



GREENVILLE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 239

GENERAL ORDERS

MISSING PERSONS / AMBER ALERT/ ENDANGERED PERSON ALERT

PURPOSE:

This policy outlines guidelines in responding to and investigating missing adults and children. Additionally, it includes procedures for the activation of the statewide AMBER Alert System.

**POLICY
STATEMENT:**

The most critical stage in the investigation of missing persons involves the initial reaction of law enforcement to the situation. Generally, when law enforcement receives the report of a missing person, it is usually unclear as to whether the person left willingly, wandered off, was delayed, or is the victim of foul play. Uncertainty in these situations may cause law enforcement to develop preconceived preliminary opinions as to the whereabouts and probable return of the missing person. Preconceived opinions may result in the loss of critical information such as a witness or physical evidence. In the interest of citizen well-being, it is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to respond to every report of a missing person as if the person is in immediate danger until the information is developed to indicate otherwise. **Additionally, there is no waiting period for reporting a missing person.**

**MISSING PERSON
INCIDENT REPORTS
AND CASE
ASSIGNMENT:**

A person 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.

A BOLO is aired by Communications and a patrol deputy is immediately dispatched to take the incident report. See also GO-221.

**FACTORS THAT CAN PLACE A MISSING PERSON AT
RISK:**

- The missing person is a child 12 years of age or younger.
- The missing person is mentally incapacitated.
- The missing person suffers a medical condition that is potentially life-threatening if left untreated or unattended.
- The missing person has demonstrated life-threatening suicide.
- Based on available information it is determined the missing person is in a life-threatening situation.

- Based on available information it is believed that the missing person is a child who is in the company of adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- The absence of the missing person is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained.
- Other circumstances are involved in the disappearance that would cause a reasonable person to conclude the missing person should be considered “at risk.”

Note – Both a dispatched patrol deputy and supervisor notification are required for all missing person incidents unless otherwise determined/authorized by the watch commander.

The **Criminal Investigations Division (CID)** investigates adult missing persons. The **SID – Juvenile Investigations Unit** investigates juvenile missing persons and runaways.

A deputy assigned to follow-up a missing person case is to:

1. Maintain contact with the complainant.
2. Report investigative progress to the missing person’s family on a regular basis.

MISSING CHILD/PERSON CATEGORIES:

Definitions -

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

NON-FAMILY ABDUCTION - A child who is taken by an unknown individual, through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.

RUNAWAY - Most often a teenager, who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.

THROWN AWAY - A child whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child who has run away, or who has been abandoned or deserted.

LOST OR OTHERWISE MISSING - A child who becomes separated from parents or caretakers under circumstances not indicating the likelihood of an abduction or voluntary absence. An adult whose whereabouts cannot be readily determined.

**CALL TAKER
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Call takers are responsible for obtaining the following information from the complainant and relaying facts to the deputy while en route to the scene:

1. Who is missing? Name and relationship of caller to missing party.
2. When person was last seen.
3. Brief description of the missing party.
4. Description of abductors/suspect vehicles, if applicable.
5. Location where the missing party was last seen.
6. Complete callback information.

**MISSING PERSONS
TEN CODES:**

The Ten Codes, 10-75 will be exclusively used for missing, endangered, and, runaway persons which has been broken down further to better identify the type of response for each type.

1. **10-75A-** Endangered Missing Person of any age.
2. **10-75B** – Runaway Juvenile
3. **10-75C** – Adult Missing Person

**FIRST RESPONDER
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The following are First Responder actions, considerations, and activities that will assist in performing competent, productive, and successful missing person investigations:

1. Interview complainant(s) who made the initial report.
2. Confirm that adult/child is in fact missing.
3. If the party missing is a child, verify the child's custody status.
4. Identify the circumstances of the disappearance.
5. Determine when, where, and by whom the missing person was last seen.
6. Interview individuals who last had contact with the missing person.
7. If the missing party is a child, determine the child's zone of safety (that distance from the residence a child is routinely allowed to go to with parental consent).
8. Obtain a brief, recent history of family dynamics. (Check Operations Safe Outcomes if registered)
9. Based on available information, make an initial determination of the type of incident whether family abduction, non-family abduction, runaway, throwaway, lost, or otherwise missing.
10. Obtain a detailed description of the missing person, abductor, and any vehicles used.
11. Secure photographs/video tapes of the missing person and the abductor, if available.

12. Evaluate whether circumstances of missing person's disappearance meets AMBER Alert protocol. Discuss plan activation with supervisor.
13. Relay detailed descriptive information to Communications for BOLO updates.
14. Determine need for additional personnel and discuss need with supervisor.
15. Obtain and note permission to search the home or building where the incident took place.
16. Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the missing child's home, even if the child was reported missing from a different location.
17. Initiate a neighborhood canvass.
18. Ascertain if the missing person has a cellular telephone or another electronic communication device.
19. Treat areas of interest as potential crime scenes.
20. Determine if surveillance or security cameras in the vicinity may have captured information about the missing person's disappearance.
21. Interview other family members, friends/associates, and friends of the family to determine when they last saw the missing person and what they think happened to the missing person.
22. Complete and Submit A Missing Persons Checklist (LEAP).

**SUPERVISORY
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The following are supervisory personnel actions, considerations, and activities that will assist in performing competent, productive, and successful missing person investigations:

1. Obtain written reports from the first responding deputy and other personnel at the scene.
2. Decide if the circumstances of the missing person's disappearance meet the protocol in place for activation of an AMBER Alert.
3. Determine if additional personnel are needed to assist in the investigation.
4. Determine the need of the Search and Rescue Team.
5. Establish a command post, if applicable.
6. Determine if additional assistance is necessary from SID, CID, Victim-Witness Unit, SLED, and FBI (JCARD, Joint Child Abduction Rapid Deployment Team, for juveniles 12 or younger).
7. Ensure that all required resources, equipment, and assistance necessary to conduct an efficient investigation have been requested and expedite their availability.

8. Ensure coordination/cooperation among all law enforcement personnel involved in the investigation and search effort.
9. Ensure that all required notifications are made.
10. Ensure that all agency policies and procedures are in compliance.
11. Be available to make any decisions or determinations as they develop.
12. Inform the Public Information Officer if the need exists to use media services.
13. Inform the Public Information Officer if AMBER Alert is activated.
14. Utilize CodeRed if applicable.

**SEARCH AND RESCUE
TEAM:**

The Search and Rescue Team consists of properly trained personnel to assist in the search for endangered missing persons and wanted persons. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the management and use of the Search and Rescue Team.

Authorized use:

- The Search and Rescue Team will respond as requested by a Sheriff's Office Field Supervisor, or at the request of Law Enforcement Agencies in the County of Greenville.
- Requests by agencies outside of Greenville County are subject to existing mutual aid agreements, and the approval of the Team Commander or the Search and Rescue Team Coordinator. In their absence, the acting Platoon Commander may activate the team.
- Requests from other agencies or out-of-state requests are approved by the Sheriff or his designee.

**INVESTIGATIVE
DEPUTY
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The following are investigative deputy actions, considerations, and activities that will assist in performing competent, productive, and successful missing person investigations:

1. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information and other details developed during the preliminary investigation.
2. Correct and investigate the reasons for conflicting information offered by witnesses and other individuals.
3. Review and evaluate all available information and evidence collected.
4. Develop and execute an investigative plan.
5. Determine what additional resources and specialized services are required.

6. Ensure that details of the case are reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, if applicable.
7. Secure the child's latest medical and dental records, and if available fingerprints.
8. Establish a leads-management system to prioritize leads and ensure that each one is reviewed and followed up on.

Note – Medical, dental, and fingerprint records are critical when investigating unidentified children.

**MISSING PERSON
NCIC ENTRY:**

All missing adults or juveniles are immediately entered into NCIC by Communications. Removal of missing persons from NCIC is the responsibility of each investigating deputy.

**MISSING PERSON
SEARCH:**

Whenever deemed necessary by an on-duty supervisor, additional resources may be employed in a search for a missing person; i.e. canines, search and rescue, and Air Support. All Sheriff's Office law enforcement and civilian resources are available for this purpose. Age, mental/physical condition of the missing person, time of day, weather conditions, and area terrain are factors that can place a missing person at risk.

Searches are mandatory for at-risk or critically missing persons; see also the next section of this order describing the activation of AMBER Alert. See also GO-220.

**AMBER ALERT
SYSTEM:**

Required Criteria for Activation of the South Carolina AMBER Alert:

1. It is believed a child was abducted (taken from his or her environment unlawfully, without the authority of law, and without permission from parents or legal guardian).
2. The child is 17 years old or younger, and it is believed the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death, or an individual is 18 years old or older, and it is believed he or she is at a greater risk for the immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death because the individual possesses a proven physical or mental disability.
3. All other possibilities for the victim's disappearance have been reasonably excluded.
4. There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the victim, suspect, or vehicle used in the abduction.

NOTE - *To qualify for activation of AMBER Alert, a missing person investigation must meet all of the four required criteria.*

Procedure for Activating AMBER Alert:

1. The missing person is entered into NCIC and removed when located.
2. Only Captains and above may activate the AMBER Alert.
3. When the Sheriff or a Captain determines a case meets the criteria for AMBER Alert activation, the abduction is reported to the South Carolina Clearinghouse at (800)322-4453 or SLED Headquarters at (803)737-9000.
4. A completed South Carolina AMBER Alert Information Form (see attached) and a photograph of the victim are faxed to (803)896-7041.

What Will Result Upon Activation:

1. SLED will fax and e-mail the **South Carolina AMBER Alert Information Form** to radio and television stations designated by the South Carolina Broadcasters Association.
2. The Associated Press Control Bureau for South Carolina will provide this information for broadcast wires in North Carolina and Georgia.
3. SLED will notify all South Carolina law enforcement agencies, including DPS, DOT, FBI, and the South Carolina Truckers' Association.
4. The public will be notified by the news media every fifteen minutes for the next three hours.
5. After eight hours, any updates/cancellations should be made directly to the South Carolina Clearinghouse at 1-800-322-4453 using either the **South Carolina AMBER Alert Update Form** or the **South Carolina AMBER Alert Cancellation Form**.
6. In the event a citizen sees the child, abductor, and/or suspect vehicle, they should immediately call 911. The agency receiving this information will contact the Sheriff's Office with the citizen-supplied information.

At the conclusion of an AMBER Alert, SLED will:

1. Fax and e-mail a formal termination of alert to all radio/television stations and the Associated Press Control Bureau for South Carolina.
 2. Notify all South Carolina law enforcement agencies, including DPS, DOT, FBI and the SC Truckers' Association.
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AFTER-ACTION REVIEW – Upon conclusion of a South Carolina AMBER Alert, the Sheriff’s Office, and the South Carolina AMBER Alert Review Committee will assess the operational efficiency of the Alert to determine if any systematic changes are needed.

**ENDANGERED PERSONS
ALERT:**

The purpose of the Endangered Person Notification System is to provide a statewide system for the rapid dissemination of information regarding a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or some other cognitive impairment.

If the Missing Persons Information Center (MPIC) at the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) receives a report from a local law enforcement agency that involves a missing person who is believed to be suffering from dementia or some other cognitive impairment, for the protection of the person from potential abuse or other physical harm, neglect, or exploitation, the center shall issue a notification providing for the appropriate dissemination of information regarding the person. The request has to be from a law enforcement agency.

Required Criteria for Activation of the South Carolina Endangered Person Notification System (EPNS):

1. It is believed an endangered person is suffering from dementia or other cognitive impairment.
2. It is believed he or she is at a greater risk for the immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death because the individual possesses a proven physical or mental disability.
3. A legal custodian of the missing person has submitted a missing person’s report to the law enforcement agency where the person went missing.

The MPIC will activate the SCDOT dynamic message signs if:

1. There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the missing person: such as photographs and confirmed vehicle/tag information.
2. Law Enforcement has already activated a local or regional advisory by contacting media outlets in their jurisdiction and/or surrounding jurisdictions.
3. Law Enforcement acknowledges the use of the statewide dynamic message signs may be the *only* possible way to rescue the missing endangered person.

IF CRITERIA ARE MET, the requesting law enforcement agency will:

1. Enter the missing person into NCIC using the proper message key: Missing (MNP), Endangered Missing (EME) code; if available enter the vehicle as being wanted.
2. The initial requesting agency sends an NLETS message to law enforcement/911 centers.
3. Make sure dispatchers or call takers are prepared to handle phone calls. Consider allocating additional resources from other law enforcement agencies.
4. Appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle the media. Once the advisory has been activated, media coverage may be overwhelming, especially for a small department. The PIO should be constantly updated to utilize the media as much as possible and receive the maximum exposure for the case.
5. When the Sheriff or Captain determines a case meets the criteria: contact the Missing Persons Information Center (MPIC) at (803)896-7133, if the criteria are met to activate a statewide Endangered Person Advisory (EPA). If criteria are not met, the agency may contact SLED's Operation Desk for assistance and use of other possible resources to assist in a safe recovery. (803)896-7133 available 24/7.
6. For more information concerning Endangered Person Alert, please visit the SLED website, <https://www.sled.sc.gov/endangered.html>.

The Endangered Person Notification System does not preclude any in-house procedures, policies, or practices used by each law enforcement agency.

Following a request to activate an Endangered Person Advisory (EPA):

1. MPIC contacts SCDOT to activate the dynamic message signs statewide if requesting agency determines criteria are met.
2. MPIC sends the Endangered Person Advisory (EPA) to broadcasters and media outlets to disseminate to the public. MPIC sends the Endangered Person Advisory (EPA) to all SC law enforcement agencies.

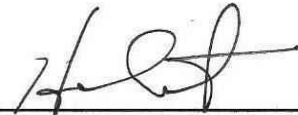
CANCELLATION:

1. The initial requesting agency requests cancellation of the Endangered Person Notification by contacting the MPIC at (803)896-7133 and by sending confirmation of the cancellation by email or fax. MPIC immediately contacts the South Carolina Department of Transportation to discontinue the use of the dynamic message signs.

2. The initial requesting agency sends an NLETS message to law enforcement/911 centers that the notification has been canceled and removes the endangered missing person from NCIC; and if previously entered, removes vehicle information.
3. By email, the MPIC will notify broadcasters, media outlet, and law enforcement to cancel the notification.

CODE RED:

Code Red is a community notification system that can help keep citizens informed during local emergencies. Information involving active searches for missing or wanted persons, as well as other emergencies, can trigger an alert through Code Red.



Hobart Lewis, Sheriff

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division Amber Alert Activation Form

IMPORTANT: Do NOT send Alert Activation form if the answer is NO to ANY of these questions.
If criteria is not met, contact SLED for assistance using other available resources.

Call SLED before sending this form or if you need assistance | Phone: 803.896.7133 | Fax: 803.896.7041

AMBER ALERT CRITERIA: (Please mark the box if the answer is yes)

- Does the law enforcement agency believe that the child has been abducted (taken from their environment unlawfully, without authority of law, and without permission from the child's parent or legal guardian)?
- If the child is 17 years old or younger, does the law enforcement agency believe the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death,
Or if the individual is 18 years old or older, does the law enforcement agency believe the individual is at greater risk for immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death because the individual possesses a proven physical or mental disability?
- Have all other possibilities for the victim's disappearance been reasonably excluded?
- Is there sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the victim, suspect, or vehicle used in the abduction?
- The child's name and other critical data, including the Child Abduction (CA) flag have been entered into NCIC. *Once it is determined there will be an activation, the entry will be modified to include the AMBER Alert (AA) flag.* NCIC #: _____

IMPORTANT: Has your Chief/Sheriff approved? _____ YES _____ NO

Reporting Agency: _____ Agency Contact Number: _____

Name/Title of Investigating Officer: _____ Cell phone number: _____

Phone number for media inquiries: _____ Date of request: _____

INCIDENT INFORMATION

Date/Time of abduction: _____ Abduction address: _____

VICTIM INFORMATION

Name: _____ Age: _____ Hair: _____ Eyes: _____ Glasses?: _____ Race: _____

Sex: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ Last seen wearing: _____

Medical conditions: _____ Scars/Birthmarks, etc.: _____

SUSPECT INFORMATION

Name: _____ Age: _____ Hair: _____ Eyes: _____ Glasses?: _____

Race: _____ Sex: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ Scars/Tattoos: _____

Last seen wearing: _____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____ Color: _____ License Plate #: _____

State: _____ Unique Markings: _____

Direction of Travel: _____

NOTE: Check SLED website for updated form for changes if needed

IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY SLED (803) 896-7133 WITH UPDATES OR WHEN AN ALERT CAN BE CANCELLED

SOUTH CAROLINA AMBER

ALERT UPDATE FORM

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ AM/PM

TO: SOUTH CAROLINA LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

FAX (803) 896-7041 (If problem, call (800) 322-4453 or (803) 737-9000)

FROM: _____

CONTACT PERSON:

TELEPHONE #:

FACSIMILE #:

UPDATE INFORMATION

NCIC#: _____

VICTIM'S NAME:

DATE OF BIRTH:

UPDATED INFORMATION:

SOUTH CAROLINA AMBER
ALERT CANCELLATION FORM

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ AM/PM

TO: SOUTH CAROLINA LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

FAX (803) 896-7041 (If problem, call (800) 322-4453 or (803) 737-9000)

FROM: _____

CONTACT PERSON:

TELEPHONE #:

FACSIMILE #:

CANCELLATION INFORMATION

NCIC#: _____

VICTIM'S NAME:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REASON FOR CANCELLATION: _____

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division Endangered Person Alert Activation Form

IMPORTANT: Do NOT send Alert Activation form if the answer is NO to ANY of these questions. If criteria is not met, contact SLED for assistance using other available resources.

Call SLED before sending this form or if you need assistance | Phone: 803.896.7133 | Fax: 803.896.7041

ENDANGERED PERSON ALERT CRITERIA: (Please mark the box if the answer is yes)

- Law Enforcement confirms that the missing person is believed to be suffering from dementia or some other cognitive impairment.
- Law Enforcement concludes that the disappearance poses a credible threat to the person's welfare and safety, or a threat to the public's safety.
- A legal custodian of the missing person has submitted a missing person report to the local law enforcement agency within the jurisdiction of the incident location.

ACTIVATION OF THE SCDOT MESSAGE SIGNS SHALL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the missing person, such as photographs and confirmed vehicle/tag information.
- Law Enforcement has already activated a local or regional advisory by contacting media outlets in their jurisdiction and/or surrounding jurisdictions.
- Law Enforcement acknowledges use of the statewide dynamic message signs may be the only possible way to rescue the missing endangered person.

NCIC #: _____ (must be entered as Missing Person Endangered)

IMPORTANT: Has your Chief/Sheriff approved? _____ YES _____ NO

Reporting Agency: _____ Agency Contact Number: _____
Name/Title of Investigating Officer: _____ Cell phone number: _____
Phone number for media inquiries: _____ Date of request: _____

INCIDENT INFORMATION

Date/Time of incident: _____ Location/Place of incident: _____

Incident details: _____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____ Color: _____ License Plate #: _____

State: Unique Markings: _____

Direction of travel/Destination: _____

MISSING PERSON INFORMATION

Name: _____ Age: _____ Hair: _____ Eyes: _____ Glasses?: _____ Race: _____

Sex: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ Last seen wearing: _____ Medical conditions: _____

_____ Scars/Birthmarks, etc. _____

NOTE: Check SLED website for updated form for changes if needed

IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY SLED (803) 896-7133 WITH UPDATES OR WHEN AN ALERT CAN BE CANCELLED

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

Endangered Person Alert **UPDATE** Form

To UPDATE any information in reference to an active alert, immediately call SLED. The SLED designee will give you the appropriate email address or request you submit this form via fax.

Call SLED before sending this form or if you need assistance | Phone: 803.896.7133 | Fax: 803.896.7041

Date/Time: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone #: _____

Facsimile #: _____

CASE INFORMATION

NCIC #: _____

Name: _____

DOB: _____

UPDATED INFORMATION

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
Endangered Person Alert **CANCEL** Form

To UPDATE any information in reference to an active alert, immediately call SLED. The SLED designee will give you the appropriate email address or request you submit this form via fax.

Call SLED before sending this form or if you need assistance | Phone: 803.896.7133 | Fax: 803.896.7041

Date/Time: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone #: _____

Facsimile #: _____

CASE INFORMATION

NCIC #: _____

Name: _____

DOB: _____

REASON FOR CANCELLATION

IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY SLED (803) 896-7133 WITH UPDATES OR WHEN AN ALERT CAN BE CANCELLED



Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Missing Person Checklist for

Case #: AKA or Nickname: Birthdate:
Deputy: Race/Ethnicity / Sex:

- Last seen place, time, method, and direction (Confirmed this occurred in our jurisdiction)
- Residence, outbuildings, vehicles, immediate area searched, and secondary search of all areas.
- Recent picture and description (Including scars/tattoos/birthmarks)
- Medical history
- Behavior history
- Mental health and/or cognitive concerns
- Threats or statements about self-harm (will our agency EPC or will the family obtain an order of detention)
- Local friends/family notified
- Friends & Family
- Cell phone pinged and historical records requested by dispatch (exigent only)
- Local hospitals and emergency rooms checked
- Local detention centers checked
- SAR K-9 requested
- P.I.O. (social media / media release completed)
- Entered on NCIC
- S.C.H.P., E.M.S., F.D. and adjoining agencies / departments notified
- CodeRed sent to the immediate area
- Door to door neighborhood canvas started
- Places frequented in the area checked
- Video surveillance at the last seen location and the immediate area checked
- Shift Supervisor on-scene
- Search and Rescue team requested (only by on-scene supervisor after the items above have been completed)
- Money and/or credit and debit accounts

- Vehicle missing (G.P.S. and/or L.P.R.)
- Social media accounts
- Local transportation including bus, airport, cabs, Uber, Lyft etc..
- F.D. assisting with area canvas
- Neighbors checking properties
- Volunteer search teams

- Public canvassing area roads
- On-call Investigator

- Victims advocate
- S.L.E.D. (amber alert / endangered person advisory)
- F.B.I. notified (including the Joint Child Abduction Rapid Deployment Team)
- Subject entered in Safe Outcomes
- Missing person enrolled in school

School

Name:

Contact:

Number:

Additional Notes