

UW Whitewater Police



Missing Person- Adult

Special Instructions:		Number: 41.2.5	No. Pages: 6
		Reviewed: 02/25/25	
Approved By: Chief Kiederlen	Effective Date: 8/2/2013	Revised Date: 5/1/24	Revision number: 3

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide all members of UW-Whitewater Police Department (UWWPD) in their roles and necessary actions during a missing person investigation involving an adult.

II. Definitions

Juvenile: Under Wisconsin State Statutes, a juvenile is a person that is under 18 years of age. Juveniles may be reported as missing by their parent or legal guardian.

Adult: A person who is 18 years of age or older.

Silver Alert: An alert system designed to warn the public if a person 60 years or older is missing or endangered.

Green Alert: An alert designed to warn the public if an at-risk veteran is missing.

Veteran at Risk: A veteran or active duty member of the armed forces, the national Guard or the military reserve forces of the United States who is known, based on information provided by the person making the report, to have a physical or mental health condition that is related to their service.

III. Policy

It shall be the policy of UW-Whitewater Police Department (UWWPD) to thoroughly investigate all reports of missing persons. UWWPD will respond swiftly to any report of a missing person. Staff will take down all information on the circumstances that the person is missing. There is no requirement that a certain amount of time to pass before the department begins an investigation.

IV. Procedure

A. **Jurisdiction:** Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided when a person is reported missing.

1. If a missing person either resides in, or was last seen in UWWPD jurisdiction, this agency will immediately initiate actions to locate the missing person.

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2. If an adult resides in this jurisdiction, or is a UW-Whitewater Student, but is reported missing in another jurisdiction, this agency will assist with any means necessary to attempt to locate the person. This is especially important because of the transient nature of the university population with going to permanent residences on weekends and breaks, into the City of Whitewater and other nearby events for entertainment, food, etc.

B. At Risk/Critically Missing Adults:

1. A missing adult will be considered at risk when one or more of the risk factors listed below are present.
 - a. Has mental or behavioral issues.
 - b. Is drug dependent, including prescribed medication, alcohol and/or illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life-threatening.
 - c. Was last seen highly intoxicated or under the influence of other drugs causing them to not be in total control of themselves.
 - d. Has been absent from their residence for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing.
 - e. Is in a life-threatening situation (severe or inclement weather).
 - f. Is in the company of others who could endanger his or her welfare.
 - g. Is absent in a way inconsistent with established pattern of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained.
 - h. Has a condition that may make them not be able to care for themselves or a danger to themselves (Example: Alzheimer's Disease).
 - i. Is involved in a situation causing a reasonable person to conclude the person should be considered at risk.
2. If it is determined risk factors are involved in the report of a missing person, the person will be considered at risk and the expanded investigation will commence.
3. If appropriate, existing interagency response protocol, including Silver and Green Alert Systems and/or other immediate community notification methods should be used, i.e. crime alerts, TIME system message.

C. Initial Responding Officer(s) Duties:

1. The initial responding officer should immediately speak with the complainant, in person if possible.
2. The officer will interview the parent(s) or person who made the initial report about the circumstances of the missing person.
3. The officer will obtain a detailed description of the missing person, including clothing last seen in, height, weight, hair color, and eye color and then update other officers of this information. This officer should also gather photo(s) of the missing person, if applicable.
4. The officer should also attempt to get contact information for communication devices the person may have and social media the person commonly uses.

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5. Identify the circumstances of the missing episode to see if any risk factors are present. The on-duty or on-call supervisor should be notified as soon as possible if there are any risk factors present. When in doubt, contact the supervisor.
6. Determine when, where and by whom the missing person was last seen. This information can narrow down the timeframe of the missing person. Get witnesses that may have seen information or comments the person may have made.
7. Interview the individual(s) who last had contact with the missing person. Officers should watch for any inconsistency in version of events and possible deceptive behavior.
8. Make an initial assessment of the type of incident.
9. Obtain a description of the suspected abductors, suspicious people in the area or other information, such as photos of possible suspects and video evidence from the area, if applicable.
10. Determine the correct NCIC Missing Person File category and ensure the notification is promptly transmitted. (Categories are juvenile, disability, endangered, involuntary and catastrophe).
11. Provide detailed description information to Dispatch for broadcast updates. This should include City of Whitewater Police, but may be expanded to other areas depending on circumstances.
12. Identify and separately interview everyone at the scene, if applicable.
13. Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the scene and surrounding area, if applicable. Officers should start with areas of concern, such as standing water in the area.
14. Seal/protect scene, such area of person's residence and areas of interest as potential crime scenes, if applicable.
15. Other resources that an officer can use to see if the person is at risk are as follows:
 - a. Access Logs (To see if coming and going from Residence Halls).
 - b. University Surveillance Cameras (Can they be seen entering areas?).
 - c. Hawk card Use (Are they buying meals, doing laundry?).
 - d. Class Schedule/Professors (Are they attending classes?).
 - e. CARE Team (Have they had any issues with this person, does CARE team have their contact information?).
 - f. Emergency contacts (Have they had recent contact from this person?).
 - g. Residence Life Staff (Have they seen person or can they watch for person?).
16. Complete a detailed report of all the above gathered information and initial actions taken.

D. Reporting Incident to a Supervisor and Supervisor Actions.

1. The initial officer should update the on-duty or on-call supervisor as soon as possible if there are any risk factors present. When in doubt, contact the supervisor.
2. The supervisor should be updated on the circumstances of the missing person, away from family and friends, so that a decision can be made about what resources and actions should occur next.

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3. The supervisor should contact the Chief, or designee, as soon as possible so university contacts can be made, if necessary.
4. Consider activation of the Silver or Green Alert system-and/or other immediate community notification methods, including campus alert systems, if applicable.
5. The supervisor or designated officer should establish a command post and staging areas in the vicinity to run the operation, if applicable.
6. The supervisor should organize and coordinate search efforts geographically with other responding agencies, if applicable.
7. The supervisor will verify all required notifications have been made, such as NCIC entry and legal guardians contacted.
8. The supervisor will establish a liaison with the family to give status updates as the investigation continues.
9. The supervisor will ensure all policies and procedures are observed.
10. The supervisor will manage the media relations, by setting up a media area, if appropriate, and contacting University Marketing and Communications (UMC).

E. Detective/Residence Hall Officer/Sensitive Crimes Investigator Assigned to the Investigation.

1. Obtain a briefing from agency personnel at the scene.
2. Verify the accuracy of the person's description and be alert to inconsistencies.
3. Initiate a neighborhood investigation to include a canvass of the area for anyone that might have information related to this investigation but might not know it, such as seeing a car that did not belong in the neighborhood earlier in the day.
4. Obtain a brief history of recent dynamics, such as sick relative, problems with school or relationships.
5. Explore the basis for any conflicting information and correct the information through follow up.
6. Coordinate all remaining key investigative and coordination steps.
7. Implement effective case management strategies.
8. Evaluate the need for additional resources such as fire department personnel, search teams or extra law enforcement officers, if applicable.
9. Update the description information if the case is not concluded quickly to include dental information, scars, marks, tattoos and fingerprints.
10. Monitor Media relations with University Marketing and Communications.

F. Silver Alert

1. Silver Alert legislation requires law enforcement to issue a Silver Alert when the following criteria are met:
 - a. The missing person is 60 years of age or older.
 - b. The missing person is believed to have Alzheimer's, dementia, or another permanent cognitive impairment that poses a threat to their health and safety.
 - c. There is reasonable belief that the missing person's disappearance is due to their impaired cognitive condition.

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- d. The Silver Alert request is made within 72 hours of the individual's disappearance.
- e. There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the missing person.
- f. The missing person has been entered into NCIC.
- 2. Alerts:
 - a. Silver alerts go out through email, text message or fax using the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network (WCAN).
 - b. Alerts may also be broadcast through television and radio, digital billboards, lottery display terminals, and DOT highway digital message signs.
- 3. The request form to initiate a Silver Alert can be found at the following website: www.wilenet.org. Dispatch shall provide the required information to the Wisconsin State Patrol Traffic Management Center who then contacts a DCI Supervisor for approval and activation.
- 4. If the Silver Alert is approved, DCI will handle issuance of the Silver Alert.
 - a. A Silver alert is only valid for 24 hours.
 - b. If the subject of the silver alert is not found after 24 hours, an extension must be requested.
 - c. Wisconsin DOJ must be contacted to cancel the alert within one hour of locating the subject of the alert. The supervisor shall notify dispatch or other designee to cancel the alert.
- 5. As Alzheimer's and dementia are not limited to those 60 and older, where individuals are missing and at risk but do not meet the criteria for a Silver Alert, your agency is encouraged to issue a Missing/Endangered alert through the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network. DCI can send out such an alert on your behalf if needed.

G. Green Alert

- 1. Wisconsin Act 175 requires the DOJ to allow law enforcement agencies to use its crime alert network to disseminate to broadcasters and outdoor advertisers reports of missing veterans at risk.
- 2. When the department receives information pertaining to a missing veteran at risk within 72 hours of the individual's disappearance, the department shall disseminate the report as quickly as practically possible if the following conditions apply:
 - a. There is reason to believe the veteran at risk is missing due to their physical or mental health condition;
 - b. There is sufficient information available to disseminate that could assist in locating the missing veteran.
- 3. If the above conditions are met and it is confirmed that a veteran at risk is missing, a department authorized Green Alert shall go out by email, text message, or fax through the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network (WCAN) to notify the public that a veteran at risk is missing.

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4. The content of the Green Alert shall be approved by a supervisor prior to distribution. The alert shall not contain any information that is HIPPA protected or sensitive in nature.
5. The Green Alert is valid for as long as the department designates.
6. Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) must be contacted to cancel the alert within one hour of locating the subject of the alert. The supervisor shall notify dispatch or other designee to cancel the alert.

H. If the Person is Located:

1. Complete the appropriate supplemental reports and cancel all notifications, Crime Alert, NCIC, Silver or Green Alerts, etc.
2. Contact university staff, such as Chief, or designee, Dean of Students, Residence Life, etc. that were looking for the person.
3. The officer should contact the complainant to advise them the person was located.