



# Tulsa Police Department

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**Policy #** 122A

**Effective Date** 09/25/2007

**Policy Name** Missing Persons/Runaways

**Approved Date** 09/19/2007

**Approved by** *Wendell Franklin, Chief of Police*

**Previous Date** 08/23/2005

## PURPOSE OF CHANGE:

To update policy format.

## POLICY:

The Tulsa Police Department responds to various types of missing persons situations. Circumstances may include kidnappings, runaways, or people with diminished mental capacity that have wandered away from caregivers. Because there are various programs that aid us in locating missing persons who fall into these categories, there are different procedures to be followed.

Missing person investigations present unique problems for police departments. The mere act of being missing is not a crime, yet it suggests the possibility that any number of major crimes may have been committed or that a person is in danger. Many innocent reasons may exist for a person's absence; indeed, most missing person cases involve no foul play. However, any circumstance that suggests a possible threat to human life mandates a timely investigative response from this Department.

Runaways also pose special problems for law enforcement. They are missing persons who have chosen to be missing. Although the Tulsa Police Department is, without a warrant, prohibited from arresting a child for being a runaway, the welfare and safety of the runaway are still of paramount concern. Therefore, the option of placing the child in protective custody as a Child In Need of Supervision (CHINS) is available to the officer when arrest is not.

There may be times when an officer encounters an unidentified child. This may be due to a child being of such a young age that they do not know their identity, due to a child's diminished mental capacity, or other reasons. If attempts to identify the child fail and it is no fault of the child, place the child in protective custody as a CHINS. If a juvenile refuses to give their identity, then take appropriate steps pursuant to applicable law.

Abandoned children may also be taken into protective custody as a CHINS.

**SUMMARY:** Procedures to be followed for missing persons and runaways.

**APPLIES TO:** All police personnel

## DEFINITIONS:

**DATE OF EMANCIPATION** – month, day, and year that a juvenile will turn 18 years old or the date declared emancipated by a court.

**RUNAWAY** – any person under the age of 18 who is willfully and voluntarily absent from their parent, guardian, or legal custodian for any length of time without the intent to return.

## PROCEDURES

1. Officers who encounter a juvenile in circumstances that appear to endanger the juvenile's welfare or safety may place the juvenile in protective custody. Such circumstances may include runaway, abandoned, or unidentified children. Factors which may contribute to probable cause for endangerment may be a combination of, but not limited to:
  - a. The age of juvenile.
  - b. Distance from home.
  - c. Lack of adult supervision.
  - d. Time of day.
  - e. Length of time missing.
  - f. Physical environment.
  - g. Association with persons of known criminal propensity.
  - h. Location.
2. Officers receiving a report of a missing person, runaway, unidentified, or abandoned child will:
  - a. Immediately initiate a reasonable investigation. Assist the person reporting, if practical, in contacting sources (work, school, close friends, relatives, places frequented) to possibly locate the individual.
  - b. Contact a supervisor in the following circumstances:
    - 1) When foul play is indicated by the presence of trauma or through police investigation.
    - 2) When the subject is so young that their mere absence indicates a potential danger to their safety and welfare.
    - 3) When the subject's physical or mental condition is such that their mere absence indicates a potential danger to their safety and welfare.
    - 4) When a child is unidentified through no fault of their own.
    - 5) When a child is abandoned.
3. Broadcast a COS.
4. Direct the parent, or person having legal custody, of a runaway to contact the Juvenile Bureau of the District Court (JBDC) to petition for a warrant. If the parent, or person having legal custody, resides outside Tulsa County, instruct that person to contact the Juvenile Court in their county of residence.
5. Complete an *Incident Report*. For purposes of entry into NCIC, a signature is no longer required.
6. Contact the Records Section and provide the records clerk with all the following information required for NCIC entry:
  - a. Subject's name, DOB, race, sex, height, weight, eye and hair color, date, and location of last known contact.
  - b. The category in which the subject will be entered:
    - 1) Disability.
    - 2) Endangered.
    - 3) Involuntary.
    - 4) Juvenile.
    - 5) Catastrophe victim.
  - c. If under 18 years old, the date of emancipation.
7. The records clerk will contact Teletype (TTY) and relay the information for NCIC entry.
8. The TTY operator will enter the subject into NCIC. The operator will also send a teletype to OSBI with the subject's NCIC entry information. The original entry shall be forwarded to the Records Section to be included in

the case file with a copy of the entry forwarded to the Detective Division.

9. A detective will be assigned to each missing person/runaway report for follow-up investigation and will conduct 60- and 90-day updates to verify that the subject is still missing and must continue to be in NCIC.
10. News releases containing pertinent case facts along with a photograph (if available) may be prepared and distributed by the assigned investigator with the approval of a supervisor.
11. Officers receiving cancellation information will:
  - a. Cancel the COS if within the same shift as the original call.
  - b. Complete a Supplemental Report.
  - c. Contact the Records Section for the TRACIS number.
  - d. Give the records clerk the required information for NCIC cancellation.
12. The records clerk will contact TTY and relay the information for NCIC cancellation.
13. The TTY operator will cancel the subject from NCIC. The operator will send a teletype to the OSBI with the subject's NCIC cancellation information. The original cancellation shall be forwarded to the Records Section to be included in the case file with a copy of the cancellation forwarded to the Detective Division.

## **REGULATIONS:**

1. When requests to "Check The Well-Being" or "Pick Up A Runaway" are received with no warrant issued or confirmed, the request will be handled under the guidelines and considerations of a protective custody situation.

## **REFERENCES:**

*Critical Incident Response Manual Missing Persons Checklist*  
122B, *Amber Plan*  
140, *Command Posts*  
CALEA 41.2.4, 41.2.5, 41.2.6, 44.2.1, 44.2.2