initial contact: making an assessment at the scene.**

a. Officers or other designated personnel shall interview, with sensitivity, the reporting party and any witnesses to determine:
   1. That this is a missing person case.
   2. If the person may be at risk – or the existence of any suspicious circumstances.
   3. If there is any potential crime scene area and/or potential witnesses.

b. Many times, parents or guardians are anxious to assist law enforcement in the initial phase of the investigation and they will want to provide additional documents to assist in the location of their loved one. Besides obtaining photographs of the missing person, additional items such as fingerprint cards obtained through community fair projects, items containing DNA samples of the missing person, or other related documents may be offered voluntarily by the family. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council recommends that responding officers accept these items and properly document their collection in their reports. These items should be treated, submitted and stored as evidence. Officers should also inform the follow-up investigators that these items have been collected.

c. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council recommends that the following information be obtained to aid in the search for the person and completion of the reports:
   1) Name, age and physical description of the missing person, and relationship of the reporting person to the missing person;
   2) Time and place last seen and the identity of anyone accompanying the missing person;
   3) The extent of any search already conducted for the missing person;
   4) Whether the missing person has been reported missing before and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits or plans;
   5) Whether the missing person has been involved recently in domestic problems; suffered emotional trauma or life crises;

demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior; has talked about running away or committing suicide; is dependent on drugs or alcohol; or has a history of mental illness;

6) The physical condition of the missing person and whether the person is currently on prescription medication. Find out if the person took the needed medication with them;
7) Any information about a vehicle or other form of transportation;
8) Determine if the missing person has taken anything with them (e.g., food, clothing, money, weapons, personal items). Do they have a bank account? (check at bank for activity);
9) If at the missing person's home, check for notes, travel folders, newspaper articles or like items in the person's room. If there is a computer, consider appropriate safeguards for later analysis;
10) At the earliest possible moment, notify dispatcher and all on-duty officers;
11) Ask if the missing person has a cell telephone or pager. Record and call the number. Leave a message if voice mail picks up;
12) Ask about relatives, friends or neighbors the missing person might see; and
13) Has the missing person failed to perform some important task? (e.g., pick-up children, feed pets?)

**d.** When a child is reported missing, regardless of reason, the responding officer will immediately notify a supervisor.

**Guideline 4:** **Making a further assessment to determine what reasonable steps should be taken to locate the missing person.**

**a.** Based upon the law, circumstances of each case and departmental policy, appropriate actions minimally include:

1. Obtaining a complete description of missing person, notify dispatch and all on-duty officers.
2. Broadcasting a "Be On the Look-Out" (BOLO) bulletin within its jurisdiction if the missing person is under 16 years of age; if there is evidence that the missing person is at risk.
3. Enter information into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) and N.C.I.C.
4. Lay groundwork for neighborhood or area canvass. Determine what personnel and resources are required for this search.
5. Determine if there is any area or property to be protected as a crime scene.

**b.** Determine if the missing person fits the mandatory criteria for an AMBER Alert. The criteria are:

1. The missing person must be under the age of 18 or of proven mental or physical disability.
2. Belief the missing child is in imminent danger of bodily injury or death.
3. Must have accurate information on at least one of the following:
   I. Description of child or
   II. Description of suspect, or
   III. Description of vehicle.
4. If above criteria are met, and there is no extenuating investigative need that dictates otherwise, the Emergency Alert System should be activated.
5. If the missing person does NOT fit the above criteria, officers should continue to exercise discretion in determining which of the many other tools available would be the most appropriate for transmitting information and photographs to other officers, the media and the public.

**c.** Consider calling a supervisor and/or investigator to the location. Ask supervisor to assist in determining the scope and area of search operations. Call for any other assistance or support required. Protect all crime scenes. Identified search areas should have restricted access. Set up staging areas to control and organize a large number of searchers.

**d.** Thoroughly search the immediate and surrounding area in a logical and systematic manner.

1) Process any potential crime scene for evidence.
2) Identify and interview potential witnesses.
3) Consider using a standardized search checklist which should include the last known location of the missing person and any likely locations where the person may have gone.
4) Consider using additional resources to assist in the search:

   I. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
   II. Department of Justice (DOJ)
   III. Critical Reach, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC),
   IV. National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA), and others.

**e.** Examine court orders regarding custody matters, if applicable.

**f.** Consider notifying other agencies for assistance in locating the missing person in their related jurisdiction.

1) The agency where the missing person was last seen may initiate the investigation.

2) It is essential that agencies work together to enhance the success of the investigation.

**g.** In high risk, at risk or high priority cases where canine assistance will be requested, officers should identify but not touch any "scent article." Allow the dog handler to take possession of the article. Vehicles can be scent articles in a search.

**h.** Request voluntary assistance from the family or reporting party in obtaining initial items of evidence belonging to the missing person such as:

1) Recent photograph(s) of missing person.
Also try to obtain photos depicting the person smiling with their teeth showing (beneficial for assisting in dental comparison and identification.
2) Personal clothing, bedding, personal hygiene items, etc., that may contain DNA with evidentiary value (direct all questions about DNA collection to the State Forensic Laboratory, biology).
3) Any personal items that contain the missing person's scent (for search dogs).
4) Suggested items include hat, comb/brush, sock, razor, toothbrushes, under garments, etc., that were recently worn by the missing person and <u>not</u> <u>handled</u> by anyone else.
5) Items taken from a family laundry hamper, containing a <u>mix</u> of family member's clothing, will not be beneficial.
6) Such "scent articles" should be placed in a clean paper bag using a clean glove or a clean stick.
7) Personal electronic devices (cell phones, or cell phone number for tracking purposes, pagers, credit cards, ATM cards, toll passes, computers and any online resources such as: screen names, email sources, websites they may frequent, etc.)

**i.** Obtain a list of persons known by the missing person's friends, co-workers, acquaintances, associates, etc.

**j.** Obtain a list of locations frequented by the missing person, hobbies, interests, preferences and predilections.

## C. Reporting Responsibilities

**Guideline 5** **Report Responsibilities:**

**a.** All law enforcement agencies shall submit to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse all missing child reports received by any such agency CGS 29-1e(d).

Any municipal police department which receives a report of a missing child under fifteen years of age shall immediately accept such report for filing and inform all on-duty police officers of the existence of the missing child report and communicate the report to other appropriate law enforcement agencies. (Sec. 7-282c CGS).

**b.** All law enforcement agencies shall submit appropriate information into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system.

**c.** All law enforcement agencies shall require written reports to be completed by investigating officers. Officer reports on missing person cases will be reviewed contemporaneously by supervisors.

**d.** Information regarding missing persons under 16 years of age, or where there is evidence that the missing person is "at risk," shall be entered into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system within four (4) hours by the law enforcement unit taking the report.

**e.** SPECIAL NOTE: A report of a missing person under the age of 21 must be reported to the U.S. department of Justice's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) per Federal Law, Crime Control Act of 1990.

**Guideline 6** **Interaction with Complainants and Others**

It is important that officers remain in open contact with the family of all missing persons and with any other associated person. In missing person investigations, law enforcement units should consider appointing and assigning an officer as "family liaison" to keep families updated on the progress of the investigation, to assist with the preparation and distribution of missing person posters, to provide support and coordination with all missing person organizations, and to focus the point of contact for communications. All officers, investigators and supervisors involved in missing person investigations need to be particularly sensitive to the interests, concerns and needs of the family or other reporting persons and, to the fullest extent possible, continually communicate relevant and appropriate information on the handling of the case.

It is not uncommon for the reporting persons or those left behind to experience significant emotional responses. They are dealing with a situation which is at the very highest stress level possible. Medical support, including consultation with a therapist is advisable, however law enforcement should advise the reporting

party of two clearing houses to also report to: for a missing person under the age of 17, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; for a missing person over the age of 18, contact the National Center for Missing Adults.

Reporting persons must also know that for adults, being a missing person is not a crime. Once the person is located, police cannot divulge information about them without the person's consent.

**Guideline 7** **Initiate follow-up contacts within 30 days.**

a. Officers or other designated personnel should re-contact the reporting party with 30 days of the initial report to determine if any additional information may have become available.

b. Other agencies involved in this case should also be contacted to determine if any additional information is available.

**Guideline 8** **When a missing person is found, the law enforcement unit must report this event through all formal channels.**

**a.** When any person reported missing is found, the officer, dispatcher or other designated personnel shall prepare a formal report of that event.

**b.** The reporting party and other involved agencies shall be notified and the notification recorded on the law enforcement unit's reporting form.

**c.** Any automated systems entries shall be cancelled.

**d.** Information regarding any found, unidentified persons, alive or deceased, should be entered into the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system and NCIC.

**e.** In the event that a missing person is found before being reported missing to the Connecticut On-line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system, a missing person report, followed by a cancellation, must still be made into the system.

**f.** Interviews on return can reveal valuable information about the reasons for going missing, where the missing person has been, with who they have been and what they have been doing. In many cases, the missing person will refuse to cooperate.

g. It must be borne in mind that sometimes the reason for running away is to escape abuse by a family member or care giver. If the interview is conducted in their presence, the aggrieved is unlikely to reveal that and the person will simply have returned to the place of abuse.

## D. Closure of Missing Person Investigation

**Guideline 9 Considerations for closure of missing person investigation.**

a. Careful consideration should be made concerning clearing a missing person investigation.

b. Obvious closure is appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned or evidence has matched an unidentified person or body.

c. Inability to move forward in the investigation should not be a reason for closing a case.
   1. By closing a case in such a manner, all evidence may be lost for the future identification of a deceased person.
   2. An unidentified body may be discovered several years later, after the missing person report had been filed and prematurely closed.
   3. In such a case, there may be no relevant evidence that may assist in identifying the body, further hindering a death investigation.

d. When the reported missing person is under the age of eighteen (18):
   1. The missing person should remain classified under their actual age as when originally reported missing, regardless of their current age.
   2. A missing child report should not be cancelled and re-entered simply because the child has reached adulthood.
   3. The missing child report should not be removed or cancelled from any automated system due to emancipation or reaching adulthood.

# Additional Resources: Agencies and Organizations

1. **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).**
   NCMEC was established in 1984 as a private, nonprofit, and tax exempt organization to provide services nationwide for families and professionals, to prevent the abduction, endangerment and sexual exploitation of children.

   NCMEC's national office is
   699 Prince Street
   Alexandria, VA 22314
   (800) 843-5678
   **www.missingkids.com**

2. **Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" Program**
   This is a nationwide identification registry program designed to assist law enforcement agencies with information to quickly identify and return those individuals who have wandered off. It offers

   A 24 hour hotline service
   Provides names, photographs, identifying characteristics and emergency contact information
   Offers a Law Enforcement Officer's Pocket Response Guide that describes the best ways to recognize, communicate with and respond to a person with Alzheimer's.

   Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" program
   (800) 272-3900
   www.alz.org

3. **US Department of State, Child Custody Division**
   This agency is the central authority for providing assistance regarding international parent/family abduction.
   Bureau of Consular Affairs, US State Department
   (202) 736-7000

4. **US Department of State, Office of Passport Services**
   Authorized to revoke passports of citizens who are subject to federal warrants
   (202) 955-0307

5. **US Postal Service**
   Access to databases of the names of all individuals within the nation who filed "Change of Address" forms
   Will provide law enforcement agencies with return address and postmark information on mail destined for a specific address
   02) 268-4267

6. **US Department of Defense**
   Information about current and past assignments of active duty members of the Armed Forces
   (800) 336-4592

7. **US Office of Personnel Management**
   Address information about retired members of Armed Forces or retired federal civil service employees
   Address information of where retiree's federal pension payments are mailed.
   (202) 606-2424

8. **Fisher Scientific Catalog** (FTA Collection Cards and Sponges)
   (800) 766-7000
   www.fishersci.com

9. **MedTech Forensics Catalog** (FTA Collection Cards and Sponges)
   (800) 596-6420
   www.medtechforensics.com

10. **National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA)**
    A division of Nation's Missing Children Organization
    4641 North 12th Street, Suite 100
    Phoenix, AZ 85014
    (800) 690-FIND
    www.theyaremissed.org