

Missing Person Investigations

Index Code: 1611

Effective Date: 9/1/2022

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for investigating missing persons.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to thoroughly investigate all reports of missing persons. Additionally, the Office of the Sheriff holds that every person reported as missing will be considered at risk until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.

III. Definitions

A. Family Abduction

A non-custodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court ordered custody arrangement.

B. Missing Adult

A missing adult includes a person who is:

1. 18 years of age or older; and
2. Whose absence is contrary to his/her normal patterns of behavior and may be linked to unusual circumstances.

C. Missing Child

A missing child includes a person who is:

1. Younger than 18 years of age; and
2. Whose whereabouts is unknown by their parents or guardians.

D. Non-Family Abduction

A non-family abduction usually involves a child taken by an unknown individual through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.

E. Runaway

A runaway is a child, most often a teenager, who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.

F. Critically Missing Persons

The following will generally be investigated by the agency CIU:

1. A missing child 13 years of age or younger.
2. A child or an adult who is missing and believed to be one or more of the factors noted below:
 - a. Out of the zone of safety for his/her age and physical and mental condition.
 - b. Mentally diminished. If the person is developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed, or the victim of disease, he/she may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address.
 - c. Drug dependent.
 - d. A potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.
 - e. In a life-threatening situation.