

ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
* PROCEDURAL ORDERS*

Effective: 09/13/2006; Replaces: 10/31/00
06-POR03

2-35 CHILD ABDUCTION/MISSING CHILD INVESTIGATIONS

POLICY:

Department policy is to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to thoroughly investigate reports of a missing child in order to determine if the missing child has been abducted. The Child Exploitation Detail will assume case responsibility for all verified child abduction cases and will assume case responsibility for missing child cases where there are factors that indicate the disappearance of the child is unusual, or the possibility exists that the missing child is at risk. Additionally, the Department believes that every child reported missing is considered "at risk" until sufficient information to the contrary is confirmed.

DEFINITIONS:

2-35-1

A. ABDUCTED CHILD

A child who is younger than 18 years of age who has been maliciously taken, detained, concealed or enticed away by a person(s) who does not have custodial rights to the child.

B. MISSING CHILD

A child who is younger than 18 years of age, whose whereabouts is unknown to a parent, guardian, or responsible party.

C. ZONE OF SAFETY

A dwelling, school, play area, other areas of activity whether public or private, or any other area that provides a reasonable expectation of safety including situations where children over ten years of age are under the supervision of persons who are authorized to provide a zone of safety, or situations where children ten years of age or less are required by law to be under the supervision of an adult.

PROCEDURES:

2-35-2 INVESTIGATIVE FACTORS - CIRCUMSTANCES TO CONSIDER

Certain factors may exist when an officer is dispatched to a missing/abducted child incident that should be considered. These factors could aid the officer in determining if a true abduction has taken place. The factors to consider include, but are not limited to:

- A. Is the child 13 years of age or younger?
- B. Is the child out of the zone of safety for his/her age and developmental stage?
- C. Is the mental capacity of the child diminished?

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- D. Does the child take prescribed medication and/or is the child drug dependant on elicit substances?
- E. Is the child a potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation?
- F. Is the situation considered life threatening in any way?
- G. Did the incident occur near a truck-stop or busy thoroughfare?
- H. Has the child been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to police as missing?
- I. Is the child believed to be with adults who could endanger his or her welfare?
- J. Is the child absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior?
- K. Does the child's disappearance involve circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to believe that the child should be considered at risk?

2-35-3 RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR MISSING CHILD/CHILD ABDUCTION INVESTIGATIONS

- A. Air Support Unit
- B. APD Metro Division
- C. APD Canine Unit
- D. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- E. Technology to Recover Abducted Kids (TRAK) - TRAK is an enclosed computer system used to send information and graphics statewide and/or nationwide to other agencies using the TRAK System.
- F. Horse Mounted Unit
- G. New Mexico State Police
- H. Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department
- I. Federal Bureau of Investigation
- J. **A Child is Missing Alert Program**

2-35-4 INVESTIGATION OF CHILD ABDUCTION/ MISSING CHILD CASES

- [6] A. Communications duties:
- 1. Determine if circumstances of the report meet the requirements of an abducted/missing child as set forth in 2-35-1 above.
 - 2. Immediately dispatch an officer to the scene of the incident.
 - 3. Notify the on-duty Communications supervisor.
 - 4. Dispatch a Field Services supervisor, transmit the appropriate radio alerts and other notifications, and update this information as it becomes available.
 - 5. Search radio/dispatch records for related information and relay this information to the responding officer and/or field supervisor.
 - 6. Safeguard all pertinent records, such as handwritten notes and dispatch logs.

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7. Ensure that relieving dispatch personnel are fully briefed and have possession of pertinent records when taking over the dispatch responsibilities.
8. Ensure that on-coming commanders/supervisors are made aware of the call.
9. Contact the relevant agencies/resources listed in subsection 2-35-3 upon request.

B. Responding officers duties:

1. Interview the parent/guardian making the report.
2. Conduct a thorough search of the immediate area including residence(s), vehicles, other buildings, swimming pools, etc.
3. Obtain a description and current photograph of the child.
4. Advise Communications of the information received, including the last known location and have this information broadcast on all radio frequencies.
5. Request an additional officer to secure any scene that may be of evidentiary value if the location is other than the home or location where the officer was dispatched.
6. Interview potential witnesses at the scene, including children.
7. Ensure the on-scene supervisor is apprised of pertinent information.
8. Stay on the scene to ensure the integrity of all potential evidence and obtain any new information when made available.
9. Initiate the Offense/Incident report as soon as practical.
10. If a tape recorder is used, ensure the tape is tagged into evidence along with any other items of evidentiary value.

[5] C. On-scene supervisor duties:

1. Ensure he/she is briefed by the dispatched officer.
2. Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed.
3. Organize and coordinate an immediate search of the area surrounding the missing child's home and/or place where the child was last seen.
4. Ensure that an officer has been established as the victim family liaison.
5. Establish a command post, if needed.
6. Will contact the Child Exploitation Detail supervisor and brief him/her of the incident. Request their presence via radio if the incident is verified as a child abduction, or if the circumstances surrounding a missing child report are suspicious or unusual.

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7. If the CED supervisor concludes a high probability exists that the child was abducted and in danger of serious harm or death, he/she will activate the Area Law Enforcement Response Transmission (A.L.E.R.T.) broadcast by calling KKOB at 767-6770 or 767-9189. The CED supervisor must give them his/her man number for verification and enough information to broadcast an "Attempt to Locate" over the Emergency Alert system. KKOB will then activate the statewide A.L.E.R.T. broadcast via television and radio station.
 8. Ensure that NCIC is notified as soon as possible with the child's information.
 9. Ensure that supplemental reports are written by all responding personnel.
 10. Ensure the PIO, the chain of command and Duty Chief are notified
 11. **Contact the on-duty communications supervisor to issue a Child is Missing Alert. The on-scene supervisor should have the following information:**
 - a. **Name and description of the missing child/person.**
 - b. **Location last seen, zip code, and county**
 - c. **Time and date last seen**
- D. Duties of the Child Exploitation Detail supervisor if the incident is verified as a child abduction, or if the circumstances surrounding a missing child report are suspicious or unusual:
1. Respond personally to the scene.
 2. After being briefed assess the situation to determine the appropriate level of response.
 3. If the situation warrants, assign the Child Exploitation Detail detective case responsibility.
 4. Ensure the case agent's orders are carried out to their completion.
 5. Assume responsibility for command post operation, if implemented.
 6. Act as liaison between investigators and other police personnel.
 7. Request additional resources as needed.
 8. Keep the Juvenile Section commander informed of all aspects of investigation.
- E. Case Agent/Assistant Case Agent duties if the incident is verified as a child abduction, or if the circumstances surrounding a missing child report are suspicious or unusual:
1. Ensure he/she is briefed by personnel at the scene.
 2. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information.
 3. Ensure that proper personnel are in place to carry out a proper and thorough investigation.

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- a. Immediately assign a records keeper, who will keep accurate records of all investigative steps taken.
 - b. Immediately assign personnel to begin a canvass of the neighborhood, using a standardized canvass form.
4. Obtain a brief history of family dynamics:
- a. Utilize information from the canvass forms.
 - b. Assign personnel to interview other family members, friends, and associates.
 - c. Obtain any available records from CYFD (Children Youth and Families), APD Records, family doctor(s), hospital and school.
5. Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services.
6. Update descriptive information.
7. Conduct follow-up interviews with reporting parent/guardian and all possible witnesses and suspects.
8. Prepare necessary reports and complete appropriate forms.
9. Assume responsibility for all phases of the investigation, with the exception of processing the scene and the collection of evidence.
10. Respond to requests for assistance by other agencies, as deemed necessary by the Chief of Police.

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F. Field Investigators Duties for missing/abducted child investigations:

1. Take preliminary photographs of the scene and search for evidence, as appropriate.
2. Be responsible for collecting evidence at the scene and tagging it into evidence.

G. Use of volunteers for searches

1. Volunteers will be used only when absolutely necessary.
2. If volunteers are used, they must be under direct supervision of police personnel.
3. No person will be allowed to volunteer without first being identified.
4. The person's information will be recorded and given to the records keeper.