

Missing Persons

316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice NYSLEAP-8.7-44.3

This policy provides guidance for handling missing person investigations.

316.1.1 DEFINITIONS

State MODIFIED

Definitions related to this policy include:

Attempt To Locate Person - Is a person who is 18 years of age or older (>18), who does not meet the requirements of a missing person, as described in this section.

At risk - Persons identified by the New York model policy and data collection guide for missing persons as high-risk or endangered, including persons who:

- (a) Are 11 years of age or younger.
- (b) Regardless of age, are believed or determined to be experiencing one or more of the following circumstances (Executive Law § 837-f-2):
 1. Out of the zone of safety for his/her chronological age and developmental stage.
 2. Mentally or behaviorally disabled.
 3. Absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing.
 4. In a life-threatening situation.
 5. Absent in a way that is inconsistent with established patterns of behavior and cannot be readily explained. Most children have an established and reasonably predictable routine.
 6. Involved in a situation that would cause a reasonable person to conclude the person should be considered at risk.
 7. A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability subjecting himself/herself to personal and immediate danger.
 8. A person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.
 9. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.
 10. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary, i.e. abduction or kidnapping.
 11. A person age 18 or older 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.
 12. A person 18 years or older who is missing and has a cognitive impairment, mental disability or brain disorder and it is believed the missing individual is at a credible risk of harm.

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- (c) Qualify for a state AMBER Alert™ (under 18 years of age, abducted and at risk for harm).
- (d) Are college students of any age, when there is reason to believe their well-being may be in jeopardy.
- (e) A person seventeen years of age or younger (<17), who is reported missing under circumstances involving custodial interference and who is a resident of the City of Syracuse as defined in this section.
 1. When the investigation determines that an incident is a custodial interference and there are no exigent circumstances, which pose a threat or potential threat to the child involved, the incident will be classified as a “custodial interference” and indicated as such in the incident report.

Missing Child - Any person 17 years of age or younger (<17) missing from his/her normal and ordinary place of residence and any child known to have been taken, enticed or concealed from the custody of his/her lawful guardian, by a person who has no legal right to do so.

Missing person - Any person residing within the City of Syracuse, including college students residing within the City of Syracuse, residents of Foster and Group Homes and Non-Secure Detention Centers, anyone involuntarily housed at a hospital within the City of Syracuse who is reported missing to law enforcement when that person's location is unknown. This includes missing children (under the age of 18), whether due to a stranger, familial or acquaintance abduction, as well as runaways and children who are lost or missing under unknown circumstances; and vulnerable adults or any adult when there is suspicion that their well-being is in jeopardy.

Missing person networks - Databases or computer networks that are available to law enforcement and are suitable for obtaining information related to missing person investigations. This includes the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), New York eJusticeNY Integrated Justice Portal and the New York State Missing Person Clearinghouse (MPC).

Missing vulnerable adult - A person 18 years or older who is missing and has a cognitive impairment, mental disability or brain disorder, and is believed to be at a credible risk of harm (Executive Law § 837-f-1).

Resident - A person whose actual principle domicile, where he or she normally sleeps and maintains personal and household effects, is located within the City of Syracuse. This definition pertains to the Missing Persons policy only.

316.2 POLICY

Best Practice **MODIFIED** NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.2.6 (a) NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 44.3, 44.3 (A)

The Syracuse Police Department does not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and assumes that the missing person is in need of immediate assistance until an investigation reveals otherwise. Priority shall be given to missing person cases over property-

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related cases. Members will initiate an investigation into all reports of missing persons, regardless of the length of time the person has been missing (Executive Law § 838).

The Syracuse Police Department shall thoroughly investigate all reports of missing children, including runaways, children reported to have been abducted, unidentified children, or children missing for other reasons. Additionally, every case will be evaluated for risk factors.

316.3 ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Best Practice NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 44.3 (A)

Any member encountering an individual who wishes to report a missing person or runaway shall render assistance without delay. This can be accomplished by accepting the report via telephone or in-person and initiating the investigation. Those members who do not take such reports or who are unable to give immediate assistance shall promptly dispatch or alert a member who can take the report.

A report shall be accepted in all cases and regardless of where the person was last seen, where the person resides or any question of jurisdiction.

316.4 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

Best Practice MODIFIED NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.2.5 (a), 41.2.5 (b), 41.2.5 (c), 41.2.5 (d), 41.2.5 (g), 41.2.6 (b), 41.2.6 (c), 41.2.6 (d), 41.2.6 (e)

NYSLEAP- 8.7 - 44.3 (B)

Officers or other members conducting the initial investigation of a missing person should take the following investigative actions, as applicable:

- (a) Respond to a dispatched call as soon as practicable.
- (b) Interview the reporting party and any witnesses to determine whether the person qualifies as a missing person and, if so, whether the person may be at risk.
- (c) Notify a supervisor immediately if there is evidence that a missing person is at risk.
- (d) The initial investigating officer shall complete a CNYCAC request form for a missing persons bulletin on all at risk missing persons.
- (e) Indicate in the initial investigation report where a photograph of the missing person can be obtained for follow-up.
- (f) Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely and initiate a search as applicable under the facts.
- (g) Collect and/or review:
 1. Any documents that may assist in the investigation, such as court orders regarding custody.
 2. Any other evidence that may assist in the investigation, including personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, computers).
- (h) When circumstances permit and if appropriate, attempt to determine the missing person's location through their telecommunications carrier.

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- (i) Contact the appropriate agency if the report relates to a missing person report previously made to another agency and that agency is actively investigating the report. When this is not practicable, the information should be documented in an appropriate report for transmission to the appropriate agency. If the information relates to an at-risk missing person, the member should notify a supervisor and proceed with reasonable steps to locate the missing person.
- (j) The initial investigating officer will ensure that the missing person investigation is entered on the CID sheet.
- (k) Patrol shall maintain responsibility for at risk missing person until properly relieved by CID.
- (l) The officer receiving a missing person report shall, when authorized by law, cause an e-Justice Integrated Portal message (File 6) to be sent as soon as possible. The message shall be sent, whenever possible by the Central Records Division in accordance with regulations.

[See procedure for MISSING PERSON INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS](#)

[See procedure for INVESTIGATION OF MISSING CHILDREN OR INCAPACITATED PERSONS](#)

316.5 REPORT PROCEDURES AND ROUTING

Best Practice **MODIFIED** NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.2.6 (e)

Members should complete all missing person reports and forms prior to the completion of their shift and advise the appropriate supervisor as soon as a missing person report is ready for review.

[See procedure for MISSING PERSON REPORT REQUIREMENTS](#)

[See procedure for MISSING PERSON REPORT](#)

316.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice **MODIFIED** NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.2.6 (e)

The responsibilities of the supervisor shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Reviewing and approving missing person reports upon receipt.
 - 1. The reports should be promptly sent to the Records Division.
- (b) Ensuring resources are deployed as appropriate.
- (c) Initiating a command post as needed.
- (d) Ensuring applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented and that the Criminal Investigations Division is notified verbally of any at risk missing persons, as appropriate.
- (e) Taking reasonable steps to identify and address any jurisdictional issues to ensure cooperation among agencies.
 - 1. If the case falls within the jurisdiction of another agency, the supervisor should facilitate transfer of the case to the agency of jurisdiction.

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- (f) In the case of at risk missing persons who are not found prior to the end of the patrol shift, the supervisor will ensure that the investigation is turned over to the next appropriate shift for continuation.
- (g) If the missing person is believed to be in the local area, notify a supervisor at the Onondaga County 9-1-1 Communications Center @ 315-435-8838. The 9-1-1 Center can initiate the Geo-Cast reverse 9-1-1 call systems as well as make notifications to the area hospitals via fax. (Consider using the Missing Persons Clearinghouse as a resource to assist in the investigation). Follow-up with hospitals should be conducted by police personnel when time allows.
- (h) Numerous calls should be expected from the public in an effort to gather or provide information. Arrangements should be made to staff personnel at the PSB to handle the large volume of phone calls.

316.5.2 RECORDS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

State **MODIFIED** NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.2.6 (e)

The responsibilities of the Records Division receiving member shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) It is the responsibility of the Central Records Division to provide the Missing Persons Unit with copies of teletype messages and, all “missing person” and “attempt to locate person” reports.
- (b) When the missing person is a resident the City of Syracuse, the Central Records Division will send a File 6, Missing Person message to the e-Justice Integrated Portal. The Central Records Division will then fax the General Message to the TA for immediate broadcast.
- (c) When a person is reported missing by a medical facility, which provides psychiatric treatment, and the person is lodged on an involuntary commitment status, the person will be designated as an “escapee”. The Central Records Division, upon receipt of the general message or incident report, will send a File 5 Wanted Person message to the e-Justice Integrated Portal if a warrant has been issued.
- (d) If applicable, a File 25, “Miscellaneous”, teletype message will be sent by the Central Records Division regarding an “attempt to locate person”.
- (e) As soon as reasonable under the circumstances, notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction for the missing person’s residence in cases where the missing person is a resident of another jurisdiction.
- (f) Notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction where the missing person was last seen.
- (g) Notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction for the missing person’s intended or possible destination, if known.
- (h) Coordinating with the NCIC Terminal Contractor for New York to have the missing person record in the NCIC computer networks updated with additional information obtained from missing person investigations (34 USC § 41308).

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- (i) Ensuring that a list of closed missing person cases is submitted to the DCJS twice a year (Executive Law § 837-m).
- (j) Ensuring that regulations and policies required by missing person networks are followed (9 NYCRR § 6055.2).
- (k) Forwarding reports to the New York State Violent Crimes Analysis Program (VICAP) as required by Executive Law § 221-b.

[See procedure for MISSING PERSON E-JUSTICE INTEGRATED PORTAL MESSAGES](#)

316.6 INVESTIGATION BUREAU FOLLOW-UP

State **MODIFIED** NY_CALEA6.13 - 41.2.5 (e), 41.2.5 (f), 41.2.6 (e), 41.2.6 (f)

In addition to completing or continuing any actions listed above, the investigator assigned to a missing person investigation:

- (a) Should ensure that the missing person's school is notified, when practical, if the missing person is a juvenile.
 - 1. The investigator should meet with school officials as appropriate to stress the importance of including the notice in the child's student file, along with the investigator's contact information, if the school receives a call requesting the transfer of the missing child's files to another school (Education Law § 3222).
 - 2. The investigator should coordinate with the SIRP officer to flag the child's school records and search the child's locker for leads, as appropriate.
- (b) Should recontact the reporting party and/or other witnesses within 30 days of the initial report and within 30 days thereafter to keep them informed, as appropriate, and to determine if any additional information has become available.
- (c) Should consider contacting other agencies involved in the case to determine if any additional information is available.
- (d) Shall verify and update DCJS, NCIC and any other applicable missing person networks within 30 days of the original entry into the networks and every 30 days thereafter until the missing person is located (34 USC § 41308).
- (e) Should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document these efforts.
- (f) Shall maintain a close liaison with state and local child welfare systems and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) if the missing person is missing for a protracted period of time and shall promptly notify NCMEC when the person is missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution (34 USC § 41308).
- (g) Should make appropriate inquiry with the Medical Examiner.
- (h) Shall obtain and forward medical records, dental records, photos, X-rays and biological samples, as applicable (Executive Law § 838).
- (i) Shall attempt to obtain the most recent photograph for persons under 18 years of age if it has not been obtained previously and forward the photograph to any other agency

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- that is a stakeholder or requires them, including DCJS, and enter the photograph into the applicable missing person networks (34 USC § 41308).
- (j) Should consider making appropriate entries and searches in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).
 - (k) In the case of an at-risk missing person or a person who has been missing for an extended time, should consult with a supervisor regarding seeking federal assistance from the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service (28 USC § 566).
 - (l) Shall prepare a written report, in the form prescribed by VICAP, where circumstances indicate a strong possibility of foul play, within 30 days of beginning the missing person investigation (Executive Law § 221-b).
 - (m) Should broadcast an alert if the person is under 21 years of age or there is evidence that the missing person is at risk (see the Public Alerts Policy). The alert should be broadcast as soon as practicable but in no event more than one hour after determining the missing person is under 21 years of age or may be at risk (Executive Law § 221).
 - (n) Ensure that entries are made into the appropriate missing person networks for resident missing persons:
 - 1. Immediately, when the missing person is at risk.
 - 2. Without delay, when it involves a missing child (9 NYCRR § 6055.3).
 - 3. In all other cases, as soon as practicable, but not later than two hours from the time of the initial report (34 USC § 41308).
 - (o) Should collect and/or review:
 - 1. A photograph and fingerprint card of the missing person, if available.
 - 2. A voluntarily provided biological sample of the missing person, if available (e.g., toothbrush, hairbrush).
 - (p) Ensuring that records have been entered into the appropriate missing person networks.
 - (q) Should ensure the Central Records Division, as required by Department procedures, transmits a teletype message.
 - (r) Should ensure the appropriate police agency is notified in those cases where a missing person resides in a jurisdiction outside the City of Syracuse.
 - (s) Should ensure the appropriate person is contacted to obtain permission to search the subject's room for leads and signs of violence or foul play. It may also be necessary to process the room for identification evidence (e.g. fingerprints, hairs, etc.).
 - 1. If permission is not obtained, but access to the subject's room is still needed for investigative purposes, then a search warrant shall be applied for.
 - (t) If the subject is a school aged child contact the SIRP officer at the school or other school official to request a search of the child's school records and search the child's locker for leads.

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- (u) Ensure department records and the CHAIRS/LEADS systems are checked for prior contacts involving the subject or contacts which have occurred since the subject's disappearance.
- (v) Ensure the subject's school or place of employment are checked for attendance.
- (w) Contact is made with local jails, hospitals, and the Medical Examiners Office's to inquire about the subject or unidentified persons matching the subject's description.
- (x) Ensure the e-Justice Integrated Portal is checked for messages regarding unidentified persons matching the subject's description.
- (y) Contact is made with airlines, railroads, taxis, and bus lines and request they check records for the subject as a passenger.
- (z) Ensure local shelters and services agencies are checked to determine if the subject is a resident or a client.
- (aa) If applicable, a check of cellular phone records, internet providers, and any social media sites that the subject is known to have used and/or visited.
- (ab) When appropriate, contact credit card companies to determine if the subject's credit cards have been used since his/her disappearance.
- (ac) Ensure that a "Missing Person Data Collection Guide (Form DCJS-1508) is completed and sent to the Division of Criminal Justice Services, Bureau of Identification for any missing person who has not been located within thirty days.

Detectives assigned to a prolonged investigation of a missing person shall continue to:

- (a) Update new information, as it surfaces, with the DCJS.
- (b) The NYS Executive Law (Section 221-b) requires that a report be submitted to NYS VICAP within 30 days when missing person cases result in circumstances that indicate a strong possibility of foul play.
- (c) Maintain contact with the person's family, keeping them abreast of new developments during the ongoing investigation.
- (d) Technical assistance regarding runaway and missing person's cases is available through the NYS DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse @ 1-800-346-3543 (websites for each organization also contain useful information), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children @ 1-800-THE-LOST, and the National Runaway Switchboard @ 1-800-621-4000. Searches via VICAP and NYS VICAP should be considered during the investigation. In addition, an NCIC "offline search" can be utilized to obtain information not available through online inquiry (searches by geographical area, etc.).
- (e) Efforts may be guided by information contained in the "Missing and Abducted Children: A Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management" manual published by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. This manual can be found on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children website www.missingkids.com. The "resources" menu on the website will allow you to view and print the publication if needed. In addition, the DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse website www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/missing/ under the Publications menu.

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The missing person detective shall monitor all “attempt to locate person” incidents for additional information to determine:

- (a) If reclassification of the incident, from an “attempt to locate person” to a “missing person” investigation is required, or
- (b) The “attempt to locate person” investigation should be closed or cancelled.

316.7 MISSING PERSONS – NON RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF SYRACUSE

Agency Content

Upon receiving a complaint of a missing person who is not a resident of the City of Syracuse, as defined in the Definitions section above, officers should obtain:

- (a) All pertinent information regarding the person (i.e. name, address, date of birth, etc.).
- (b) A detailed physical and clothing description.
- (c) The location where the person was last seen.
- (d) Name(s) and pertinent information of the person(s) who last saw the individual.

The investigating officer will assist the complainant in attempting to locate the person.

If the officer is unable to locate the person, he/she will advise the complainant to contact the police Department where the missing individual resides, if they have not already done so, and file a “missing persons” report with that agency.

Contact the Emergency 9-1-1 dispatcher, as soon as possible and broadcast a “point of information” on the individual.

File an incident report, which should include the following:

- (a) The “incident type” category, which is to be listed as miscellaneous (MISC).
- (b) A detailed physical and clothing description.
- (c) The location where the person was last seen.
- (d) Name(s) and pertinent information of anyone who last saw the person.
- (e) Any locations where the person may be found.
- (f) All locations that have been checked.

Notify the Criminal Investigations Division for listing on their incident sheet.

If applicable, contact the Central Records Division Teletype Operator and request that a File 25, “Miscellaneous” message be sent to the police agency having jurisdiction where the person resides. The Syracuse Police Department does not submit an NCIC or e-Justice Integrated Portal entry because it is the responsibility of the agency where the original “missing person” report is filed.

Department members shall assist outside agencies as deemed appropriate.

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316.8 ATTEMPT TO LOCATE A PERSON INCIDENTS

Agency Content

When an officer determines that an “attempt to locate a person” is needed, he/she will:

- (a) Complete an incident report. The incident type will be classified as “miscellaneous” (MISC).
- (b) Conduct a warrant check on the individual. If the person is wanted, the information will be added to a general message.
- (c) Notify the Central Records Division of all pertinent information for the broadcast of the General Message.
 1. If needed and requested, the teletype operator in the Central Records Division will send a File 25 teletype message “Miscellaneous” statewide.

316.9 PARENTAL KIDNAPPING/CUSTODIAL INTERFERENCE INVESTIGATIONS

Agency Content

Incidents of parental abduction and custodial interference often originate as a civil matter which may escalate into a crime. In addition to the following normal missing person procedures, officers investigating a report of such an incident shall:

- (a) Verify the non-abducting parent’s custody decree and any visitation provisions for the other parent and obtain a copy of the court document.
- (b) Obtain information about the abducting parent (e.g. name, address, description, employment, social security number, vehicle information, and criminal history, if any).

The Missing Persons detective shall be responsible for follow-up investigations of parental abductions or custodial interference cases, and in addition to standard follow-up procedures, shall:

- (a) Request the non-abducting parent secure a certified copy of the custodial decree containing the raised seal of the issuing court which will be necessary should the child be taken to another state or country.
- (b) Utilize, when necessary, the services of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and/or the Federal Parent Locator Service of the United States Department of Health and Human Services @ 315-422-0141.
- (c) Notify the State Department in Washington D.C. if the investigation reveals that the child may be taken out of the country.
- (d) Obtain a subpoena for the abducting parent’s records (e.g. telephone bills, band records, and credit card charges).
- (e) Obtain a search warrant for the abducting parent’s residence and, when appropriate, and arrest warrant for the abducting parent.
- (f) Refer the non-abducting parent to referral services or a support group when necessary.
- (g) Interview the abducted child to determine the circumstances of the abduction, checking for abuse and neglect.

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- (h) When the investigation determines that an incident is a custodial interference and there are no exigent circumstances, which pose a threat or potential threat to the child involved, the incident will be classified as a “custodial interference” and indicated as such in the incident report.

316.10 RUNAWAYS

Agency Content

The N.Y.S. Family Court Act defines a runaway as a person less than eighteen (<18) years of age who has run away from home without just cause; or who, in the reasonable opinion of the officer, appears to have run away from home without just cause. A police officer may reasonably conclude that the child has run away from home when the:

- (a) Child refuses to give his/her name or the name and address of his/her parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care; or
- (b) Officer has reason to doubt the name and address given are correct.

Officers are authorized and shall return a runaway who is less than sixteen (<16) years of age to his/her parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care. If the parent refuses custody of the runaway, or there is risk of fight or flight, the runaway may be brought to an approved facility for such purposes (e.g. Booth House).

If a runaway is a person at least sixteen (16) years of age but less than eighteen (<18) years of age the officer shall make every reasonable effort, short of using physical force, to return the runaway to his/her parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care or to an approved facility for such purpose (e.g. Booth House). If the sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) year old runaway refuses to cooperate in returning, the officer shall notify his/her parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care of the status and location of the runaway and document his/her actions in a police report.

Technical assistance regarding runaway cases is available through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children @ 1-800-THE-LOST and the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) @ 1-800-RUNAWAY.

Officers shall follow-up the return of runaways to determine if the child has been victimized or exploited and may want to recommend a comprehensive physical examination for the child. The officer should also make the child/family aware of the community services to deal with any unresolved issues.

Complaints regarding runaways or persons missing from locations outside the City of Syracuse shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency of jurisdiction.

316.11 WHEN A MISSING PERSON IS FOUND

State MODIFIED

When any person reported missing is found, the assigned investigator shall document the location of the missing person in the appropriate report, notify the relatives and/or reporting party,

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as appropriate, and other involved agencies, and refer the case for additional investigation if warranted.

The Commanding Officer of the Records Division should ensure that, upon receipt of information that a missing person has been located, the following occurs:

- (a) Notification is made to the agency or the agencies that are stakeholders in missing person cases, including DCJS.
- (b) Entries are made in the applicable missing person networks.
- (c) When a person is at risk, the fact that the person has been found should be reported to DCJS as soon as possible.
- (d) Notification shall be made to any other law enforcement agency that took the initial report or participated in the investigation.
- (e) Appropriate missing person files are purged and destroyed as required (Executive Law § 837-e; Executive Law § 838).
- (f) Whenever a missing person is located or returns officers shall make personal contact with the subject to confirm his/her whereabouts and wellbeing. If the missing person is less than sixteen (<16) years of age the officer shall return the missing person to his/her parent or guardian. If the missing person is over the age of sixteen (>16), the officer shall make all attempts to return the missing person, but if the missing person does not want to return to his/her parent or guardian officers shall understand that the missing person over the age of sixteen (>16) is not compelled to return. Officers shall document these details in their police report and shall be responsible for:
 1. Ensuring that all e-Justice Integrated Portal/teletype messages are cancelled including the "A child is Missing" @ 1-888-875-2246, (954)-763-1288 (www.achildismissing.org) if the service was utilized.
 2. Notifying the Central Records Division to ensure that all copies of the "Missing Person Data Collection Guide" (form DCJS-1508) are destroyed in accordance with Section 837-e of the New York State Executive Law, when necessary.
 3. Document the cancellation of teletypes and destruction of (form DCJS-1508) in the narrative portion of the police report.

[See procedure for LOCATED MISSING PERSONS](#)

[See procedure for LOCATED MISSING PERSONS \(OUTSIDE AGENCIES\)](#)

316.11.1 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS/UNIDENTIFIED CHILDREN/INCOMPETENT PERSONS FOUND

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Members investigating a case of an unidentified person who is deceased or a living person who cannot assist in identifying him/herself should:

- (a) Obtain a complete description of the person.
- (b) Enter the unidentified person's description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File.

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- (c) Use available resources, such as those related to missing persons, to identify the person.
- (d) Notify a supervisor.
- (e) The supervisor will, if necessary, cause whatever notifications are necessary to ensure an appropriate response.
- (f) Canvass the area where the unidentified child was found in an attempt to locate the child's parents, legal guardian, or witnesses who may have information regarding the child.
- (g) Document the incident as a CHLD complaint for found unidentified children.

If attempts to locate the child's parents or guardian fail, and the child remains unidentified, a follow-up investigation shall be conducted by the missing person detective.

Document the investigation as a MISC in an incident report for incompetent and unidentified persons.

If attempts to locate the subject's parents or guardian fail, and the subject remains unidentified, a follow-up investigation shall be conducted by the missing person detective.

Whenever an unidentified incompetent person is not returned to his/her home or to his/her guardian the missing person detective/investigating officer shall transport the subject to St. Joseph's Hospital for examination and psychiatric evaluation.

[See procedure for FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION FOR UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS/INCOMPETENT PERSONS](#)

316.12 WARRANT CHECKS OF MISSING/FOUND PERSONS

Agency Content

Officers assigned to a missing or found person investigation will request a warrant check on the individual. If the warrant check on a missing person is positive (code red), this information will be included in a general message and documented in the incident report.

[See procedure for JUVENILES WITH WARRANTS](#)

316.13 CASE CLOSURE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

A Criminal Investigations Division supervisor may authorize the closure of a missing person case after considering the following:

- (a) Closure is appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned or evidence matches an unidentified person or body.
- (b) If the missing person is a resident of Syracuse or this department is the lead agency, the case should be kept under active investigation for as long as the person may still be alive. Exhaustion of leads in the investigation should not be a reason for closing a case.

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- (c) If this department is not the lead agency, the case can be made inactive if all investigative leads have been exhausted, the lead agency has been notified and entries are made in the applicable missing person networks, as appropriate.
- (d) A missing person case should not be closed or reclassified because the person would have reached a certain age or adulthood or because the person is now the subject of a criminal or civil warrant.

316.14 TRAINING

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Subject to available resources, the Commanding Officer of the Training and Education Division should ensure that members of this department whose duties include missing person investigations and reports receive training that includes:

- (a) The initial investigation:
 - 1. Assessments and interviews
 - 2. Use of current resources
 - 3. Confirming missing status and custody status of minors
 - 4. Evaluating the need for a heightened response
 - 5. Identifying the zone of safety based on chronological age and developmental stage
- (b) Briefing of department members at the scene.
- (c) Identifying NCIC Missing Person File categories (e.g., disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile and catastrophe).
- (d) Verifying the accuracy of all descriptive information.
- (e) Initiating a neighborhood investigation.
- (f) Investigating any relevant recent family dynamics.
- (g) Addressing conflicting information.
- (h) Key investigative and coordination steps.
- (i) Managing a missing person case.
- (j) Additional resources and specialized services.
- (k) Update procedures for case information and descriptions.
- (l) Preserving scenes.
- (m) Internet and technology issues (e.g., internet use, cell phone use).
- (n) Media relations.