

RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

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| Chief of Police: Jason Soto /s/ | | |
| Approving Deputy Chief: Deputy Chief Tom Robinson | | |
| General Order No: P-290-04 | Issued: February 16, 2005 | Supersedes: 3/228.000 |
| Revised: May 11, 2015 | | |
| General Order Title: Missing Person | | |

POLICY

All reports made to the Reno Police Department concerning missing persons will be given full consideration and attention.

PROCEDURES

Many missing person reports involve subjects who have voluntarily left home for personal reasons, while other reports are often unfounded or quickly resolved. However, there are instances in which subjects disappear for unexplained reasons and under circumstances where they can be considered to be at risk. The roles of the complaint-taker and initial responding officer are critical in identifying circumstances surrounding missing persons and in identifying those subjects at risk. Particular care must be exercised in instances involving missing children and those who may be mentally or physically impaired or who are insufficiently prepared to take care of themselves.

Reporting/Classification of Missing Persons

1. There is no waiting period for reporting a missing person. Missing person reports may be made in-person or by telephone.
2. A subject may be declared "missing" when his/her whereabouts are unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable parties as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the subject's behavior patterns, plans or routines.
3. A subject may be considered "missing-critical" who meets the foregoing criteria and who, among other possible circumstances:
 - May be the subject of foul play;
 - Because of age (young or old), may be unable to properly safeguard or care for himself/herself;
 - Suffers from diminished mental capacity or medical condition(s) that are potentially life-threatening if left untreated/unattended;

- Is a patient of a mental institution and is considered potentially dangerous to him/herself or others;
 - Has demonstrated the potential for suicide, or
 - May have been involved in a sporting accident, e.g., boating, mountain-climbing, etc., or a natural disaster.
4. Reports of children who have voluntarily left home, i.e., “runaways,” should be classified as such only after a thorough investigation.
 5. Based on the outcome of initial inquiries, a decision may be made concerning the potential danger posed to the missing person and the urgency of police response.

Initial Report-Taking

1. The initial report taker must gather as much pertinent information as possible in order to properly classify a missing person report and initiate proper response. This includes, but is not limited to, the following information:
 - Name, age and physical description of the subject and relationship of the reporting party to the missing person;
 - Time last seen at last-known location and the identity of anyone accompanying the subject;
 - Employment or school information;
 - The extent of any search already conducted for the subject;
 - Whether the subject has been missing on prior occasion and the degree to which this absence departs from established behavior patterns, habits, or plans;
 - Whether the subject has been involved recently in domestic incidents; suffered emotional trauma or life crises; demonstrated unusual, uncharacteristic or bizarre behavior; is dependent on drugs or alcohol; or has a history of mental illness;
 - The current physical condition of the subject and whether the subject is currently on prescription medication.
2. The report taker should attempt to obtain a color photograph of the missing person. The photograph should be attached to the original report and not booked into evidence. The photograph will be forwarded to the Missing Person Investigator.
3. A supervisor will be notified immediately upon classification of a report as “missing-critical.”
4. The report taker will ensure the missing person is immediately entered into NCIC when any one of the following criteria exists:
 - **Disability** – A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - **Endangered** – A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.
 - **Involuntary** – A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.
 - **Juvenile** – A person under the age of 18 who is missing and has not been declared

emancipated in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes.

- **Catastrophe Victim** – A person of any age who is missing after a disaster.
- **Other** – A person over the age of 18 not meeting the criteria for entry in any other category who is missing and for whom there is reasonable concern for his/her safety.

5. The report taker will classify the report using one of the five listed criteria for NCIC entry, if applicable, and will then:
 - Obtain supervisory approval;
 - Hand-carry the Missing Person report to the Records Section for NCIC entry;
 - Make a copy of the NCIC teletype entry and attach it to the completed report.

In cases where NCIC entry was requested but not completed, Records personnel will attach a completed “NCIC No Entry” form to the report explaining why the missing person was not entered. If the missing person does not meet NCIC criteria, the report taker will clearly outline why NCIC entry wasn’t made. If the slightest justification exists for entry into NCIC due to disability or endangerment, the entry will be made. However, the report taker will note concerns to the contrary in his/her report.

6. If the missing person meets the criteria set forth in the current Care Trak procedures, Officers and Supervisors will implement the Care Trak protocol as soon as practical.

Preliminary Investigation

A preliminary investigation is made to gather additional information and to take steps to aid in the search for and location of a missing person. This includes gathering the following types of information and materials:

- A complete description of the subject and a recent photograph if it has not already been obtained;
- Details of any physical or emotional problems;
- Identity of the last person(s) to have seen the subject as well as friends, relatives, coworkers, or associates who were or may have been in contact with the subject prior to the disappearance. A canvas of the missing person’s neighborhood/last known location will take place to locate witnesses, associates, possible suspects, and vehicles.
- Plans, habits, routines, and personal interests of the subject, including places frequented or locations of particular personal significance;
- Indications of missing personal belongings, particularly money and other valuables;
- Any suggestions of foul play or accident. The report taker should also attempt to determine if a possible crime scene exists and take steps to preserve the scene for detectives.

In the case of a subject designated as “missing-critical,” a supervisor may:

- Direct dispatch to broadcast to all persons on duty all information necessary to identify the missing person, and
- Request that the shift commander authorize mobilization of resources necessary for an area search.

Ongoing Investigation

Ongoing investigations of missing persons should include, but not be limited to, the following actions and activities.

1. Request release of dental records and fingerprints if available. Additionally, sources of potential DNA identification should be located, *i.e.*, hair from brushes, missing person's biological parents, known blood specimens, etc.
2. Contact hospitals, jail, mental health facilities and the coroner's office as appropriate for injured or deceased persons fitting the description of the missing person.
3. Thoroughly check the location at which the missing person was last seen and conduct interviews as appropriate with persons who were with the subject or who may work in or frequent the area. The citizen who initiated the missing persons report should be contacted to verify details included in the report and should be interviewed formally, if appropriate, particularly if foul play is suspected or the disappearance is missing-critical.
4. Conduct interviews with additional family members, friends, work associates, schoolmates and teachers, as well as school counselors and social case workers, as appropriate, to explore the potential for foul play or voluntary flight.
5. Provide identification and related information to all divisions of the Reno Police Department, the Nevada Division of Investigation, neighboring police agencies and, if parental or stranger-to-stranger abduction is suggested, the FBI.
6. Financial institutions holding accounts belonging to the missing person should be contacted for activity and possible leads. Additionally, generic credit bureau information and other computer databases may be accessed, as appropriate.
7. The decision to use local media to help locate missing persons will be made with the approval of supervisory personnel. The missing person's family will be consulted, when practicable, when the media is to be utilized.
8. The lead investigator will maintain routine on-going contact with the missing person's closest relative concerning the progress of the investigation. These and other relevant individuals will be informed that they must notify the lead investigator as soon as any contact is made with the missing person.

Recovery of Missing Persons and Case Closure

1. Competent adults, having left home for personal reasons, cannot be forced to return home. Officers locating such subjects will:
 - Advise them that they are the subject of a missing person investigation;
 - Ask if they desire the reporting party or next-of-kin to be notified of their whereabouts; and
 - Make provisions to transmit this information to the reporting party or next-of-kin if permitted by the missing person.

2. If an adult missing person can be verified to have been seen in another jurisdiction, and under circumstances which reasonably suggest that they are not “missing-critical,” the Reno Police Department’s missing person report may be closed. Adult missing persons who have warrants for their arrest, in which information exists suggesting a link between their disappearance and the warrant, may be closed unless “missing-critical” circumstances exist.

3. A runaway juvenile may be removed as being classified as a runaway via a telephone call only by the Missing Person Investigator. In all other cases, the runaway juvenile will only be cleared after being seen by either the original report taker or someone else following up on the original report.

4. In all cases, reporting parties will be informed of the well-being of located, missing persons. Unless criminal matters necessitate other action, desires of missing persons not to reveal their whereabouts will be honored.

5. Missing persons will be questioned, if appropriate, to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance and whether criminal activity was involved.

6. Upon location of a missing person, all agencies and information systems previously contacted for assistance will be notified or updated.

7. Where abuse and/or neglect of juveniles or the elderly is indicated, follow-up action will include filing an abuse and neglect report with Social Services. This report will include complete information on the whereabouts, actions, and activities of children and at-risk adults while missing. Where indicated, criminal charges will be filed with the prosecutor’s office.

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Checklists

CARE TRAK PROCEDURES

The purposes of the procedures to be followed are in the event that the Care Trak System is activated for an At Risk Missing Care Trak Client. Reports of Care Trak missing persons with cognitive impairment will be treated as an emergency and a search will begin as soon as reasonably possible.

See related General Orders (Missing Persons) P-290-04 and (Missing Persons under 21) P-291-05.

Definitions:

Care Trak- Equipment consisting of RF Telemetry Tracking Devices and Transmitters

Care Trak Client- Subject who is currently equipped with the Care Trak Wrist/Ankle Transmitter who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Autism, or other Cognitive Impairments

Caregiver- Subject who has the principal responsibilities for caring for a child or dependent adult

Six (6) Digit Frequency Code- Personal identifying code assigned to each Care Trak wrist/ankle Transmitter

Wandering Prevention Program (WPP) –Web based system containing all Care Trak client information.

Responsibilities:

Upon receiving a 911 call from the caregiver activating the Care Trak system, the following procedures will be adhered to when possible:

Communications Personnel:

- Caregiver will inform Communication's Personnel (ECOM) that the missing person is a Care Trak client and provide his/her six (6) digit frequency code.
- If the Caregiver does not have the six (6) digit frequency code, the code can be obtained from the Wandering Prevention Program system (WPP) under the client's name.
- Communication's Personnel will log in to WPP, verify the missing person is an active Care Trak Client and click the "Activate Alert" icon on the missing person's client page.
- An On –Duty Patrol Supervisor will be notified immediately upon classification of Care Trak client by Communication's Personnel.
- On duty trained Care Trak Officers (Care Trak code on strength report) will be dispatched and immediately be provided with the six (6) digit frequency code to activate the receiver. Additional Officers will be dispatched to scene to take initial report from caregiver per G.O. P290-04 and P291-05.
- Verify if RAVEN and/or Washoe County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue (SAR) are on duty and relay Raven and/or (SAR) status to Patrol Supervisor for additional assistance in search.
- Broadcast ATL informing all Patrol Officers of the pertinent missing person's information per standard procedures.
- Upon locating the Care Trak missing person; cancel the Attempt to Locate (ATL), "Cancel Alert" from the WPP system.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Time is critical, and quickly ensuring the Care Trak equipment has been activated is very important.

- Ensure on Duty Trained Care Trak Officers have been dispatched to the scene with Care Trak locating equipment.
- If RAVEN is on-duty, activate RAVEN for assistance on the search.
- IF RPD, WCSO, OR SPD CARE TRAK TRAINED OFFICERS ARE UNAVAILABLE, ACTIVATE CARE TRAK TRAINED WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) TO THE SCENE.
- Ensure that trained Officers of the Care Trak locator equipment conduct a thorough area search for the missing person in accordance with Care Trak training
- Ensure that all standard reporting procedures are followed per G.O.s P290-04 and P291-05 to include NCIC entry procedures.
- Handle media releases in accordance with G.O. S180-05 (Media Relations)
- If it has been determined that the missing person has ventured outside of the tracking range or the transmitter has failed to produce a radio frequency, command staff will revert to using the standard RPD search protocol for missing endangered person.
- Request deactivation of Care Trak search upon locating the missing person
- Ensure Kids to Seniors Korner is informed of the Care Trak search results.

Sworn Officers

- Trained Care Trak Officers will respond to collect Care Trak equipment, activate receiver with frequency code provided by Communications, and begin responding to the location the missing person was last seen.

- If a vehicle mounted receiver is available, the Officer driving the vehicle should immediately activate the on-board receiver with the frequency code and begin the search.
- The assigned Patrol Officer will initiate a report in accordance with G.O. P290-4/P-291-05
- It shall be documented in the report that the missing person is a participant of Care Trak and entered into NCIC per procedure.
- Upon locating the Care Trak missing person, the Officer will follow the procedures for removing the individual from NCIC.

At deactivation of the Care Trak search, all portable Care Trak equipment should be immediately returned to the Station for charging and to prepare for next use.