



Effective Date:
February 1, 2014

APD.SOP.3085
Missing Persons

Applicable To: Sworn employees and communications employees

Approval Authority: Chief George N. Turner

Signature: Signed by GNT

Date Signed: 1/27/2014

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the procedures for handling reports of missing children, missing juveniles and missing adults.

2. POLICY

The Atlanta Police Department will investigate all reports of missing persons thoroughly, to include the careful recording and investigation of the factual circumstances surrounding the disappearance, and give particular attention in cases involving: missing children, persons who may be mentally and/or physically impaired, persons who are incapable of caring for themselves, and/or children or adults who are either unidentified or unidentifiable to determine if they are classified as missing. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6a)

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Communications Section call taker will collect and disseminate necessary information upon receiving a missing person call. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6e)

3.2 The responding field officers will assess the situation, notify a supervisor, and begin efforts to locate the missing person. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6e)



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- 3.3 Field supervisors will ensure that the appropriate personnel are responding to the call for the level of response that the circumstances dictate. The supervisor will personally respond to the scene when required. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6e)
- 3.4 School Detectives supervisors will ensure that the appropriate School Detectives sworn personnel respond to the call investigate children missing from public schools. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6e)
- 3.5 Investigators will assist field officers and personally respond to the scene in certain situations. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6e)
- 3.6 Once an individual is classified as “missing,” the case will be forwarded to the appropriate Major Crimes’ unit for the follow-up investigation. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6f)
- 3.7 The Special Victims Unit (SVU) will conduct follow-up investigations concerning missing children and juveniles.
- 3.8 The Homicide Unit will conduct follow up investigations concerning missing adults.
- 3.9 The CID investigator that is assigned a “missing person” report will contact the reporting person immediately. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5d)
- 4. ACTION
 - 4.1 Reporting and Classification
 - 4.1.1 Missing person reports involve individuals who voluntarily leave home for personal reasons, disappear for unexplained reasons, or who may be considered at risk. The role of the initial responding officer is critical in identifying the circumstances surrounding missing persons and in identifying those cases when an individual may be in jeopardy.
 - 4.1.2 There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person.
 - 4.1.3 An individual may be declared “missing” when his or her whereabouts is unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the person’s behavior patterns, plans, or routines.
 - 4.1.4 Officers should be aware that they might encounter several types of missing-child cases, each with their own unique response requirements. They include:
 - 1. The non-family abduction in which a child is taken by an unknown individual, through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization;
 - 2. The family abduction in which, a non-custodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court-ordered custody arrangement;
 - 3. The runaway child, most often a teenager, who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons;
 - 4. The lost or otherwise missing child, who becomes separated from parents or caretakers under circumstances not indicating the likelihood of an abduction or voluntary absence; and



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5. The thrown-away whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child who has run away or who has been abandoned or deserted.
- 4.1.5 An officer will notify his or her supervisor of missing person(s) that satisfy one or more of the following criteria: (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6b)
1. Information that the missing person may be the victim of foul play;
 2. Because of age (juvenile or elderly), the person may be unable to properly safeguard or care for him or herself;
 3. The person suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated or unattended;
 4. The person is a patient at a mental institution and is considered potentially dangerous to himself or herself, and/or to others;
 5. The person has demonstrated the potential for suicide; and
 6. Reports of juveniles who have voluntarily left home (e.g., “runaways”) should be classified as such only after thorough investigation.
- 4.1.6 The 911 call takers should attempt to obtain as much information as possible regarding the missing person with special attention to the above criteria. The call taker should obtain a complete physical description; including clothing the missing person was last seen wearing and broadcast a lookout on all radio frequencies. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5f)
- 4.2 Investigation Procedures
- 4.2.1 The responding officer will complete an incident report during the preliminary investigation to include the following information: (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5a)
1. Name, age, sex, race and physical description of the missing person, and relationship of the reporting party to the missing person;
 2. Time, date, and place of last known location and the identity of anyone accompanying the missing person prior to their disappearance;
 3. Indications of missing personal belongings, particularly money, and other valuables;
 4. The extent of any previously conducted search or inquiries;
 5. Whether the missing person has been missing on prior occasions, and the degree to which the absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits, or plans;
 6. Whether the missing person has been involved recently in domestic incidents; suffered emotional trauma or a life crisis; demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic, or bizarre behavior; is dependent on drugs or alcohol; or has a history of mental illness;
 7. The current physical condition of the missing person and whether the person is currently on prescription medication;



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8. Any suggestions of foul play or accident.
- 4.2.2 A search will be organized and performed under the direction of the on-scene field supervisor when information is received that a missing person may be in a given geographical area. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5e)
 - 4.2.3 Tracking dogs may be requested during a search of missing persons who suffer from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated or unattended, or that are suspected to be a victim of foul play.
 - 4.2.4 Some searches may require support from more than one public safety agency. Such operations will be coordinated between the field supervisors and CID supervisors.
 - 4.3 Non-Critical Missing Child - Initial Investigation
 - 4.3.1 Responding Officer's Responsibilities:
 1. The responding officer will initiate an immediate investigation in an attempt to locate the missing child and relay such information through the on-duty field supervisor.
 2. Obtain and document any leads as to the possible location (e.g., child's destination, mode of travel, routes, etc.).
 3. The identity and location where the missing child was last seen, and the identity of the person who last saw the missing child.
 4. Names and telephone numbers of relatives and friends, and any other information which may assist in locating the missing child.
 5. A broadcast made over the patrol frequency with a description of the missing child and any known circumstances.
 6. Officers will also disseminate information to adjacent agencies, and to the law enforcement agencies in the jurisdiction of any known or suspected destinations of the missing child.
 7. Locations will be lawfully searched, if the complainant indicates a probable location or locations.
 8. Interviews with the reporting person, parents, siblings, friends, or any other persons who may have knowledge of the whereabouts of the missing child. These interviews may be made by telephone or in person, but all interviews and attempts to interview will be documented.
 9. Obtain a photograph, if possible, of the missing child and forward the photograph to SVU, so missing person posters can be generated for distribution.
 10. Initiate an incident report, with a narrative summary of all actions taken by the reporting officer, and any related actions known to have been taken by others including an initial physical description of the missing child, and clothing description. The officer should also inquire about and document any recent disciplinary or behavioral issues at home or at school.



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11. The officer shall contact GCIC and request the missing child be placed on the system as missing within an hour of the conclusion of the search. The officer shall list the name of the operator who took the information in the ICIS report. This entry will be removed if the missing child is located. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5c)
12. The reporting officer will advise the parent or legal guardian to obtain a pick up order from the juvenile court when 45 days have elapsed since the missing persons report was filed or when there is reason to believe that the missing juvenile has left the state.

4.3.2 Non-Critical Missing Child - Follow-up Investigation

4.3.3 The Special Victim's Unit (SVU) and Crimes against Children Squad will be responsible for the follow-up investigation. The follow-up investigation will include:

1. Contacting the complainant and completing all aspects of the initial investigation that were not completed by the first responder.
2. Contacting the Fulton County Department of Family and Children's Services (DFACS) to request access to any relevant information on the missing child, including: whether or not there is an active case, the name of the case worker, previous missing incidents, previous reported abuse cases, and other information which would lead to the whereabouts of the missing child.
3. Contact the missing child's school and inquire about their attendance record and disciplinary issues.
4. Contacting the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST, and provide them with all available information for posting on their website if the child remains outstanding for thirty (30) days or more.
5. Interview the missing child within 48 hours of when he or she is located; and complete a missing Juvenile Debriefing Report, and a supplemental ICIS report.
6. Interview the missing child within 48 hours of when he or she is located, complete a missing Juvenile Debriefing Report and complete a supplemental ICIS report.

4.4 Critical Missing Child - Initial Investigation

4.4.1 Responding Officers' Responsibilities:

4.4.2 Upon receiving a report of a critical missing child, the responding officer shall follow steps listed below. Insure that the field supervisor and a SVU investigator are notified to respond to the scene. In cooperation with assisting officers, available investigators and supervisors, the responding officers should follow all below listed steps (reference Form APD 375-6 "First Responder Checklist");

1. Activate the vehicles video system when approaching the scene to record vehicles, people, and anything else of note for later investigative review;
2. Interview parents, guardians, and/or person making the initial report;
3. Confirm the child is in fact missing;



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- a. When a small child is involved, there should always be a physical search, especially of the home and immediate area where the child lives or was last seen.
 - b. The search should start at the last known location and spiral outward. This search should be made even if the parent or guardian has already conducted a search; and
 - c. Officers and investigators should understand that small children might hide and refuse to answer when their names are called.
4. An officer should go to the child's home and remain in that area with relatives to protect as a potential crime scene until properly relieved. If assistance with this task is needed, request another officer to assist;
 5. Verify the child's custody status;
 6. Identify the circumstances of the disappearance;
 7. Determine when, where, and by whom the missing child was last seen;
 8. Interview the individuals who last had contact with the child;
 9. Identify the child's zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage;
 10. Based on the available information, make an initial determination of the type of incident whether nonfamily abduction, family abduction, runaway, or lost, injured, or otherwise missing;
 11. Obtain a detailed description of the missing child, abductor, and any vehicles used;
 12. Secure photograph and/or videos of the missing child or abductor;
 13. Relay detailed description information to Communications for a lookout broadcast and updates to be given out citywide every hour;
 14. Determine need for additional officers, investigators, or units including, but not limited to, ID, CID supervisor, SVU supervisor, helicopter unit, fire department personnel, etc.
 15. Brief and bring up to date all additional responding units;
 16. The field officer will interview all parties at the scene, and ensure the identifying information is properly recorded. To aid in the process, if possible, take pictures or record video images of everyone present;
 - a. Note name, address, home or cellular numbers of each person;
 - b. Determine each person's relationship to the child;
 - c. Document information each person may have about the child's disappearance;
 - d. Determine when and where each person last saw the child;



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- e. Ask each person what they think happened to the child;
 - f. Obtain names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's friends, associates, and other relatives and friends of the family.
17. Continue to keep Communications apprised of all appropriate developing information for broadcast updates;
 18. Obtain a signed Consent to Search form and note permission to search home or building where incident took place; (APD.SOP.3020 "Search and Seizure")
 19. Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the missing child's home; even if the child was reported missing from a different location;
 20. An officer or investigator will remain at the scene to protect the scene and area of the child's home (including the child's personal articles such as hairbrush, dairy, photographs, and items with the child's fingerprints, footprints and/or teeth impressions) so evidence is not destroyed during or after the initial search; and to help ensure items which could help in the search for and or to identify the child are preserved. Determine if any of the child's personal items are missing. If possible, photograph or video record the area;
 21. Evaluate the contents and appearance of the child's room and/or residence;
 22. Inquire if the child has access to the internet and evaluate its role in the disappearance;
 23. Ascertain if the child has a cellular telephone or other electronic communications device;
 24. Extend search to surrounding areas including vehicles and other places of concealment (rapid search);
 25. Treat areas of interest as potential crime scenes and secure for crime scene processing;
 26. Determine if surveillance or security cameras in the vicinity may have captured information about the child's disappearance;
 27. Interview other family members, friends, and associates of the child, and friends of the family to determine:
 - a. When each last saw the child;
 - b. What they think happened to the child.
 28. Ensure information regarding the missing child is entered into GCIC Missing Person Files within one hour of the initial reported incident, and any information about a suspected abductor is entered in the GCIC Wanted Person File;
 29. The officer or investigator shall list the name of the operator who took the information in the ICIS report; and
 30. The officer and investigator will complete ICIS reports and the appropriate paperwork before the end of their shift.



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- 4.4.3 Investigator's Responsibilities
(Reference Form APD 375-5 "Investigators Checklist")
1. Obtain briefing from the first responding officer and other on-scene personnel.
 2. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information and other details developed during the preliminary investigation.
 3. Initiate a neighborhood canvass using all available resources and utilizing questionnaires.
 4. Obtain a brief, recent history of family dynamics.
 5. Correct and investigate the reasons for conflicting information offered by witnesses and other individuals, if any.
 6. Collect articles of the child's clothing for scent tracking purposes.
 7. Review and evaluate all available information and evidence collected.
Steps 1-7 should be initiated within the first hour of the investigator's arrival
 8. Secure the child's latest medical and dental records.
 9. Contact landfill management and request they segregate garbage and dumping containers from key investigative areas in cases where it is suspected there may be imminent danger to the missing child.
 10. Develop and execute an investigative plan.
 11. Conduct a criminal history check on all principal suspects and participants in the investigation.
 12. Determine what additional resources and specialized services are required.
 13. Ensure details of the case have been reported to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).
 14. Prepare and update bulletins for local law enforcement agencies, missing children clearinghouse, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), and other appropriate agencies.
 15. Utilize Crime Stoppers Hotline for receipt of tips and leads.
 16. Implement the Leads Management System to prioritize leads and ensure each one is reviewed and followed up on.
- 4.4.4 If a juvenile is reported missing either from school or fails to return home from school, the School Detective Section will have the initial responsibility for the investigation. If the School Detective investigators do not locate the child, a SVU investigator will be contacted for assistance in the investigation.



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1. If the initial investigation reveals that either the missing juvenile was transported to the school or was present at the school but was not observed being transported home from school, the School Detectives investigator will retain primary responsibility for the investigation, with assistance from the SVU.
2. If the child was transported from the school and properly delivered (to the correct bus stop or designated location) and then becomes missing, the SVU will have primary responsibility for the investigation with assistance from the School Detective Section.

4.4.5 Supervisor Responsibilities:

4.4.6 The on-duty FOD supervisor will respond to the scene and ensure that the below steps are completed as soon as possible, reference Form APD 375-4 "Supervisor Checklist."

1. Obtain a briefing from the first responding officer and other personnel at the scene.
2. Remain on the scene off all missing person incidents until the person is either located or until relieved by the Homicide or Special Victims Unit commander.
3. Decide if circumstances of the child's disappearance meet the protocol in place for activation of: Levi's Call/Amber Alert or a Child is Missing (ACIM). (Reference the Appendix)
4. Determine if additional personnel are needed to assist in the investigation.
5. Establish a command post away from the child's residence.
6. Determine if additional assistance is necessary from:
 - a. The GBI/CART Team;
 - b. Missing-Children Clearinghouse;
 - c. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
 - d. Specialized units (e.g., tracking dogs, air support, etc.);
 - e. Victim-Witness Services (e.g., Departmental Chaplain, Victim Advocate, etc.);
 - f. NCMEC's Project ALERT/Team after conferring with the Chief of Police or Division commander.
7. Confirm all the required resources, equipment, and assistance necessary to conduct an efficient investigation have been requested and expedite their availability.
8. Ensure coordination and cooperation among all law enforcement personnel involved in the investigation and search efforts.
9. Verify that all required notifications are made.
10. Ensure all agency policies and procedures are in compliance.



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11. Be available to make any decisions or determinations as they develop.
12. Use media including radio, television, and newspapers to assist in the search throughout the duration of the case (Other immediate community notification systems, e.g., twitter, community e-mail systems).
13. Activate CART for a critical missing child under the age of ten (10), if four hours have elapsed where no evidence is discovered or viable leads established regarding the location of the child with the prior approval from a Major or above.
14. Determine if the Leads Management System should be implemented to prioritize leads and ensure each one is reviewed and followed up on.

4.5 Unidentified Found Child Investigation

4.5.1 Responding Officers' Responsibilities

4.5.2 Upon receiving a report of an unidentified found child the responding officer will initiate an immediate investigation in an attempt to identify the child and relay such information through the on-duty field supervisor. This investigation will include the following actions:

1. An initial physical description of the child;
2. The identity and location where the child was located, and the identity of the person who located the child;
3. A broadcast made over the patrol frequency with a description of the located child and any known circumstances;
4. Officers will also disseminate information to adjacent agencies;
5. The officer will initiate and document an entry into the ACIC/GCIC computer system within the first hour. This entry will be removed if the individual is identified;
6. Take a photograph of the child and forward the photograph to SVU, so posters can be generated for distribution;
7. Initiate an incident report, with a narrative summary of all actions taken by the reporting officer, and any related actions known to have been taken by others. Document the assigned ACIC/GCIC number in the narrative of the report; and
8. If the child is not identified and a caretaker located within a reasonable amount of time the on-call SVU investigator should be summoned to take custody of the child and complete the required Protective Custody paperwork.

4.5.3 Unidentified Found Child Follow-up Investigation

4.5.4 The SVU will be responsible for the follow-up investigation. The follow-up investigation will include:

1. Completing all aspects of the initial investigation that was not completed by the first responder.



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2. Contacting the Fulton or DeKalb County Department of Family and Children's Services to request access to any relevant information they may have discovered on the unidentified child, including: whether or not there is an active case; the name of the case worker; previous missing incidents; previous reported abuse cases; and other information which would lead to the identification of the child.

4.6 Removal of Information from Criminal Justice System

- 4.6.1 When the missing child is located, the officer responding will verify the information, and request to have the information removed immediately from ACIC/GCIC by an ACIC III operator. If the missing child is located by the investigator completing the investigation, he or she will be responsible for requesting the removal of the missing person from ACIC/GCIC. If the 'Mattie's Call' alert was activated and the missing person was located, the assigned investigator must notify the local media, ACIM (A Child is Missing), cancel the state wide BOLO, notify the Lottery Corporation, and notify the GBI, if News Net was utilized. If the 'Kimberly's Call' alert or 'Mattie's Call' alert was initiated, the assigned investigator must notify the local media, ACIM (A Child is Missing), cancel the state wide BOLO, notify the Lottery Corporation, and notify the GBI, if News Net was utilized.

4.7 Recovery and/or Return of Missing Child

- 4.7.1 An officer assigned to the recovery or return of a missing child shall complete the following tasks, among his or her other responsibilities:
 1. Verify the identity of the found child as the missing child while assessing the child's safety and gathering available information about possible predators.
 2. During the verification process, determine whether intervention services are needed to ensure that the child can safely remain in the home and ensure that arrangements are made for delivery of these services. These include but are not limited to mental health and/or physical health examinations and arrangements for family counseling.
 3. Complete designated supplemental reports and cancel all outstanding notifications to include notification of ACIC/GCIC to have the ACIC III operator remove the child from the system. The supplemental report should describe the child's activities while missing and the circumstances of the recovery/return.
 4. If the child is determined to be a runaway, the officer will notify an investigator to respond to the scene, and the investigator shall attempt to determine the reason(s) why the child ran away and include that information in the investigators supplement report.

4.8 Missing Juvenile

4.8.1 Responding Officers' Responsibilities:

- 4.8.2 Officers will immediately notify a field supervisor of all missing juveniles and give the description of the missing juvenile to Communications for dissemination to all radio frequencies.
- 4.8.3 Officers will obtain as much information as possible concerning the whereabouts and description of the missing juvenile, including the circumstances surrounding the events related to the juveniles missing status. This information should be included in detail in the incident report.



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- 4.8.4 Officers should obtain a photo of the missing juvenile and the photo should be forwarded to the SVU as soon as possible.
- 4.8.5 Officers will immediately fax a copy of the report to the SVU and Central Records for entry in ACIC/GCIC system.
- 4.8.6 Anytime a juvenile is reported missing, a SVU investigator will be notified.
- 4.8.7 If a missing juvenile is under the age of eighteen (18) or is suspected of being the victim of foul play or has some mental impairment or physical disability, the responding officer should immediately:
1. Notify a field supervisor;
 2. Request assistance for a canvass of the area or possible locations where the child might be;
 3. Notify a SVU investigator who will respond to the scene and assume overall responsibility for the investigation;
 4. Identify any witnesses who may have knowledge of the missing juvenile's whereabouts;
 5. Obtain a photo of the missing juvenile; and
 6. Complete an incident report.
- 4.9 Recovery of Missing Juveniles
- 4.9.1 Officers who locate a juvenile who they suspect may be considered missing will contact ACIC/GCIC radio to determine the missing status of the juvenile and notify SVU.
- 4.9.2 If ACIC/GCIC confirms that the juvenile has been reported missing and the juvenile resides in Fulton County the officer will transport the juvenile to his or her residence, and release the juvenile to the parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian is not available, Fulton County DFACS must be notified to take control of the child.
- 4.9.3 If ACIC/GCIC confirms that the juvenile has been reported missing and the juvenile resides in DeKalb County, and outside the City limits of Atlanta will transport the juvenile to the DeKalb County line and request that a DeKalb County officer take custody of the juvenile.
- 4.9.4 If ACIC/GCIC confirms that the juvenile has been reported missing and the juvenile resides in DeKalb County (Zone Six) the officer will transport the juvenile to his or her residence, and release the juvenile to the parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian is not available, the juvenile will be transported to the DeKalb County Emergency Children's Shelter.
- 4.9.5 Officers locating juveniles who reside in other counties will contact the appropriate police agency and arrange for transportation. The juvenile will stay in the officer's custody until transportation is arranged and the juvenile is turned over to the transporting agency or the juvenile's parent or guardian.
- 4.9.6 If officers are unable to arrange for the child to be transported to another agency or a guardian, Fulton County DFACS will be notified.



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- 4.9.7 Officers will immediately take a juvenile into protective custody when a child is located and is unable to provide information regarding their guardian's location or residence or whenever there is reason to believe the child is in danger because of their present environment; if the child requires medical attention; and/or if the child has been a victim of any form of abuse or neglect either prior to, or during their period of absence.
- 4.9.8 When in protective custody, appropriate medical care will be obtained if required, and the juvenile will be brought to the Special Victims Unit for necessary follow-up investigative action.
- 4.9.9 Missing juveniles (not requiring protective custody) officers will detain the juvenile until he or she can be released to proper authorities.
- 4.9.10 When the juvenile is located, the SVU investigator or officer will contact ACIC/GCIC and remove the juvenile from the system. The SVU investigator or officer will fax a supplement report to Central Records. If an officer is removing the juvenile from the system, the officer will fax a copy of the supplement to SVU and Central Records. (CALEA 5th ed. St. 41.2.5c)
- 4.10 Missing Adult (Non-critical)
- 4.10.1 Missing Adult (Non-critical) - Field Officers' Responsibilities
1. A field officer will respond to the scene of all 911 calls reporting a missing person, and will immediately give the description of the adult and other pertinent information to Communications for dissemination to all radio frequencies.
 2. The responding officer will obtain as much information as possible concerning the whereabouts and description of the adult, including the circumstances surrounding the events related to the person's missing status. This should include prior missing reports, vehicle description, license plate information, clothing, cell phone numbers, and favorite locations the missing adult might frequent. This information should be included in detail in the ICIS Incident Report.
 3. The responding field officer will immediately contact his or her supervisor and update the supervisor of the missing adult, and the circumstances involved (reference section 4.15).
 4. The responding officer will fax a copy of the reports to the Homicide Unit and Central Records for entry into GCIC/NCIC system within one hour of the initial call.
- 4.11 Missing Adult (Non-critical) - Homicide/Adult Missing Persons Investigator's Responsibilities
- 4.11.1 When an Adult Missing Persons investigator receives a missing person report, the investigator will contact the reporting person to determine if the missing adult is competent, if the person left voluntarily, and the possible reasons for the disappearance. The investigator will also ensure a full description of the missing person, and any other pertinent information has been included in the report.
- 4.11.2 In an attempt to locate the missing adult, the Homicide/Adult Missing Persons investigator will do the following:
1. Ensure a lookout of the person has been given over the radio;
 2. Ensure the missing person has been placed into the GCIC/NCIC system;



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3. Check all metro Atlanta jails (City of Atlanta, Fulton County, DeKalb County, etc.);
4. Check metro hospitals (Grady, Atlanta Medical, and Crawford Long, etc.);
5. Check day and night shelters if circumstances dictate;
6. Check driver's license records, and criminal histories;
7. Interview employers, co-workers, and neighbors if circumstances dictate;
8. Check all credit cards, debit cards, and/or bank account activity;
9. Obtain cellular phone records if circumstances dictate;
10. Contact the reporting person to determine if any more pertinent information can be gathered;
11. Document all actions taken in an investigative file; and
12. If foul play is suspected in the disappearance of the missing person, the Homicide/Adult Missing Persons investigator will conduct a complete investigation.

4.12 Critical Missing Adult

4.12.1 Critical Missing Adult – Field Officer Responsibilities

4.12.2 If a missing adult is suspected of being the victim of foul play, or suffers from diminished mental capacity, or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated or unattended, the responding officer will immediately:

1. Notify their on duty field supervisor;
2. Gather information on the missing adult, to include: age, race, sex, weight, height, hair, clothing description, vehicle if driven, mental and medical conditions, and any other specific information that relates to foul play;
3. Participate in a canvass of the area or possible locations where the adult might be;
4. Notify a Homicide investigator;
5. Identify any witnesses who may have knowledge of the adult's whereabouts;
6. Obtain a photo of the adult, and deliver it to the Homicide Unit along with a copy of the incident report; and
7. Advise the reporting person the phone number for the Homicide Unit (404-546-4235) so they can contact the Missing Person Investigator if they receive additional information;
8. Complete a detailed incident report.

4.12.3 Critical Missing Adult – Field Supervisor



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- 4.12.4 When notified about a critical missing adult, the field supervisor will:
1. Respond to the scene and remain on scene until relieved by the Homicide Supervisor or his or her designee;
 2. Conduct a canvass and search of the area or possible locations where the adult will include the zone discretionary and investigative units; and might include the air unit, APEX, etc. Documentation should be made of all personnel who participate in the canvass and search, what addresses were visited on the canvass, the area that was searched, the times of the search, and any other pertinent information relating to the search. The search and canvass will continue until all the immediate neighborhood has been searched and all leads have been exhausted; and (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5e)
 3. Notify the Homicide Unit;
 4. The Homicide Unit will establish if the missing person meets the criteria for a Mattie's Call;
- 4.12.5 Critical Missing Adult – Homicide/Adult Missing Persons Investigator
- 4.12.6 When notified about a critical missing adult, a Homicide/Adult Missing Persons Investigator will:
1. Notify a Homicide/Adult Missing Persons supervisor;
 2. Respond to the scene and remain on scene until relieved by the Homicide or SVU commander;
 3. Determine if the missing person meets the criteria for a Mattie's Call. If the missing person does meet the criteria, a Homicide investigator will activate a Mattie's Call; (Reference Appendix)
 4. Attempt to locate a photograph of the missing person, either from the missing person's family, or from the driver's license database;
 5. Prepare a media release of the missing person, with a photograph, if available. Contact Public Affairs and forward a copy of the release to them;
 6. Speak with the reporting person to see if any additional information can be obtained;
 7. Document all actions taken in the investigation in the investigative file;
 8. A determination will be made whether tracking dogs are required during a search of missing persons that are critical missing persons, suffer from diminished mental capacity, or suspected to be a victim of foul play; and
 9. Photograph the possible crime scene, and collect any possible evidence, if applicable.
- 4.12.7 If the critical missing adult meets the criteria, a Homicide investigator will activate a Mattie's Call and complete the following steps:
1. Complete a Mattie's Call Information Sheet parts 1 and 2. (APD form 374)



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2. Contact a Communications supervisor and advise them that a Mattie's Call is being activated; (Reference Appendix)
3. Fax a copy of the Mattie's Call Information Sheet to Communications;
4. Complete the GBI's Mattie's Call Alert Bulletin (APD form 375-1). Contact the GBI at 404-244-2600 and notify them that a Mattie's Call is being activated. Fax the GBI Mattie's Call Alert Bulletin to the GBI at 404-243-6545;
5. Add the missing person to the missing person's section of the Atlanta Police Department website.

4.12.8 Mattie's Call Alert Criteria for Activation

1. There must be a confirmed adult missing person and alternative explanations for the disabled person's disappearance have been eliminated;
2. The missing person must be an adult 18 years of age or older;
3. The missing person must have Alzheimer's, dementia, or other mentally disabling conditions that would impair the person from returning safely without assistance. This included medically endangered individuals;
4. There must be enough descriptive information to believe that an immediate broadcast alert will help recover the missing adult;
5. Request for activation must be made as soon as possible after the missing adult is reported;
6. The case must be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database within the first hour;
7. A statewide broadcast to law enforcement and to 911 centers must be issued and also contact local media regarding the missing person; and
8. At the discretion of the Homicide Unit commander, or his or her designee.

4.12.9 If the person does not meet the criteria, the reporting officer will complete the report and forward the report to Central Records within the first hour so the missing person can be entered into the NCIC system as prescribed by ACIC/GCIC policies and procedures. A copy of the report will be faxed to the Adult Missing Person Squad.

4.12.10 If the person does meet the criteria, the Homicide supervisor will request a Mattie's Call activation by filling out the GBI's "Mattie's Call Alert Bulletin" and faxing it to the GBI at 404-243-6545.

4.12.11 A Homicide supervisor, or his or her designee will then fill out part one of a "Mattie's Call" Information Sheet (Form APD-375-1), which will list all provided information on the missing person. The supervisor will then fill in part two of the sheet, showing that the missing person meets the criteria, authorizing the activation of a "Mattie's Call," and sign it.

4.12.12 The Homicide supervisor, or his or her designee will notify a Communications supervisor that a "Mattie's Call" needs to be activated. The Homicide supervisor will provide the Communications



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supervisor, either by hand, by email, or by fax, the completed parts one and two of a “Mattie’s Call” Information Sheet on the missing person. Communications is responsible for activating the alert, including disseminating the information to all of the agencies listed in Atlanta Code Section 98-3 “Mattie’s Call.”

- 4.12.13 A contact number for Communications will be included in the alert. Information and leads received in Communications regarding the missing person will be immediately forwarded to The Adult Missing Persons Squad via phone or radio. The Adult Missing Persons investigator will record all leads on a lead sheet, along with what action was taken on each lead.
- 4.12.14 Public Affairs will be notified so a media release can be disseminated. As soon as possible, a picture of the missing person will be obtained, and included in the media release.
- 4.12.15 Communications will broadcast the lookout over all Atlanta Police radio channels every hour for twenty-four hours, or until the alert is cancelled.
- 4.12.16 All completed “Mattie’s Call Information Sheets” will be reviewed and signed by the Homicide Unit commander.
- 4.12.17 All “Mattie’s Call” Information Sheets will be kept on file for a minimum of five years.
- 4.12.18 Deactivating a Mattie’s Call - When the critical missing person is located a Homicide Supervisor, or his or her designee will:
1. Complete part three (3) of the Mattie’s Call Information Sheet;
 2. Contact a Communications supervisor and advise them that the Mattie’s Call is being deactivated;
 3. Fax a copy of the Mattie’s Call Information Sheet to Communications;
 4. Contact the GBI at 404-244-2600 and notify them that the Mattie’s Call is being deactivated. Fax the GBI Mattie’s Call Cancellation form (APD form 374c) to the GBI at 404-243-6545;
 5. Notify Public Affairs that the Mattie’s Call has been deactivated and the missing person has been located; and
 6. Remove the missing person to the missing person’s section of the Atlanta Police Department website.
- 4.13 Involuntary Custody
- 4.13.1 A missing adult may be taken into custody for involuntary medical treatment if the individual has committed any criminal offense and there is probable cause to believe the person is mentally ill. (See APD.SOP.3084 “Mentally Ill and Disabled Persons” and O.C.G.A. 37-3-42 Emergency Admissions report by officer) Under such circumstances:
1. The adult will be transported to Grady Hospital’s 13th floor for evaluation and treatment;
 2. Officers will complete the “Report of Peace Officer” form;
 3. The officer does not have to initiate charges against the person;



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4. An Offense or Supplemental ICIS report will be completed indicating that the missing person was located and taken to Grady Hospital's 13th floor.

4.14 Recovery of Missing Adults

4.14.1 Recovery of Missing Adults – Field Officer

4.14.2 Competent adults, having left home for personal reasons, cannot be forced to return home. When such individuals are located, the officer will:

1. Advise them that they are the subject of a missing person's investigation;
2. Question the missing adult to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance, and whether criminal activity was involved;
3. Ask if they desire the reporting party or next-of-kin to be notified of their whereabouts;
4. Confirm the missing person through ACIC/GCIC to ensure the entry is cleared as mandated by NCIC policies and procedures;
5. Complete offense or supplemental report indicating that the missing person has been located, and circumstances in which they were located; and
6. Notify Homicide Unit and/or Adult Missing Persons Squad and forward a copy of the recovery report.

4.14.3 Whenever an adult missing person who was reported missing from Atlanta has been located in another jurisdiction, a copy of the located person's tele-type will be placed in the case file, and the case will be closed in accordance to APD.SOP.5010 "Criminal Investigations Division."

4.14.4 Whenever an incompetent adult who has been reported missing is located, the reporting officer or investigator will provide first aid for the missing person, if needed. The officer or investigator will then confirm the missing person through ACIC to insure the entry is cleared as mandated by GCIC/NCIC policies and procedures. The responding officer or investigator will transport the person to the Grady Hospital Psychological Clinic, if needed. The officer or investigator will notify GCIC, the reporting party and the Homicide Unit/Missing Persons Squad.

4.14.5 After the missing person has been located, and the alert has been cancelled, a Homicide supervisor will fill out part three of the "Mattie's Call" Information Sheet. A copy of all lead sheets, the original incident report, and all supplements will be stapled to the completed information sheet, and given to the Adult Missing Persons investigator. The Adult Missing Persons investigator will complete a supplement and a GCIC/NCIC Clear/Cancel Form (APD-427) and deliver it to Central Records where the subject will be cleared from the NCIC system as mandated by GCIC/NCIC policies and procedures.

4.14.6 Telephonic notification of recovered missing persons:

1. Whenever information is received telephonically through Communications that a missing person has returned to their home, the information must be verified.



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2. A patrol car will be dispatched to the location of the recovered missing person to confirm the recovery, ascertain the facts and circumstances of the person's absence, and document the case closure on a Supplemental ICIS report.
3. The field officer will confirm the missing person on ACIC, and notify them that the missing person has been located, and remove them from GCIC/NCIC. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5c)
4. The field officer will notify Homicide/Missing Persons Squad, and Central Records, fax a copy of the Supplement ICIS report to both units.

4.14.7 In all cases when the missing person is located:

1. Contact will be made with all agencies previously informed of the case for assistance, if applicable.
2. Appropriate follow-up action will be taken, such as the initiation of a family violence investigation or the issuance of criminal charges when necessary.

4.14.8 Removal of information from GCIC/NCIC: The Adult Missing Person investigator or the ACIC/GCIC operator will remove any missing person information based upon confirmation (e.g., supplemental ICIS report) that the individual has been located. A copy of the supplemental report will be forwarded to the Homicide Unit/Adult Missing Person Squad. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5c)

4.15 Dissemination of Information

4.15.1 Once an individual is classified as missing or as a runaway, the investigating officer will immediately provide the Communications Section with the individual's description, possible destination, vehicle data, last contact source, and other relevant information so that a "look-out" can be initiated. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.5b)

4.15.2 Detailed descriptive information is required for immediate notification of other law enforcement agencies and agencies such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), First Innocent Images, Georgia Missing Children Center, Child Abuse Investigative Support Center and the Internet Crime Against Children. (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6c)

4.15.3 Decisions to use the local media to help locate the missing person will be made by the lead investigator, in consultation with the CID commander.

4.16 Entry of Information into GCIC/NCIC
(CALEA 5th ed., standard 41.2.5c)

1. The reporting officer will within the first hour hand-carry or fax the missing persons and runaway incident report that involves foul play, endangered persons, or juveniles to the Central Records Unit for entry into GCIC/NCIC.
2. In all other cases involving missing adults, the reporting officer will hand carry or fax the report to Central Records Unit for GCIC/NCIC entry within the first hour of the reported incident and notify the Homicide Unit.



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3. The GCIC/NCIC operator will distribute "be on-the-lookout" (BOLO) information as directed by the investigator.
- 4.17 The "A Child is Missing" (ACIM) program is a potentially valuable resource.
1. An ACIM Alert will generate telephone calls to local residents within fifteen (15) minutes of initiation by law enforcement.
 2. When the decision to use ACIM has been made, the investigator will immediately call ACIM at 1-888-875-2246 (ACIM) or page the operator at 1-954-492-4778.
 3. Suggested calling times are from 7:00AM to 10:30PM. Calls can be placed after 10:30 PM (in all time zones) if extenuating circumstances exist and only with a supervisor's approval.
 4. The investigator will provide ACIM with the Communications Section phone number, (404) 614-6525, and will also contact the Communications Section to make them aware that ACIM has been involved in the search for the juvenile.
 5. If there is a confirmed sighting of the missing juvenile, the investigator will contact ACIM to update the location and any changes in appearance.
 6. When the missing person is found, the investigator will call ACIM to report the recovery. A "Case Follow-Up Report" will be faxed to the investigator by ACIM. The investigator will fill out the report and fax it back to A Child Is Missing at (954-763-4569).
- 4.18 Child Abductions (AMBER ALERT)
- 4.18.1 Levi's Call, Georgia's Amber Alert was established in January of 2002, as an investigative tool to assist local law enforcement agencies in the safe return of abducted children.
- 4.18.2 Levi's Call is a partnership between law enforcement agencies, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and broadcasters to solicit the public's help in locating an abducted child before any harm occurs.
- 4.18.3 Before Levi's Call can be activated, the following "Alert Criteria" must be met: (CALEA 5th ed., Standard 41.2.6d)
1. There must be confirmed child abduction.
 2. The circumstances surrounding the abduction must indicate that the child is in "imminent danger" of harm or death.
 3. The child must be 18 years of age or younger.
 4. There must be enough descriptive information to believe that an immediate broadcast alert will help.
 5. The case must be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database within the first hour.
- 4.18.4 Activation will not be granted for family abductions where no danger exists to the child or for runaways. Exception may be given to juveniles with mental or physical disabilities who may be



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at greater risk because of their impairments. These cases should be evaluated on their own merit. Preliminary investigation must conclude whether a pattern of running away exists.

5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 A Critical Missing Child: Any child twelve years of age and younger (except for a Runaway Child as described above), that is missing or any child in poor physical or questionable mental health, or any missing child where there is an indication of foul play. Foul play is indicated if the occurrence is grossly out of character for the child, or the reporting party has sufficient reason to believe foul play has occurred. Any child missing under circumstances which would lead a reasonable person to conclude that there is danger if the child is not located immediately (e.g., child missing outdoors in extremely harsh weather or who requires medication, etc) will also be considered a critical missing child. A Child missing under the circumstances below would be considered a critical missing child.
- 5.2 A Missing Child and Missing Juvenile: Anyone 18 years of age and under, that is being reported as missing from his/her usual location within the City limits of Atlanta.
- 5.3 A potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation: Significant risk to the child can be assumed if investigation reveals indications of a possible abduction, violence at the scene of abduction, or signs of sexual abuse.
- 5.4 An Unidentified Found Child: A child whether living or deceased, who appears to be a child and is located unattended within the city limits of Atlanta.
- 5.5 Critical Adult: A person 18 years or older who suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical conditions that are potentially life threatening if left untreated or unattended.
- 5.6 Family Abduction: A non-custodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court ordered custody arrangement.
- 5.7 In a Life Threatening Situation: The environment in which the child is missing may be particularly hazardous. Examples of a dangerous environment could be a busy highway for a toddler, an all-night truck stop for a young teenager, or simply an outdoor environment in inclement weather for any missing child.
- 5.8 Is absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior: Most children to some degree have established routines that are reasonably predictable. Significant, unexplained deviations from those routines increase the probability that the person may be at risk.
- 5.9 Lost of Otherwise Missing: A child who becomes separated from parents or caretakers under circumstances not indicating the likelihood of an abduction or voluntary absence.
- 5.10 Medically Endangered: A person with a known medical condition that might reasonably cause such person to become incapacitated or that may result in life-threatening physiological conditions likely to lead to serious bodily injury or death if not immediately treated.
- 5.11 Mentally Diminished: If a child is developmentally disabled, emotionally disturbed, or the victim of disease, they may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address. The disability places the child in danger of exploitation or other harm.



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- 5.12 Missing Person: Any person who is absent from or fails to reach his or her home, school, job, place of recreation, or some other location within a reasonable length of time, without a known or apparent reason; or any patient of a hospital, clinic, nursing home, or mental institution that leaves without the permission or knowledge of those in charge.
- 5.13 NCMEC: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- 5.14 Non-Critical Missing Child: A non-critical missing child is any child over the age of twelve that is missing, not in poor physical or questionable mental health and there is no indication of foul play. This group is most often teenagers who leave home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.
- 5.15 Non-Family Abduction: An unknown individual takes a child through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.
- 5.16 Out of the Zone of Safety for Their Age and Physical and Mental Condition: The zone of safety will vary depending on age. In the case of an infant, for example, the zone of safety shall include the immediate presence of an adult custodian, or the crib, stroller, or carriage in which the infant was placed. For a school age child, the zone of safety might be the immediate neighborhood or the route taken between home and school.
- 5.17 Runaway: Any child twelve (12) years or older who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.
- 5.18 Thrown-Away: A child whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child who has run away, or who has been abandoned or deserted.
6. CANCELLATIONS
- APD.SOP.3085 "Missing Persons", effective August 15, 2009 and signed August 18, 2009.
7. REFERENCES
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) 5th Edition Standards 41.2.5 a-f and 41.2.6 a-f.
- Georgia Bureau of Investigation "Public Alert System: Levis Call/Amber Alert"
- OCGA § 37-3-42 "Emergency admission of persons arrested for penal offenses; report by officer; entry of report into clinical record"
8. APPENDIX
- 8.1 Files on wanted, missing, and unidentified persons are available through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). When investigating cases of missing, abducted, or unidentified children, officers will find the following NCIC resources to be of particular value: Wanted Person File (WPF), Missing Person File (MPF), Unidentified Person File (UPF), and the Off-Life Search Procedure.
- 8.2 Levi's Call/Georgia's Amber Alert: the Levi's Call is an alert initiated by law enforcement when a child has been abducted and is believed to be in danger of being harmed by his or her abductor. This alert system utilizes the Emergency Service Alert System and the Georgia Department of Transportation's changeable message boards, located along major highways around the state. The criteria for a Levi's Call activation consist of the following:



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1. Confirmed child abduction;
 2. Circumstances surrounding the event must indicate that the child is in danger of harm or death;
 3. The child is under the age of eighteen (18) years;
 4. Sufficient descriptive information is available to believe that an immediate broadcast will be beneficial;
 5. The abduction must be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.
- 8.3 A Levi's Call bulletin: will be completed and presented to the GBI by the assigned detective. The information required includes a description of the child; a suspect description; a vehicle description and direction of travel; where the abduction took place; where the child was last seen; and a phone number where the public can contact local law enforcement. (Reference Form APD 375-2 Levi's Call Alert Bulletin)
- 8.4 A Child is Missing Alert (ACIM): The Child is Missing alert is a system that uses the local telephone networks to alert residents, via recorded message, to be on the look-out for missing children, missing disabled adults, and/or wanted persons who pose a significant threat to children in the community. ACIM is staffed 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week, 365 days a year. ACIM can be used in conjunction with Levi's Call. ACIM can be used for the following situations: wander-off children (2-5 years old); adventurers, habitual runaways where foul play is suspected; first time runaways, with or without foul play suspected, child abductions from home or other areas; and mentally/physically challenged children. ACIM requires that the supervisor be able to answer the following questions prior to contacting them, so they can broadcast an alert via a pre-recorded message:
1. Case Number;
 2. Name and description of missing person(s);
 3. Location last seen, zip code, county, and search area;
 4. Date and time last seen;
 5. Police department number for citizens to report sightings.
 6. Once the child has been located, the responding officer will notify ACIM so the case can be closed. ACIM can be contacted at 888-875-2246, or if no answer by pager at 954-492-4778.
- 8.5 Mattie's Call: An alert/lookout initiated by law enforcement for missing disabled adults (any adult who is developmentally impaired, suffers dementia, or other cognitive impairment) or critically missing children. The system utilizes three phases: Phase I: the "Child is Missing" system; Phase II: The Georgia Association of Broadcasters' News Net; and Phase III: the Georgia Lottery Corporation.
- 8.5.1 Procedure: If it has been determined through a thorough investigation, that the missing disabled adult or child is in immediate danger of bodily harm or death, a 'Mattie's Call' should be initiated.



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Before the alert is initiated, the missing person must have been entered onto NCIC, a local and state wide BOLO activated, and the local media notified. The 'Mattie's Call' alert form must be completed. PHASE I (local alert) of the alert system is completed by initiating the ACIM Alert (see above initiation instructions). If it is believed that the missing child has traveled outside of the local area, or there have been no results from PHASE I, PHASE II of the alert should be initiated. PHASE II is completed by faxing or emailing the 'Mattie's Call' information form, along with a photo of the missing child to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. The information will be forwarded to the Georgia Association of Broadcasters', (GAB) News Net, and may be broadcast by local news agencies. Phase III is the State-wide alert, which is activated by contacting the Georgia Lottery Corporation and providing them with the information that has been collected. The investigating detective will provide contact telephone numbers that he/she can be reached consistently, in the numbers that he/she can be reached consistently, in the event of other required information for the alert. (Reference Form APD 375-1 Mattie's Call Alert Bulletin)

8.6 Kimberly's Call: An alert/lookout initiated by law enforcement, for criminals who are wanted for serious crimes against persons, and who pose a serious threat to the public. The system has three phases that include: Phase I: A Child is Missing system, Phase II: The Georgia Association of Broadcasters' News Net, and Phase III: the Georgia Lottery Corporation.

8.6.1 Procedure: If it has been determined by the assigned detective, and approved by the CIS Supervisor, this alert may be activated for suspect(s) that have active arrest warrants for serious crimes against persons. The suspect must pose a serious threat to the public. This alert can be used in child abduction cases to help locate a suspect if warrants have been issued for their arrest stemming from the abduction. Before the alert can be initiated, there must be an active arrest warrant for the suspect; the suspect's information must have been entered onto GCIC/NCIC; a state wide BOLO placed on the suspect; and the Kimberly's Call information sheet completed. The Phase I can be used if the suspect is believed to be in the immediate community from which the crime was committed, and where children are in danger of being harmed if the subject is not immediately arrested. In Phase I, the investigating detective must contact ACIM and provide information recorded on the information work sheet. Phase II is intended to alert persons in the regional area where the suspect may be located. In Phase II, the investigating detective will complete the Kimberly's Call work sheet, and email or fax it to the GBI. The information will be forwarded to the Georgia Association of Broadcasters' News Net, and may be broadcast by local news agencies. Phase III is the State-wide alert, which is activated by the assigned detective, by contacting the Georgia Lottery Corporation and providing them with the information that has been collected. The investigating detective will provide contact telephone numbers that he/she can be reached consistently in the event of other required information for the alert.