



# Edina Police Operations Manual

Policy Number  
625.00

Subject:

## MISSING/ENDANGERED PERSONS RESPONSE

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### PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines and responsibilities for the consistent response to, and investigation of, all reports of missing and/or endangered persons.

625.01

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Edina Police Department recognizes there is a critical need for immediate and consistent response to reports of missing and endangered persons. The decisions made and actions taken during the preliminary stages may have a profound effect on the outcome of the case. Therefore, this agency has established the following responsibilities and guidelines for the investigation of missing and endangered persons.

625.02

### DEFINITIONS

**Subd. 1 *Missing:*** "The status of a person after a law enforcement agency has received a report of a missing person, has conducted a preliminary investigation, and determined that the person cannot be located" MN SS [299C.52](#), subd. 1 (c).

**Subd. 2 *Endangered:*** "A law enforcement official has recorded sufficient evidence that the missing person is at risk of physical injury or death. The following circumstances indicate that a missing person is at risk of physical injury or death:

- a) The person is missing as a result of a confirmed abduction or under circumstances that indicate that the person's disappearance was not voluntary.
- b) The person is missing under known dangerous circumstances.
- c) The person is missing more than 30 days.
- d) The person is under the age of 21 and at least one other factor in this paragraph is applicable.
- e) There is evidence the person is in need of medical attention or prescription medication such that it will have a serious adverse effect on the person's health if the person does not receive the needed care or medication.
- f) The person does not have a pattern of running away or disappearing.
- g) The person is mentally impaired.
- h) There is evidence that the person may have been abducted by a noncustodial parent.
  - i) The person has been the subject of past threats or acts of violence.
  - j) There is evidence the person is lost in the wilderness, backcountry, or outdoors where survival is precarious and immediate and effective investigation and search and rescue efforts are critical.
- k) Any other factor that the law enforcement agency deems to indicate that the person may be at risk of physical injury or death, including a determination by

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another law enforcement agency that the person is missing and endangered, MN SS [299C.52](#), subd.1 (e).

**625.03      INITIAL RESPONSE**

**Subd.1      As required by MN SS [299C.53](#), subd. 1(a), Law Enforcement shall accept, without delay, any report of a missing person. Law enforcement shall not refuse to accept a missing person report on the basis that:**

- a) The missing person is an adult.
- b) The circumstances do not indicate foul play.
- c) The person has been missing for a short period of time.
- d) The person has been missing for a long amount of time.
- e) There is no indication that the missing person was in the jurisdiction served by the law enforcement agency at the time of the disappearance.
- f) The circumstances suggest that the disappearance may be voluntary.
- g) The reporting person does not have personal knowledge of the facts.
- h) The reporting person cannot provide all of the information requested by the law enforcement agency.
- i) The reporting person lacks a familial or other relationship with the missing person.
- j) For any other reason, except in cases where the law enforcement agency has direct knowledge, that the person is, in fact, not missing, and the whereabouts and welfare of the person are known at the time the report is filed.

**625.04      UNIFORM RESPONSE TO MISSING/ENDANGERED PERSONS**

- a) The communications center will dispatch an officer to the scene, to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether the person is missing, and if missing, whether the person is endangered.
- b) Interview the person who made the initial report, and if the person is a child, the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- c) Determine when, where, and by whom the missing person was last seen.
- d) Interview the individual(s) who last had contact with the person.
- e) Obtain a detailed description of the missing person, abductor, vehicles, etc. and ask for recent photo of missing person.
- f) Immediately enter the complete descriptive and critical information, regarding the missing and endangered person, into the appropriate category of the NCIC Missing Person File. EPD form 2500 should be used to assist with all pertinent information and then given to a Police/Fire 911 dispatcher.

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- As required by [42 U.S.C. 5779\(a\)](#) (Suzanne's Law) law enforcement shall immediately enter missing children less than 21 years of age into the NCIC.
  - As required by MN SS [299C.53](#), subd. 1(b), if the person is determined to be missing and endangered, the agency shall immediately enter identifying and descriptive information about the person into the NCIC.
- g) Enter complete descriptive information regarding suspects/vehicle in the NCIC system.
- h) Notify patrol supervisor.
- i) Complete missing person and incident reports.
- j) Communicate known details promptly and as appropriate to other patrol units, local law enforcement agencies, and surrounding law enforcement agencies. If necessary, use the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Systems (NLETS) and the Minnesota Crime Alert Network to alert state, regional and federal law enforcement agencies.
- k) Secure the crime scene and/or last known position of the missing person and attempt to identify and interview persons in the area at the time of the incident.
- l) Obtain and protect uncontaminated missing person scent articles for possible use by search canines.
- m) Begin gathering information regarding the identity of all family members, friends, employers, co-workers, and other persons who have regular contact with the victim.

**625.05****UNIFORMED SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Upon arrival at the scene, the uniformed supervisor should evaluate the need to establish a command post. Begin setting up the Command Post/Operation Base away from the person's residence. Assign two liaison officers (one at the command post and one at the victim's residence). The role of the liaison at the home will include facilitating support and advocacy for the family.
- b) If more personnel are needed to secure the area, conduct a search, or canvas of the immediate area, the supervisor may consider mutual aid or using non-sworn personnel (CSO, Police Reserve, etc.) to perform these duties.
- c) In addition, the uniformed supervisor shall:
- Evaluate the need for Crime Lab to respond and process the scene.

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- Notify the Investigations Division supervisor.
- Evaluate and coordinate the need for any special equipment, which may aid in the initial investigation.
- Communicate known details promptly and as appropriate to other patrol units, local law enforcement agencies, and surrounding law enforcement agencies. If necessary, use the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Systems (NLETS) and the Minnesota Crime Alert Network to alert state, regional and federal law enforcement agencies.
- Contact the BCA Communication Center at 651-793-7000 to activate an AMBER ALERT/CRIME ALERT NETWORK. A BCA representative will gather the information necessary and initiate the alert if all requirements are met.
- If either alert system is activated, have a Police/Fire 911 Dispatcher contact the Public Information Officer to respond and begin preparing for the media inquiries.
- Notify the family of the Minnesota Missing/Unidentified Persons Clearinghouse services available. This is accomplished by providing the Minnesota Missing Person Bulletin Information & Release Form.
- As required by MN SS [299C.53](#), subd. 1(b), consult with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension if the person is determined to be an endangered missing person. Request assistance as necessary.

**625.06 INVESTIGATIVE SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES****Subd.1 Upon being notified of the situation, the investigative supervisor shall:**

- Notify and call in all available detectives and assign one detective as the primary detective handling the investigation.
- Make notifications to the chief of police.
- Verify that the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) was advised of the incident.
- Coordinate with the public information officer and arrange for use of helpful media coverage.

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- Evaluate the need to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). If the EOC is to be activated, contact IT personnel to respond.
- Evaluate the need for additional resources. (FBI, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, DNR, surrounding agencies, State Patrol, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children).
- The investigative supervisor shall oversee the coordination of the investigative effort among assigned personnel, including uniformed and investigative personnel of Edina Police Department as well as members of other agencies that may be assisting in the effort.

**Subd. 2 Assign an investigative sergeant to be responsible for lead management. This person shall be responsible for:**

- Collecting and reviewing each incoming lead.
- Classifying the priority of the lead.
- Assigning each lead for follow up.
- Providing the primary detective with a copy of each lead.
- Reviewing and clearing each lead upon completion.

**625.07****PRIMARY DETECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Respond to the scene for initial briefing. Evaluate the need to bring any additional equipment to the scene to assist in the investigation (i.e. telephone-recording equipment, digital camera, laptop computer.)
- b) The primary detective shall coordinate the investigation effort with all officers including officers and investigators from other police agencies.
- c) Other responsibilities include:
  - Review incoming lead sheets.
  - Coordinate all necessary briefings.
  - Coordinate all search warrant requirements.
- d) Assign a designated case evidence officer to oversee collection and processing of all potential evidence, for chain of custody requirements.
- e) Maintain records of telephone communications/messages.
- f) Establish the ability to "trap and trace" all incoming calls. Consider setting up a separate telephone line or cellular telephone for agency use.

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- g) Compile a list of known sex offenders in the region.
- h) Obtain the missing person's medical and dental records, fingerprints, and DNA when practical or within 30 days.
- i) For persons' under the age of 21, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) for photo dissemination and other case assistance.
- j) Secure electronic communication information such as the missing person's cell phone number, email address(s) and social networking site information.
- k) Appoint an officer who shall be responsible to communicate with the family/reporting party or their designee and who will be the primary point of contact for the family/reporting party or designee. Provide contact information and the family information packet (if available) to the family/reporting party or designee.

**625.08 MISSING FOR OVER 30 DAYS**

**Subd. 1 If the person remains missing after 30 days from entry into NCIC. The local law enforcement agency will be contacted by the BCA to request the following information (if not already received):**

- a) DNA samples from family members and, if possible, from the missing person.
- b) Dental information and x-rays.
- c) Additional photographs and video that may aid the investigation or identification.
- d) Fingerprints.
- e) Other specific identifying information.
- f) This information will be entered into the appropriate databases by BCA Clearinghouse personnel.
- g) If the person is still missing after 30 days, change the NCIC classification to endangered.

**625.09 PROLONGED INVESTIGATION**

- a) Develop a profile of the possible abductor.
- b) Consider the use of a polygraph for parents, spouse, and other key individuals.
- c) Re-read all reports and transcripts of interviews, revisit the crime scene, review all photographs and videotapes, re-interview key individuals and re-examine all physical evidence collected.

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- d) Review all potential witness/suspect information obtained in the initial investigation and consider background checks on anyone of interest identified in the investigation.
- e) Periodically check pertinent sources of information about the missing person for any activity such as phone, bank, internet, or credit card activity.
- f) Develop a timeline and other visual exhibits.
- g) Arrange for periodic media coverage.
- h) Consider utilizing rewards and crime-stoppers programs.
- i) Update NCIC Missing Person File information, as necessary.
- j) Re-contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) for age progression assistance.
- k) Maintain contact with the family and/or the reporting party or designee as appropriate.

**625.10      RECOVERY/CASE CLOSURE****Subd. 1      ALIVE**

- a) Verify that the located person is the reported missing person.
- b) If appropriate, arrange for a comprehensive physical examination of the victim.
- c) Conduct a careful interview of the person, document the results of the interview, and involve all appropriate agencies.
- d) Notify the family/reporting party that the missing person has been located. (In adult cases, if the located adult permits the disclosure of their whereabouts and contact information, the family/reporting party may be informed of this information.
- e) Consider the need for reunification assistance, intervention, counseling, or other services for either the missing person or family/reporting party.
- f) Cancel alerts (Minnesota Crime Alert, AMBER Alert, etc), remove case from NCIC (as required by MN SS [299C.53](#), subd 2) and other information systems and remove posters and other publications from circulation.
- g) Perform constructive post-case critique. Re-assess the procedures used and update the department's policy and procedures as appropriate.

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- a) Secure the crime scene.
- b) Contact coroner or medical examiner to arrange for body recovery and examination.
- c) Collect and preserve any evidence at the scene.
- d) Depending upon the circumstances, consider the need for intervention, counseling or other services for the family/reporting party or designee.
- e) Cancel alerts and remove case from NCIC and other information systems, remove posters and other publications from circulation.
- f) Perform constructive post-case critique. Re-assess the procedures used and update the department's policy and procedures as appropriate.