

## MISSING PERSONS

### Policy of the Attorney General Regarding Missing and Unidentified Persons Investigations

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The investigation and resolution of missing persons cases are an important responsibility of the law enforcement community in New Jersey. The difficult problems surrounding missing persons cases demand from the law enforcement community a prompt, informed and uniform response. It is imperative that missing and unidentified persons investigations be given the appropriate degree of priority treatment. Follow-up investigations and public safety activities should be timely and comprehensive. The victim's family should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and family referrals to the appropriate support services should be made as required.

All available law enforcement resources must be utilized in an appropriate fashion to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect our children and other missing persons. To better accomplish this objective each agency's chief law enforcement executive shall:

Provide leadership by developing a clear and concise written order or directive based upon these standards and disseminating it to all law enforcement officers of the agency.

These law enforcement standards will be meaningless unless the chief law enforcement executive of the agency provides direction and leadership through a well-defined written order or directive which provides an agency based framework for these missing and unidentified persons investigation standards.

## PURPOSE OF MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INVESTIGATIVE STANDARDS

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At the direction of Attorney General W. Cary Edwards, and as the First Assistant Attorney General and Criminal Justice Director I have issued these investigative standards for missing and unidentified persons cases to be used by New Jersey law enforcement in conducting timely and comprehensive missing and unidentified persons investigations.

These procedural standards are effective December 4, 1987 and supersede all previous Attorney General directives relating to this issue.

In the first six months of 1987, 8,058 persons in the State of New Jersey were listed as missing in the National Crime Information Center missing persons file. These types of incidents present a unique and significant public safety problem to the law enforcement community. Law enforcement officers investigating missing and unidentified persons incidents are frequently faced with a case that generally lacks significant investigative leads. The investigative problems are compounded by readily available transportation networks which facilitate the rapid movement of victims and suspects. These same investigative complexities occur in non-criminal missing or unidentified person incidents.

In any case the accurate and comprehensive collection of information and personal descriptors entered in a timely manner in the National Crime Information Center computer system generally facilitates a successful resolution to the missing and unidentified persons case.

These investigative standards will provide an organized investigative framework for the timely and comprehensive investigation of missing and unidentified persons incidents.

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Provide leadership by developing a clear and concise written order or directive based upon these standards and disseminating it to all law enforcement officers of the agency.
2. Ensure that all law enforcement officers receive appropriate training in all operational areas relating to missing and unidentified persons investigations as set forth in the agencies missing/unidentified persons written order or directive.
3. Ensure that an appropriate initial law enforcement response is provided to all reports of missing or unidentified persons and that an appropriate follow-up investigation is carried out.

4. Effectively calm the families of missing persons and reduce their fear through direct ongoing official communication regarding the missing person incident.
5. Reassure the family that appropriate investigative and enforcement methods will be utilized by the law enforcement agency in addressing the incident.
6. Interact with concerned community organizations and civic groups regarding the missing persons incident as necessary.
7. Ensure that appropriate and accurate media relations are maintained regarding missing and unidentified persons investigations.
8. Ensure that referrals to the county prosecutor's victim/witness services coordinator are made as appropriate.
9. Ensure that Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Programs are conducted regarding missing persons issues as appropriate.

#### MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INVESTIGATIVE STANDARDS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR NEW JERSEY LAW ENFORCEMENT

The missing and unidentified persons investigative standards establish the following procedural guidelines:

New Jersey Law Enforcement Agencies shall conduct a standard preliminary investigation as soon as a juvenile or adult is reported missing or an unidentified person is found and prepare a standard police incident report documenting the basic facts and circumstances surrounding the incident.

Prompt action shall be initiated in order to locate a missing juvenile or adult or to identify any unidentified person.

Law enforcement agencies shall undertake any other immediate action required to maintain order

and protect the public.

Follow-up investigative personnel shall conduct a thorough and timely follow-up investigation.

Investigators shall complete investigative reports documenting the facts and circumstances of the investigation.

#### FOR MISSING PERSON INCIDENTS:

As soon as a juvenile or adult is reported missing, pertinent information and identifying characteristics regarding the missing person shall be entered immediately into the National Crime Information Centers missing person files. (NCIC)

A File 6 (NJLETS) teletype messages with all available, pertinent information regarding the missing person shall be broadcast concurrently with the entry into the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File. The teletype shall be broadcast on a statewide basis and expanded as the need exists.

In addition to a General Police Incident Report, the Missing Person Report for NCIC Record Entry shall be adopted as the standard document for the collection of specific information regarding a missing person in accordance with Federal Bureau of Investigation - National Crime Information Center guidelines.

The New Jersey State Police Missing Persons Report Written Documentation Form shall be used as appropriate. This document is available for reproduction from the New Jersey State Police Missing Persons Unit.

The Missing Persons Investigation Packet entitled "Missing Person File, Data Collection Entry Guide" should be used to organize data collection and to collect additional information from the family of the missing person and other appropriate information sources during a missing person's investigation. This document is available from the Federal Bureau of Investigation - National Crime Information Center.

Upon the return or locating of the missing person the record shall be immediately cleared from

the National Crime Information Center missing persons file. (NCIC)

A File 6 (NJLETS) teletype message shall be broadcast immediately regarding the return or locating of the missing person.

It is the responsibility of each entering agency to clear NCIC entries and update NJLETS File Messages upon the return or location of a missing person.

#### FOR UNIDENTIFIED PERSON INCIDENTS:

In the case of Unidentified Persons, living or deceased the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File shall be utilized as soon as the individual identifying characteristics become available which are necessary for the basic file entry.

A File 25 (NJLETS) teletype messages with all available, pertinent information regarding the Unidentified Person shall be broadcast concurrently with the entry into the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File. The teletype will be broadcast on a statewide basis and expanded as the need exists.

In addition to a General Police Incident Report, the Unidentified Person Report for NCIC Record Entry should be used as the standard document for the collection of specific information regarding an unidentified person.

The Unidentified Persons Investigation Packet entitled "Unidentified Person File, Data Collection Entry Guide" should be used to organize data collection and to collect additional information from other appropriate sources during an unidentified persons investigation.

This document is available from the Federal Bureau of Investigation - National Crime Information Center.

When an unidentified person is identified, the record entry shall be immediately cleared from the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File. (NCIC)

A File 25 (NJLETS) teletype message shall be immediately broadcast regarding the identification of the previously reported unidentified person.

It is the responsibility of each entering agency to clear NCIC entries and update NJLETS File Messages upon identifying the previously unidentified person.

#### FOR MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INVESTIGATIONS

Law enforcement agencies engaged in a missing or unidentified persons investigation shall contact the New Jersey State Police Missing Persons Unit and other appropriate law enforcement agencies for assistance as required.

Where a crime or other unlawful act is suspected, law enforcement agencies engaged in a missing or unidentified person investigation shall work with the county prosecutor in developing the case for criminal prosecution as appropriate.

Referrals to the county prosecutor's victim/witness services coordinator shall be made as appropriate.

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Programs shall be conducted regarding missing persons issues as appropriate.

#### VIOLENT CRIMINAL APPREHENSION PROGRAM (VICAP)

The Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP), established by the Federal Bureau of Investigation is a nationwide data information center designed to collect, collate and analyze a variety of violent crime information. VICAP provides all law enforcement agencies reporting similar patterns of violent crimes with the information necessary to initiate coordinated multi-agency investigations.

In cases where investigation reveals that a missing person or unidentified person has been a

victim of a violent act, use of the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) should be explored.

Information regarding the VICAP Program is available from any local Federal Bureau of Investigation Office or by writing to VICAP Program, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA, 22135.