



**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania**

**Policy 4-03**

**Policy Title:** Missing Persons

**Date of Issue:** December 1, 2022

**Rescinds:** None

**By Authority of:**

**Chief of Police**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and responsibilities for the consistent response to, and investigation of, all reports of missing persons. This includes missing and endangered children in compliance with Federal law and Section 2908 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code (Title 18).

**II. Policy**

Reports of missing persons can be among the most difficult, challenging, and emotionally-charged cases received by a law enforcement agency. The response to missing children, including runaways, abandonment, abduction, or other missing status, is of paramount importance. All members of the department will consider any missing or unidentified child a primary concern. It is the policy of the Springfield Township Police Department that reports of missing children are immediately investigated upon receipt of the report. This report will be accepted regardless of the age of the missing child, the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the child, or the location of the incident. Such reports will be accepted from a relative, guardian, authoritative source, or a responsible adult who has close contact with the missing child. Reports will be accepted by phone; however, an officer shall be dispatched to conduct a personal interview. Each report will be handled as if it were a first-time incident, regardless of the frequency of the reports. All available resources will be mobilized whenever necessary.

**III. Definitions**

A. A missing person may be entered into CLEAN / NCIC only if they meet one of the following criteria:

1. Disability – A person of any age who is missing and who is under proven physical / mental disability, or is senile, thereby subjecting themselves or others to personal and immediate danger.

2. Endangered – A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that their physical safety may be in danger.
  3. Involuntary – A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.
  4. Juvenile – A person who is missing and declared unemancipated as defined by the laws of their state of residence and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in 1, 2, 3, 5, or 6 herein.
  5. Catastrophe Victim – A person who is missing after a catastrophe.
  6. 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 their safety.
- B. Suzanne’s Act – A federal law that changes the mandated reporting into NCIC from 18 to 21 years of age.

#### **IV. Missing Child**

##### **A. Initial Investigation**

1. All emergency calls are received by Montgomery County Emergency Dispatch Services (MCEDS). Call takers are trained to obtain specific information. The information is then broadcast in accordance with their policies and protocols.
2. Upon dispatch of a missing child, the Lieutenant shall be notified, and should immediately direct the necessary patrols to the general area to begin searching for the child. When appropriate, a supervisor shall assume command of the incident and consider utilization of other resources and implementation of the Incident Command System.
3. The first responding officer shall obtain a complete physical description from the reporting party. Clothing, possible destination, friends or associates, and any other pertinent information which may assist in locating the person shall be obtained. Any information which may assist officers who are searching for the person shall be relayed as quickly as possible to all appropriate officers and agencies, and shall be included in the incident report, as required by Section 2908(a)(2) of Title 18.
4. A Missing Persons entry shall be made without delay and upon receipt of sufficient information into CLEAN / NCIC as required by Section 2908(a)(3) of Title 18, using the CLEAN / NCIC Entry Form (Attachment A). All entries must be made in under two hours. Timely cancellations shall also be made when the missing child is located.

5. As required by Act #1990-106, the investigating officer shall be responsible for notifying the appropriate school district and the Pennsylvania Department of Health – Division of Vital Records, that a child is lost, abducted, missing, or runaway. The same shall also be notified upon recovery of the child. Notification shall be made to both entities via facsimile using the Missing Child Notification Letters (Attachment B). Similarly, notification shall be made to both entities when previously missing children are subsequently found. Notification shall be via facsimile using the Located Missing Child Notification Letters (Attachment C).
6. A determination should be made to have a detective to assist. Investigators shall be briefed and assist with the investigation according to department policies and protocols.
7. Upon addressing these immediate issues, a determination shall be made as to the jurisdiction for proper follow up by the appropriate law enforcement agency. The investigating officer shall contact the appropriate law enforcement agency and coordinate proper follow-up.

B. Amber Alert

1. If information leads officers to believe that the child was abducted, and police believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death, the Pennsylvania State Police Consolidated Dispatch in Harrisburg shall immediately be contacted at (717) 346-5430. A brief synopsis of the abduction shall be provided and an Amber Alert shall be requested.
2. Family abductions are not excluded, provided the criteria are met and circumstances support activating the Pennsylvania Amber Alert plan.
3. The decision to activate the Pennsylvania Amber Alert Plan will be made by the PSP Criminal Investigation Assessment Unit based on the facts provided by our officers.

C. Lost Child

1. The shift supervisor shall establish a command post and make notification to the Lieutenant. If unavailable, notification shall be made directly to the Chief of Police.
2. The shift supervisor shall then determine and request appropriate resources needed for a search. This could include additional officers, fire department personnel, bloodhounds, or helicopter. A systematic search shall be conducted, to include locations such as the entire house where the child was last seen.
3. Surrounding agencies should be notified through MCEDS.
4. A recent photo shall be obtained along with a detailed description.

D. Runaways

1. If a runaway is not immediately located, an email shall be sent by the investigating officer to all members of the department for the purpose of follow-up by the Patrol Division.
2. Follow-up action shall be documented in a supplemental report, and taken in accordance with the following schedule, by contacting the parents and school to determine if there is any new information:
  - a. After 24 hours from the time the runaway report was taken.
  - b. After 72 hours from the time the runaway report was taken.
  - c. After 7 days from the time the runaway report was taken.
  - d. After 30 days and every 30 days thereafter from the time the runaway report was taken, until the runaway is located and returned home.

The above is intended for those cases when an officer does NOT suspect: foul play, a criminal offense has occurred or is occurring, or considers the runaway endangered in any way. Should those conditions apply, follow-up action is required every 24 hours until the runaway is located and returned home.

E. Additional Follow-Up

1. Officers and investigators shall make every reasonable effort to locate a missing child.
2. Follow-up investigation should include re-contacting the parents, family, and friends to determine whether any new information exists. Any new information shall be documented in the incident report. CLEAN / NCIC shall be updated as necessary.
3. The National Child Search Assistance Act requires that no later than 60 days after the original entry of the missing child in CLEAN / NCIC, the police department must verify and update the entry with any additional information, including medical and dental records, if available.
4. Officers and investigators shall maintain close liaison with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (Phone 703-274-3900) for the exchange of information and technical assistance.

F. Discovering a Living or Deceased Child

1. If a living child is discovered and is unable to be identified, such as an infant or a physically or mentally disabled child, an entry shall be made into the Unidentified Persons File through CLEAN.
2. The Montgomery County Children and Youth Agency shall be contacted as soon as possible to accept custody of a living child who cannot be identified.

3. If an unidentified deceased child is found, the scene shall be treated as a crime scene and an investigation conducted. An entry shall be made into the Unidentified Deceased Person File through CLEAN immediately upon receiving any descriptive information on the deceased child.

G. Returned Missing Juveniles

1. Any time a call is received indicating that a missing juvenile has been located, an officer will be assigned to the call.
2. Any time it is brought to the attention of an officer that a juvenile previously reported missing has been located, the officer shall investigate the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance and return. The information shall be documented in the incident / CFS report. Officers shall attempt to assist the family where possible with their concerns.

H. Suzanne's Act

1. Federal law requires that local law enforcement agencies report each case of a missing child under the age of 21 to NCIC (42 USC §5779).
2. NCIC entries in compliance with Suzanne's Act fall under the category of "Other." A "Missing Person Declaration," which is required for Missing Adults, is not required for entries under this law.

**V. Missing Adult**

- A. Officers investigating reports of missing persons that meet any of the criteria for entry into NCIC should collect the following information from the reporting person, their family, relatives, or other knowledgeable sources.
  1. The first responding officer shall obtain a complete physical description. Physical descriptors, clothing, jewelry, possible destination, friends or associates, and any other pertinent information which may assist in locating the person should be obtained. Any information which may assist officers who are searching for the person shall be relayed as quickly as possible to all appropriate officers and agencies. All information obtained shall be included in an incident report.
  2. A CLEAN / NCIC Entry Form for Missing Person (Attachment A) shall be signed and completed by the complainant prior to entry into NCIC. Entry into NCIC cannot be made until this form is completed. This form shall be attached to the incident / CFS report.
- B. Collected information may be disseminated as needed to locate the missing person. Officers should consider: contacting agencies where the person may be found, sending SCOPE messages, county-wide broadcasts, and contacting the media in accordance with

department policies. Any action taken shall be documented in the incident / CFS report. Copies of messages or releases should be attached, if possible.

- C. The officer responsible for the initial investigation shall ensure that entry into NCIC / CLEAN is made as soon as sufficient information is obtained and the NCIC / CLEAN Entry Form for Missing Person (Attachment A) is complete. Entries shall be made by MCEDS. MCEDS's Missing Person form shall be completed and sent to MCEDS to facilitate entry.
  - 1. Officers who obtain additional information after the initial entry is made are responsible to ensure that the additional information is added to the entry.
- D. Any officer who investigates the locating of a person previously reported as missing to the Springfield Township Police Department shall ensure that the entry is removed from NCIC / CLEAN. Agencies previously notified to look for the person should be notified that the person has been located.
- E. Any officer responsible for follow-up investigation of a missing person under this section shall maintain ongoing contact with the reporting person and provide them with updated information regarding the investigation.
- F. The shift supervisor is responsible to ensure that follow-up investigations are done and documented in the RMS by the end of the shift of the person who has been assigned. Follow-up of cases assigned to the Detectives are the responsibility of the assigned Detective. When additional information becomes available, the senior officer on-duty shall ensure that an on-duty officer or detective is assigned to investigate the information.
- G. The Lieutenant shall be notified immediately when an officer believes the missing person is critically missing or at-risk, such as those in the categories of "endangered," "involuntary," or "disabled." Notifications to the Chief of Police should also be made in these circumstances.
- H. Searches for missing persons, including children, shall initially be coordinated by the senior officer on duty, who shall establish a command post and organize the efforts in accordance with department policy.

## **VI. Attachments**

- A. NCIC / CLEAN Entry Form for Missing Person
- B. Missing Child Notification Letters
- C. Located Missing Child Notification Letters

**ATTACHMENT A**



**Montgomery County Department of Public Safety**

Today's Date

**CLEAN/NCIC Entry Form**

**Missing Person**

Disability

Endangered

Involuntary

Runaway

Juvenile

Catastrophe

Other

Caution

Date of Report	Police Department	Reporting Officer	Badge Number	Report Number

Fields marked with an Asterisk\* are Mandatory.

* Name (NAM)	* Sex	* Race (RAC)	* Height	* Weight	* Eye Color (EYE)

* Hair Color (HAI)	* Date of Last Contact	* Time of Last Contact	Photo Available (PTO)	DNA Available (DNA)
			<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

* Date of Birth (DOB)	Social Security Number (SOC)	FBI Number (FBI)

At least one of the next 3 sets of fields (1, 2 or 3)

1a. Operator's License Number (OLN)	1b. State	1c. Year	2a. License Plate	2b. State	2c. Expires	2d. License Type

3a. Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)	3b. Year (VYR)	3c. Make (VMA)	3d. Model (VMO)	3e. Style (VST)	3f. Color (VCO)

Place of Birth (POB)	Scars, Marks, Tattoos and other characteristics (SMT)	Last Known Address

Medical Conditions / Addictions	Ethnicity (ETN)	Skin Tone (SKN)	Blood Type (BLT)

Circumcized <input type="checkbox"/>	Footprint Available <input type="checkbox"/>	Body X-Ray <input type="checkbox"/>	Corrective Lenses <input type="checkbox"/> None	Jewelry:

Miscellaneous (MIS) - (Include clothing description and any other info not addressed.)

**CASE USE ONLY**

Dispatcher Initials / Number	Date	Time	OCA
Checked By - Initials / Number	Date	Time	

\*\*\*Print Legibly or Type All Information\*\*\*

**PRINT**

**Fax completed forms to 610-631-6539 for entry.**

**CLEAR**

**EMAIL**

Form can be emailed to [MCentries@montcopa.org](mailto:MCentries@montcopa.org) (Form MP-1: Revision 201909b)



**Montgomery County Department of Public Safety**

**CLEAN/NCIC Entry Form**

**Missing Person Declaration**

Date of Report	Police Department	Reporting Officer	Badge Number	Report Number
Name (NAM)			Date of Birth (DOB)	
Address				

- DISABILITY:** A PERSON WHO IS MISSING AND WHO IS UNDER PHYSICAL / MENTAL DISABILITY, THEREBY SUBJECTING HIMSELF / HERSELF OR OTHERS TO PERSONAL AND IMMEDIATE DANGER.
- INVOLUNTARY:** A PERSON WHO IS MISSING UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES INDICATING THAT THE DISAPPEARANCE WAS NOT VOLUNTARY.
- ENDANGERED:** A PERSON WHO IS MISSING UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES INDICATING THAT HIS / HER PHYSICAL SAFETY IS IN DANGER.
- CATASTROPHE:** A PERSON WHO IS MISSING AFTER A CATASTROPHE, (E.G., PLANE CRASH)
- OTHER:** A PERSON NOT MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR ENTRY IN ANY OTHER CATEGORY, WHO IS MISSING & FOR WHOM THERE IS A REASONABLE CONCERN FOR HIS/HER SAFETY.

I hereby declare and certify to the \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department that the individual named above is missing as indicated in the category checked and his or her whereabouts are unknown. Police assistance is requested to locate this person. I am signing this document with the full understanding that any false information or statement will subject me to the criminal penalties of 18 Pa. CS 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

_____	_____
Complainant Signature	Complainant Name Printed
_____	_____
Complainant Address	Relationship to Missing Person

\*\*\*Print Legibly or Type All Information\*\*\*

**Fax completed forms to 610-631-6539 for entry.**

**PRINT**

**CLEAR**

**EMAIL**

(Form MISS\_DEC: Revision 201912)

Form can be emailed to [MCentries@montcopa.org](mailto:MCentries@montcopa.org)



**Missing Person Criteria**

A missing person record may be entered using one of the following categories:

**Disability (MKE\*/EMD):** a person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting him/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.

**Endangered (MKE/EME):** a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.

**Involuntary (MKE/EMI):** a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary, i.e., abduction or kidnaping.

**Juvenile (MKE/EMJ):** a person under the age of 18 who is missing and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in 1, 2, 3, or 5.

**Catastrophe Victim (MKE/EMV):** a person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.

**Other (MKE/EMO):** 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 a reasonable concern for his/her safety. (NCIC 2000 format only).

**ATTACHMENT B**

**NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL DISTRICT - MISSING CHILD**

Student Records Department

District:

Address:

Records Custodian:

Under the provisions of Act 106 of 1990, specifically Section 402-A, notification of a missing child must be made by the investigating law enforcement agency to the appropriate school district. The following-named child has been reported missing to our Police Department. Please make a notation on their record.

<b>NAME OF CHILD:</b>
<b>DATE OF BIRTH:</b>
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH (Including County):</b>
<b>NAME OF FATHER:</b>
<b>MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER:</b>

<b>INVESTIGATING OFFICER / CONTACT PERSON:</b>
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER: 215-836-7600</b>
<b>E-MAIL:</b>

If a request for information from the record of the above-named child is received, please notify the investigating officer/contact person prior to honoring such request. Also, attempt to obtain identifying information from the requestor. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

**NOTIFICATION TO DIVISION OF VITAL RECORDS - MISSING CHILD**

Director, Division of Vital Records  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
PO Box 1528  
New Castle, PA 16103-1528

Director:

Under the provisions of Act 106 of 1990, specifically Section 402-A, notification of a missing child must be made by the investigating law enforcement agency to the Division of Vital Records. The following-named child has been reported missing to our Police Department. Please make a notification on their birth certificate record.

**NAME OF CHILD:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**PLACE OF BIRTH (Including County):**

**NAME OF FATHER:**

**MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER:**

**INVESTIGATING OFFICER / CONTACT PERSON:**

**TELEPHONE NUMBER: 215-836-7600**

**E-MAIL:**

If a request for information from the record of the above-named child is received, please notify the investigating officer/contact person prior to honoring such request. Also, attempt to obtain identifying information from the requestor. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

**ATTACHMENT C**

**NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL DISTRICT - LOCATED CHILD**

Student Records Department

District:

Address:

Records Custodian:

Under the provisions of Act 106 of 1990, specifically Section 402-A, notification of a missing child must be made by the investigating law enforcement agency to the appropriate school district. The following-named child has been located by our Police Department. Please remove the "missing child" notification from your records.

**NAME OF CHILD:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**PLACE OF BIRTH (Including County):**

**NAME OF FATHER:**

**MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER:**

**INVESTIGATING OFFICER / CONTACT PERSON:**

**TELEPHONE NUMBER: 215-836-7600**

**E-MAIL:**

If a request for information from the record of the above-named child is received, please notify the investigating officer / contact person prior to honoring such request. Also, attempt to obtain identifying information from the requestor. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

**NOTIFICATION TO DIVISION OF VITAL RECORDS - LOCATED CHILD**

Director, Division of Vital Records  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
PO Box 1528  
New Castle, PA 16103-1528

Director:

Under the provisions of Act 106 of 1990, specifically Section 402-A, notification of a missing child must be made by the investigating law enforcement agency to the Division of Vital Records. The following-named child has been located by our Police Department. Please remove the "missing child" notification from their birth certificate.

**NAME OF CHILD:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**PLACE OF BIRTH (Including County):**

**NAME OF FATHER:**

**MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER:**

**INVESTIGATING OFFICER / CONTACT PERSON:**

**TELEPHONE NUMBER: 215-836-7600**

**E-MAIL:**

If a request for information from the record of the above-named child is received, please notify the investigating officer / contact person prior to honoring such request. Also, attempt to obtain identifying information from the requestor. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

