

**SENECA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER**

General Order: 430	Rescinds: 07/01/13,05/01/16
Subject: Missing Persons	NYS Accreditation: 44.3
Effective Date: 03/21/2019	
By Order Of: Stuart W. Peenstra, Chief of Police	

I. PURPOSE

Under New York State law, it is the responsibility of the police agency to which a person is reported missing to supply certain mandated information to the Division of Criminal Justice Services. This order establishes guidelines and responsibilities for responding to, obtaining, recording, and disseminating information when missing persons are reported to the Seneca Falls Police Department.

II. POLICY

- A. Reports of missing persons brought to the attention of members of the Seneca Falls Police Department shall be immediately and thoroughly investigated and documented at the scene. Information shall be provided to New York State as legally mandated.
- B. The Seneca Falls Police Department holds that every child reported as missing shall be considered at risk until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.
- C. Information on any person, regardless of age, reported missing under suspicious circumstances, is to be forwarded IMMEDIATELY to DCJS through eJustice.
- D. Any non-suspicious juvenile missing child (under 18 years) will be forwarded IMMEDIATELY to DCJS through e-Justice.
- E. An adult missing under non-suspicious conditions must be forwarded within 30 days.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Amber Alert** (activation criteria) – The investigating police agency has reasonable cause to believe that an abduction of a child (17 years of age or younger) has occurred, and the child is believed to be in danger of serious bodily harm or death, either due to the actions of another or due to a proven mental or physical condition. The NYSP COMSEC (1-518-457-6811) can assist with activation guidelines if investigative information is not conclusive.
- B. **Missing Vulnerable Adult Alert** (activation criteria) – A missing person 18 years of age or older who has a cognitive disorder, mental disability or brain disorder and law enforcement has determined there is a credible risk of harm to such missing person.
- C. **Missing Child/College Student Alert** (activation criteria) – When a missing child or college student is deemed to be endangered, but the case does not meet the AMBER Alert activation criteria, this alternative alert system is available.
- D. **Missing Child** – Any person 17 years of age or younger missing from his or her normal and ordinary place of residence and any child known to have been taken, enticed or concealed from the custody of his or her lawful guardian, by a person who has no legal right to do so.
- E. **Missing College Student** – Any person 21 years of age or under or a college student of any age who is a student of an institution (college or university) who resides in a facility

owned or operated by such institution and who is reported as missing from his or her residence.

- F. A Child is Missing** – A service that can make rapid, high volume telephone calls to a designated area requesting information/assistance from citizens. The service can be used for missing persons who are: age 17 and younger, age 65 and older, along with disabled persons (no age limit) who have been determined to be missing. This service should be considered for immediate activation and can be contacted 24 hours a day at 1-800-875-2246.
- H. The term "extenuating" or "unusual circumstances" refers to:**
1. A missing child thirteen (13) years of age or younger. The federal Missing Children Assistance Act established this age because children of this age group have not established independence from parental control, and do not have the survival skills necessary to protect themselves from exploitation on the streets.
 2. A child or an adult believed to be (one or more of the following):
 - a. Out of the zone of safety for his or her age and physical and mental condition. The zone of safety will vary depending on age. In the case of an infant, for example, the zone of safety shall include the immediate presence of an adult custodian, or the crib, stroller, or carriage in which the infant was placed. For a school age child, the zone of safety might be the immediate neighborhood or the route taken between home and school. In the case of an elderly person of diminished physical and/or mental health, the zone of safety might include the close proximity and availability of a caregiver familiar with that individual's condition and needs.
 - b. Mentally diminished. If a person is developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed, or the victim of disease, he or she may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address. The disability places the person in danger of exploitation or other harm.
 - c. Drug dependent. In the case of a child, the term "drug dependent" shall refer to dependence on either prescription or illicit substances, since any drug dependency puts a child at substantially increased risk. In the case of an adult, the term 'drug dependent' shall refer only to a dependence on legitimately prescribed drugs or medicines vital to the adult's continued physical well-being relating to an existing medically diagnosed condition. This in no way limits an investigating officer's discretion in determining exigent circumstances in specific situations regarding an adult's use of illicit drugs.
 - d. A potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation. Significant risk to the person can be assumed if investigation reveals indications of a possible abduction, violence at the scene of abduction, or signs of sexual abuse.
 - e. In a life threatening situation. The environment in which the person is missing may be particularly hazardous. Examples of a dangerous environment could be a busy highway for a toddler, an all-night truck stop for a young teenager, or simply an outdoor environment in inclement weather for a child or elderly missing person.

- f. Absent from home for more than twenty-four (24) hours before being reported to the police as missing. While some persons may incorrectly assume that twenty-four (24) hours must pass before police will accept a missing person case, a delay in reporting might also indicate the existence of neglect or abuse within the family.
 - g. Believed to be with persons who could endanger his or her welfare. A missing person in such circumstances is in danger not only of sexual exploitation, but also of involvement in criminal activity such as burglary, shoplifting and robbery.
 - h. Is absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior. Most children and adults to some degree have established routines that are reasonably predictable. Significant, unexplained deviations from those routines increase the probability that the person may be at risk.
3. A child or adult whose disappearance involves circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the missing person should be considered at risk.
- *NOTE - Determination of extenuating or unusual circumstances:* If it is determined that extenuating or unusual circumstances are involved in the report of a missing child or adult, a thorough investigation, including the use of all appropriate resources, shall commence immediately. While all missing person incidents should be investigated thoroughly, those involving unusual circumstances indicate a heightened likelihood of risk to the person who is missing and, therefore, require an intensive response. In any missing person case determined to involve "extenuating or unusual circumstances," a supervisor and an investigator shall be alerted immediately.

IV. PROCEDURES

**NOTE:* There is no required waiting period for reporting a missing person. A person may be declared "missing" when his/her whereabouts are unknown and unexplainable for a period of time that is regarded by knowledgeable persons as highly unusual or suspicious in consideration of the subject's behavior patterns, plans or routines.

A. Missing Child/College Student Alert (Revised 03/05/2019)

- a. When a case does not meet the AMBER Alert activation criteria but a missing child or college student is deemed to be endangered (See definitions) the NYS DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse alternative alert system is available. The activation of this system provides immediate emergency broadcasts of descriptive information to the public through a multitude of media outlets.
- b. The activation should be requested within the shortest period of time possible following a preliminary investigation being conducted to determine if an abduction occurred. Guidance can be found in this order to include "A Child is Missing" automated call service.
- c. Within the shortest amount of time possible after determining that a case meets alert requirements a Missing Child/College Student Alert Activation Request form shall be completed. The NYS DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse shall be contacted at 1-800-346-3543 prior to submitting the form. The form can then be submitted via fax to 518-457-6965 or by email to

missingpersons@dcjs.ny.gov . Photographs of the missing person may also be attached to the email. The form is also located in the following locations; SFPD forms folder on the “N Drive”; Missing Persons Packet and the Integrated Justice Portal website.

- d. A NCIC File 6 message shall be sent via Integrated Justice Portal as soon as possible.
- e. If the missing person is believed to be in the local area, notify the Seneca County 911 Communications Center @ 315-539-9241 or by portable radio. The 911 Center can initiate reverse 911 call system as well as make notifications to the area hospitals via fax. (A Child is Missing should be considered as the first resource utilized). Note: Follow-up with hospitals should be conducted by police personnel via telephone and or in person when time allows.
- f. Numerous calls should be expected from the public. Arrangements should be made to staff the Headquarters to handle large volumes of phone calls.

B. MISSING VULNERABLE ADULT ALERTS (REVISED 03/05/2019)

- g. When a case does not meet the criteria of an AMBER alert, but a missing vulnerable adult is deemed to be endangered (See definitions) the NYS DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse alert system shall be considered. Activation of the system provides immediate emergency broadcasts of descriptive information to the public through a multitude of media outlets.
- h. The activation should be requested within the shortest period of time possible following a preliminary investigation being conducted to determine if the person is actually missing.
- i. Within the shortest amount of time possible after determining that a case meets alert requirements a Vulnerable Adult Alert Submission Form shall be completed. The NYS DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse shall be contacted at 1-800-346-3543 prior to submitting the form. The form can then be submitted via fax to 518-457-6965 or by email to missingpersons@dcjs.ny.gov . Photographs of the missing person may also be attached to the email. The form is also located in the following locations; SFPD forms folder on the “N Drive”; Missing Persons packet and the Integrated Justice Portal website.
- j. A NCIC File 6 message shall be sent via Integrated Justice Portal as soon as possible. Officer must select the missing person’s condition “Vulnerable Adult” tab and include a description of the cognitive disorder, mental disability, or brain disorder.
- k. If the missing person is believed to be in the local area, notify the Seneca County 911 Communications Center @ 315-539-9241 or by portable radio. The 911 Center can initiate the reverse 911 call system as well as make notifications to the area hospitals via fax. (A Child is Missing should be considered as the first resource utilized). Note: Follow-up with hospitals should be conducted by police personnel via telephone and or in person when time allows.
- l. Numerous calls should be expected from the public in an effort to gather or provide information. Arrangements should be made to staff the Headquarters to handle large volumes of phone calls.

A. PATROL DIVISION

1. **The INITIAL OFFICER** assigned to the report of a missing person shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. Respond promptly to the scene of the report. Even if the assigned officer has been provided with initial information such as the missing person's description and other facts about the incident, it would be inappropriate to delay response to conduct a random search or to stop suspicious individuals. Unless in immediate response to the missing person's safety, these activities can be handled by other patrol units. The department will immediately accept and investigate reports of missing persons. There shall be no required waiting period prior to a report being accepted. (Revised 03/05/2019)
 - b. Interview the person(s) making the initial report. Gain an insight into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and other information needed to conduct an initial assessment of the case.
 - c. Obtain a description of the missing person. The collection of information about the missing person; race, height, weight, hair and eye color, clothing, and other noteworthy features should be done promptly and relayed to other officers who may be assisting in the investigation. Recent photographs and/or videotape should be secured if available.
 - d. Provide the Seneca County 911 Center with the description of any person who is missing under extenuating or unusual circumstances for broadcast (by telephone or email if available).
 - e. Verify that the person is in fact missing. In the case of children, first responders should never assume that searches conducted by distraught parents or others have been performed in a thorough manner. Another check of the house and grounds should be made that includes places where children could be trapped, asleep, or hiding. Special attention should be paid to enclosures like refrigerators, freezers, and the interior of parked vehicles where limited breathing air may place the child at even greater risk. In the case of older children, first responders should ask if parents have checked with the child's friends or perhaps overlooked or forgotten something the child may have said that would explain the absence.

**NOTE:* a search of the home should be conducted even if the child was last seen elsewhere.

- f. In the case of a child, confirm the child's custody status. First responders should ascertain whether a dispute over the child's custody may have played a role in the disappearance. Questions regarding whether the reporting party has full legal custody, or if the not- custodial parent has been contesting custody, or if the missing child expressed a wish to live with the other parent, may help an officer gain important insight into the case.

- g. Identify the circumstances of the disappearance. First responders need to ascertain whether the circumstances surrounding a person's disappearance are such that a heightened level of response is warranted. If "extenuating or unusual circumstances" exist, as defined in Section H, then the decision to employ additional responders and resources is clear. In other situations where the circumstances are not clear, officers should keep the missing person's safety in mind and act accordingly.
- h. Determine when, where, and who last saw the missing person. This information is needed to determine factors such as, abduction time frame or window of opportunity, and for verification of previously received information.
- i. Interview the individual(s) who last had contact with the missing person. Effective questioning of those individuals who last saw or spoke with a missing person is crucial in the case assessment process. While seeking information about the person's appearance, demeanor, and actions, officers also should be alert to contradictions or evasiveness by the witness, especially if these statements cannot be readily substantiated.
- j. Identify the missing person's zone of safety for his or her age and physical and mental state. Responding officers should attempt to determine how far the missing person could travel from the location where last seen before he or she would most likely be at risk of injury or exploitation. This perimeter should, under many circumstances, define the first search zone.
- k. Make an initial determination of the type of incident. By employing all available assessment tools, i.e., completion of standardized forms, interviews with parents, family, and friends, statements of witnesses, search of scene, etc., an officer should be able to reach a preliminary determination regarding the type of case and the need for additional resources. Officers must be cautious in "labeling" or classifying a missing person case, since the classification process shall affect the way in which initial information or evidence is gathered. Even if first indications suggest a "less urgent" incident, officers should consider all possibilities until the case category is clearly determined.
- l. Obtain a description of the suspected abductor(s) and other pertinent information. Officers need to record witness information immediately; not only for general investigative use, but also before witnesses forget or speak to others who may confuse or make suggestions about what was actually observed. If the abduction scene involves a business or other public place, officers may be able to supplement witness information with video from security cameras that might provide crucial information about suspect, vehicles, and circumstances. In the case of a suspected family abduction, the reporting party may have photographs of the abductor or other valuable information.

- m. Determine the correct NCIC Missing Person File category and ensure that a notification is promptly transmitted. There are five (5) categories within the Missing Person File; disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile, and catastrophe. Quickly entering this information into NCIC will increase the possibility of identifying a missing person coincidentally stopped or observed by law enforcement personnel not yet aware of the incident at hand. In the case of a missing child, simply because the child is less than 18 years old does not require that the juvenile category must be used. The circumstances of the disappearance should govern category selection.

**NOTE:* NCIC suggests that family and non-family abductions be entered in the involuntary category. Runaways most commonly are entered in the juvenile category unless unusual circumstances exist.

- n. Provide detailed descriptive information to the Seneca County 911 Center Dispatcher for broadcast updates. As information becomes available regarding the missing person's physical appearance, circumstances of the case, or description of the potential abductor, the initial officer should ensure that other officers and agencies are provided with up-to-date facts.
- o. Identify and interview everyone at the scene. The name, address, home and work telephone number of everyone present at the scene, along with his or her relationship to the missing person, should be recorded. If possible, include them in photographs and/or videotapes of the incident scene. By interviewing each person privately, officers may be able to uncover information that shall be instrumental in resolution of the case.
- p. Conduct a thorough scene search. With the assistance of additional personnel, a systematic, thorough search of the incident scene should be conducted. If appropriate, officers should obtain written permission to search houses, apartments, outbuildings, vehicles and other property that might hold information about the person's disappearance. Officers are again reminded to conduct a thorough, immediate search of the child's home and property - even if the disappearance supposedly took place elsewhere. When possible, officers also should search a missing child's school locker as well as any computer or electronic messaging system to which a capable child has access.
- q. Secure and safeguard the area as a potential crime scene. If unusual circumstances exist, first responders must take control of the immediate area where the incident occurred and establish an appropriate perimeter to avoid destruction of vital evidence. In addition to external crime scenes, the person's home, and particularly his or her bedroom, should be secured and protected until evidence and identification material such as hair, fingerprints, bite marks, etc. are collected.

- r. Obtain, when possible, two recent photographs of person missing and attach it to the report.
- s. Prepare a written report utilizing Spillman, by obtaining and documenting as much information as possible. Information gathered by the first responding officer(s) may be instrumental in the eventual case solution. To record this important information, officers should prepare a chronological account of their involvement and actions in the case from time of assignment to the point of dismissal.
- t. In circumstances where the missing person investigation is the result of, or in conjunction with a crime, e.g. Unlawful Imprisonment, Kidnapping, members will utilize Spillman as needed to appropriately capture victim(s) and/or suspect(s) information.
- u. If the missing person investigation involves a domestic offense, e.g. Custodial Interference, then a Domestic Incident Report shall serve as the main report form. However, Spillman must also be utilized to document the necessary information for a missing person entry into NYSPIN.
- v. If the subject is a school aged child, contact the SRO and or school officials to request that they flag the child's school records and seek permission to search the child's locker for leads.
- w. If the missing person is identified as Autistic any body of water in the vicinity should be given immediate priority. Evidence indicates that some Autistic persons have a fascination with water and thus may be susceptible to drowning. (Revised 03/05/2019)
- x. Officers may consider initiating the automated call service "A Child Is Missing" at 1- 888-875-2246, (954) 763-1288 or www.achildismissing.org.
- y. Check the Sex Offender Registry to determine if any registered offenders live in proximity to the point person was last seen. If so, assign personnel to investigate including an in-person check/interview.

B. The SUPERVISOR assigned to the report of a missing person shall be responsible for the following:

- a. Obtain a briefing from the first responder(s) and other agency personnel at the scene. This briefing allows the supervisor to determine the scope and complexity of the case and thus develop an appropriate response. The briefing should be conducted away from family, friends or any other individuals who may be present. Doing so shall allow officers to speak freely about the events that have transpired and to pass along initial impressions and opinions that might be misconstrued by others.

- b. Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed to assist in the investigation. Depending upon the situation, a supervisor may determine that additional personnel, including specialized units, should be called to the scene or otherwise assist in the investigation. Certain cases may also require that the supervisor activate existing interagency response protocols. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate investigative unit has been notified and is responding to the correct location.
- c. Establish a command post if needed. A command post is a field headquarters for scene management. It is used as a center for organizing personnel and directing investigative efforts as well as a focal point for inquiries, intelligence gathering and media contacts. As a general rule, the command post should be close enough to the center of activity to facilitate control and coordination, but sufficiently apart to allow a free exchange of ideas among responders. Using the victim's home as a command post is not recommended. Organize and coordinate search efforts.
- d. A supervisor should appoint a search operation coordinator who can oversee the search effort while the supervisor remains available to manage the entire investigation. Ensure that all required notifications have been made. Because dissemination of information is an integral part of the search for a missing person, the supervisor should ensure that all officers, other departments and agencies, and all investigative networks are supplied with accurate details.
- e. Establish a liaison with the victim's family. Families of a missing person will experience extreme stress. Supervisors should establish a liaison with the victim-family who can explain what investigative actions are being employed and what they can do to assist in the search.
- f. Confirm that all agency policies and procedures are observed.
- g. Manage media relations. Many missing person investigations, especially those involving large-scale search efforts, are likely to draw media attention. Supervisors should manage media presence in a way that complements, rather than conflicts with the investigation.
- h. Ensure that the oncoming shift supervisor is aware of the missing person report and any necessary follow-up needing immediate attention. After the oncoming supervisor has been briefed, it will become his/her responsibility to brief the next oncoming shift, insuring appropriate follow-up is conducted by all shifts until the missing person is located, leads are exhausted, or the case is assigned to CIS.

C. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION SECTION

The INVESTIGATOR assigned to the report of a missing person shall be responsible for the following:

1. Obtain a briefing from agency personnel at the scene. This briefing should be conducted prior to interviews with family members of the missing person or witnesses who may have been identified during the initial stage of the case. Its objective is to assist the investigator in formulating an effective interview strategy.
2. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information. The verification process should include all details developed during the preliminary investigation. During the interview process the investigator should be alert to facts or statements that conflict with those gathered by the first responder.
3. Conduct a neighborhood investigation if appropriate. A thorough canvass of the neighborhood should be conducted without delay. The objective is to identify and interview all persons within the abduction zone who may provide information related to the incident. Investigators should use a standardized set of questions to ensure completeness and uniformity of information and facilitate establishment of a database to track leads. Record should also be made of all vehicles parked within the neighborhood and any other conditions that may have future investigative value. Access should also be made to the Sex Offender Registration list to determine if individuals designated as sexual predators reside, work, or might otherwise be associated with the area.
4. Obtain a brief history of recent family dynamics. Information about family dynamics, obtained from family members, neighbors, teachers, classmates, employers, co-workers, friends, and witnesses can offer valuable insights into what may have happened to the missing person and where he or she may be found. Records of family contact maintained by law enforcement agencies, social service departments, schools and other organizations should also be evaluated.
5. Explore the basis for conflicting information. When preliminary investigative steps have been taken, investigators should "compare notes" with the first responder, fellow investigators, and other agency personnel to identify and work through conflicting information. This collaborative evaluation will provide the investigative staff with a solid foundation upon which to structure future case directions.
6. Implement effective case management. Depending on the resources available, information may either be computerized or incorporated in a simple card system. Both methods are used to record, index, cross-reference, and retrieve the facts amassed during an investigation. The method doesn't matter as long as the system works for the investigator in charge of solving the case.

7. Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services. The complexity of many missing person incidents may necessitate the use of resources and services both from within the agency and from other organizations as well. Investigators should be aware of the input that can be obtained from resources such as the FBI, NCIC, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
8. Update descriptive information. If it appears that the case will not be resolved promptly, investigators should ensure that the descriptive record, especially that entered into the NCIC Missing Person File, is updated to include dental characteristics, scars, marks and tattoos, fingerprints, along with additional articles of clothing, jewelry, or unique possessions.
9. Monitor media relations. While information gained through effective media relations is often of significant value in a missing person case, investigators should review all notices prior to release to ensure that investigative objectives are not unintentionally compromised.

C. UNIDENTIFIED PERSON

An officer assigned to the report of an UNIDENTIFIED PERSON, living or deceased, shall be responsible for the following:

1. Obtain a complete description. Officers who are assigned to this task should utilize standardized information gathering forms such as the NCIC Unidentified Person File Worksheet.
2. Enter the unidentified person's description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File. This file is compared daily with the contents of the NCIC Missing Person File. Entries with common characteristics are flagged and both agencies are informed.
3. Utilize all available resources to aid in identification of the person. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and state medical examiners may be of assistance in the identification.
4. Cancel all notifications after identification is confirmed.

D. RECOVERY OR RETURN

An officer assigned to the RECOVERY OR RETURN of a missing person shall be responsible for the following:

1. Verify that the located person is, in fact, the reported missing person. All returns should be personally verified by an officer. The benefits of this practice include

assessing the person's safety, gaining intelligence about possible predators, and preventing future episodes.

2. In the case of a missing adult who has been located, inform the located person that he or she is the subject of a missing person investigation. If the located person is a competent adult, the officer shall determine the person's willingness for the police to reveal his or her whereabouts. To the extent possible, a person's desire to remain hidden shall be honored.
3. Notify the initial reporting person(s) of the well-being and, if permissible, the physical Whereabouts and contact information of the person who has been located.
4. In the case of a missing or abducted person who has been located, arrange for intervention services, if indicated. During the verification process, officers should be alert for indications that additional services may be needed before a located person can safely remain with his or her family. These services may include mental and/or physical health examinations and arrangements for family counseling.
5. In the case of a runaway or missing child from within department jurisdiction, who has been located and who is not wanted on a warrant or other law violation, arrange the return of the child to his or her legal guardian or to an appropriate shelter under sponsorship of the Department of Social Services Child Protective Services.
6. In the case of a runaway from another jurisdiction who has been located and for whom an arrest warrant exists, or for whom an NCIC Missing Person hit is verified, place the child in custody and transport him or her to the appropriate facility for admission. Section 718 of the Family Court Act authorizes any Police Officer to take a juvenile under the age of 18, whom he reasonably believes to have run away from his/her home without just cause into custody for purposes of returning him/her to his/her home, this statute covers return to a parent or other legally responsible for the child's care and has been cited by and upheld by the Court of appeals in cases such as Matter of Marrhonds G. 81 NY2d 942. Sub-section 718(b) provides the procedure where the officer determines that return to the home would be unsafe for the child or where the child cannot be returned to the home for any reason. The statute is discretionary in that it specifies that the officer may act, not that he is required to do so.
7. Complete an Investigative Action Report and a Spillman Report for cases originating from the Seneca Falls Police Department and a Standard Incident Report for cases originating from other jurisdictions. Reports shall include the victim's name, age, and date of return. Officers shall also advise the Seneca County 911 Center Dispatcher to cancel all outstanding notifications and broadcasts. Along with cancellation of the NCIC missing person file entry and other notifications regarding the case, a

supplemental report should be completed that describes the person's activities while missing and the circumstances of the recovery/return.

E. AMBER ALERT

- A. An Amber Alert will be done when:
 1. Members having followed the guidelines outlined in Section II and IV of this order and if during the course of the investigation it is determined that an abduction has occurred, and
 2. The following criteria are also met:
 - a. The child is 17 years of age or younger, and
 - b. It is believed that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm or death, either at the hands of another or due to a proven mental or physical disability.
- B. If the above criteria are met, the investigating member will:
 1. Immediately notify his/her supervisor.
 2. Complete:
 - a. All necessary paperwork as outlined in Section IV.
 - b. The "Amber Alert Submission Form" and,
 - c. The "NYS Amber Alert Authorization to Publicize"
 - d. Call NYSP Communications at (518) 457-6811 to request activation. The Amber Alert submission form, along with image (s) of the child and abductor (if known) can be sent via emails to commop@troopers.ny.gov and nyspvu@troopers.ny.gov or faxed to the NYSP COMSEC@ (518) 457-3207 or entered into the Integrated Justice Portal. If utilizing the Portal, select the notifications tab, then select on broadcasts, then select the abduction or sexual assault tab. As soon as reasonably possible a missing person (File 06) message and an abduction (File 11) must be entered in the Integrated Justice Portal. (Revised 03/05/2019)
 - e. After the NYSP Communication Center receives the AMBER Alert form you will be contacted and informed whether an AMBER Alert will be issued. At that time, you may be asked to provide additional details and or continue an investigation prior to the issuance of an AMBER Alert.
 3. Have the parent or guardian of the missing child sign the "NY State Amber Alert Authorization to Publicize" form.
 4. Obtain two (2) recent photographs of the missing person.
 5. Submit all documentation to the on-duty supervisor for immediate teletype entry.

4. Supervisors will:

1. Confirm that the initial investigation has been thoroughly completed pursuant to this order.
2. Ensure that an immediate teletype entry has been made.
3. Follow guidelines outlined in Section IV-A-4.
4. Call the NYSP Communications Section at 518-457-6811 to advise them that a request for an Amber Alert is being sent via fax and e-Justice.
5. Have the Seneca County 911 Center send the FILE 11A via teletype, and request a copy by sent to the Seneca Falls Police Department via fax or email and Fax a copy of the form to the NYSP Communications Section at 518-457-3207.

F. AMBER ALERT CANCELATIONS

- A. Members will immediately notify all investigating units that the child has been recovered.
- B. Supervisors will ensure that the Chief of Police has been notified and that a File 11 cancel is immediately sent via NYSPIN.
- C. The Chief of Police or a sergeant shall notify media contacts of the cancellation.

G. REPORT FORM COMPLETION FOR MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATIONS

Unless otherwise noted by this order, i.e. domestic offenses, members shall complete the Standard Incident Report (SIR) to document a missing person investigation. As directed by G.O. 470, the report form shall be completed in its entirety.

There is however specific information that is required to enter a missing person into NYSPIN that does not have a designated box on the SIR form. As such, members shall use the narrative section to include the answers to the following questions:

- a. Code Description – Indicate whether the person is missing under the following categories:
 - **Disability** – A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile thereby subjecting himself or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - **Endangered** – A person of any age who is missing and in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that his physical safety is in danger.
 - **Involuntary** - A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.

- **Juvenile** – A person who is missing and is less than sixteen (16) years of age and does not meet any of the above criteria.
 - **Disaster Victim** – A person of any age who is reported missing after a disaster, either natural or manmade.
 - **Other** – A person of any age who is missing under circumstances NOT described by above codes. This is the person who is missing for unknown reasons.
- b. Date of last contact.
 - c. Place of birth (City/State).
 - d. Whether footprints are available.
 - e. Whether body x-rays are available.
 - f. Mother's maiden name.
 - g. School name (if person is under 18 years of age and attends school in New York State).
 - h. The narrative should also include a detailed clothing description including any known jewelry.
 - i. Officers may utilize information contained in the "Missing and Abducted Children Guide" located on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children website www.missingkids.com. This is a guide to assist with Case Investigations and Program Management. The resources menu on the web site allows you to access and print the publication. In addition the DCJS Missing Persons Data Collection Guide may also be utilized. This guide can be found on the NYS Missing Persons Clearinghouse website www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/missing under the publications menu.

H. MISSING PERSONS FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIONS

1. Unless the case is otherwise assigned, the Patrol Division shall be responsible for the follow-up of missing person reports.
2. Officers shall attempt to conduct a follow-up during each watch for thirty (30) days or until the subject is located unless directed otherwise by a supervisor. When conducting follow-ups, officers should:
 - a. Attempt to obtain permission from the appropriate person 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.).
 - b. If the subject is a school aged child, contact the SIRO and or school officials to request that they search child's school records and seek permission to search the child's locker for leads.
 - c. Check department and Spillman records for prior contacts involving the subject or contacts which have occurred since the subject's disappearance.

- d. Check the subject's school or place of employment regarding his/her attendance.
 - e. Contact local jails, hospitals and the Medical Examiners Office's and inquire about the subject or unidentified persons matching the subject's description.
 - f. Check the Integrated Justice Portal System messages for unidentified persons matching the subject's description.
 - g. Contact airlines, railroads and bus lines and request that they check records for the subject as a passenger.
 - h. Check local shelters and service agencies to determine if the subject is a resident or client.
 - i. Check with the Seneca County Department of Social Services to determine if the subject is receiving benefits.
 - j. When appropriate, contact credit card companies to determine if the subject's credit cards have been used since his disappearance.
3. If the missing person has not been located within thirty (30) days, or the person is missing under unusual circumstances, responsibility for the investigation shall be transferred to the Criminal Investigation Division (CID). CID shall be responsible for completing and transmitting the "Missing Person Data Collection Guide" (form DCJS-1508) to the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).
4. Investigators 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 persons cases is available through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST, the National Runaway Switchboard @ 1-800-621-4000 and the NYS DCJS Missing Persons Clearinghouse @ 1-800-346-3543 (websites for each organization also contain useful information). 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.

I. MISSING PERSON INTEGRATED JUSTICE MESSAGES

5. The officer receiving a missing person report shall, when authorized by law, cause an Integrated Justice Portal message to be sent as soon as possible. The message shall be sent by a trained officer or, whenever possible, by the Records Division, in accordance with regulations.
6. File 6 missing person entries are authorized by the Integrated Justice Portal whenever:
 - a. A person of any age is missing and has a proven physical or mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself or others to personal and immediate danger.
 - b. A person of any age is missing and in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that his physical safety is in danger.
 - c. A person of any age is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.
 - d. The person is less than eighteen (<18) years of age.
 - e. A person considered a missing vulnerable adult.
7. A File 11A Integrated Justice Portal message (abduction message) shall be generated if an abduction has been confirmed to ensure that other law enforcement agencies are aware of the abduction and related details. Statewide distribution (and if deemed to be appropriate, dissemination to adjoining states) is required. This will assist with coordinating the involvement of other police agencies and will ensure that they are prepared to effectively handle telephone calls received in response to any broadcast abduction alert. The message can be entered into the Integrated Justice Portal by an Officer or Seneca County 911.
8. A File 25 "attempt to locate" message shall be entered into the Integrated Justice Portal in all other cases.
9. Whenever a missing person is located or returns, officers shall make personal contact with the subject to confirm his whereabouts and wellbeing. If the missing person is less than sixteen years of age the officer shall return the missing person to his parent or guardian. If the missing person is sixteen (16) years of age or older, the officer shall make all attempts to return the missing person, but if the missing person does not want to return to his 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 contacts on a Police Report and shall be responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring that all teletype messages regarding the subject are canceled.
 - b. Destroying all copies of the "Missing Person Data Collection Guide" (form DCJS-1508) in accordance with Section 837(e) of the New York State Executive Law, when necessary.
 - c. Document the cancellation of teletypes and destruction of the DCJS-1508 form on a Police Investigation Report narrative.

J. PARENTAL KIDNAPPING/CUSTODIAL INTERFERENCE INVESTIGATIONS

10. Incidents of parental abduction and custodial interference often originate as a civil matter which may escalate into a crime. In addition to following normal missing person procedures, officers investigating a report of such an incident should:
 - a. Verify the non-abducting parent's custody decree with 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).

11. The Criminal Investigation Division 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 at (315) 422-0141.
 - c. Notify the State Department in Washington, D. C. if the investigation reveals that the child may have been taken out of the country.
 - d. Obtain a subpoena for the abducting parent's records (e.g. telephone bills, bank records and credit card charges).
 - e. Obtain a search warrant for the abducting parent's residence and, when appropriate, an 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.

K. RUNAWAYS

12. 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 a 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 that the name and address given are correct.
13. 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 purpose.
14. 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. If the sixteen or seventeen 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.
15. Technical assistance regarding runaway cases is available through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST and the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000.
16. 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 community services to deal with any resolved issues.

17. Complaints regarding runaways or persons missing from locations outside of the Town of Seneca Falls shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency of jurisdiction.

L. REPORT DISTRIBUTION

The original copy will be filed with the Records Division.