18-13 - Project Lifesaver Pilot Program

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
NEWSLETTER
Field Operations Support Services

PROJECT LIFESAVER PILOT PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to familiarize Department members with the Project Lifesaver pilot program, and pending a Field Operations Directive, provide guidelines establishing preliminary procedures for affected personnel when a person wearing a Project Lifesaver wristband goes missing.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has developed the "Bring Our Loved Ones Home" Task Force (BOLOH), now called "LA Found," which is comprised of various members of public and private agencies; including Department personnel, who are focused on developing the following objectives:

- To keep track of those at-risk for "wandering" or going missing, including children and adults with Alzheimer's disease, Dementia, Autism, and other cognitive disorders; and
- In the shortest time possible, locate and return those individuals safely when they wander away from their families and caregivers.

The LA Found task force proposed multiple strategies for achieving their objectives, and one which the Board of Supervisors has chosen to move forward on, is the Project Lifesaver pilot program.

Project Lifesaver International is a 501(C)(3) community based, public safety, non-profit organization that provides law enforcement, fire/rescue, and caregivers with a program and products designed to quickly locate individuals with cognitive disorders who are prone to the life threatening behavior of wandering.

The Project Lifesaver pilot program will be implemented county wide and across multiple jurisdictions. Through existing mutual aid agreements, police agencies within the County of Los Angeles may call upon the Department to assist with searching in any local jurisdiction for a missing person equipped with a Project Lifesaver wristband (transmitter).

During the pilot program, the Department will be represented and led by the Mental Evaluation Team (MET), who with the Communications and Fleet Management Bureau (CFMB) and Aero Bureau, have been provided in-depth training and achieved certification to operate Project Lifesaver equipment. Two Department airships, Project Lifesaver/MET search team units, and a CFMB Mobile Communications Unit (MCU) are now equipped with Project Lifesaver radio frequency (RF) receivers and ground antennas.

Station units will not be outfitted with RF receivers or ground antennas; however, it is important for all Department members working in a patrol or station desk capacity to be aware of what to do should a call of a missing person involving a Project Lifesaver wristband occur.

PROCEDURE

Regardless of whether a person reported missing is a Project Lifesaver participant, Department personnel shall follow existing Department policy and procedures pertaining to missing persons.

Desk Personnel Responsibilities

Upon receiving a telephone call involving any missing person, desk personnel shall ask the caller whether the missing person was wearing a Project Lifesaver wristband or any other type of locator device.

If the missing person is a Project Lifesaver participant, station desk personnel should take the following steps:

- Gather pertinent information regarding the missing person, such as name, age, physical description, clothing worn, mental/physical condition, whether the missing person requires critical medications, last time/location seen, possible mode and direction of travel, and/or possible destination;
- Gather the frequency number of the missing person's transmitter from the informant, if known;
- Advise the informant to remain at the location to meet responding deputies, and not to leave or go looking for the missing person until after deputies arrive on scene and make contact;
- Dispatch units to the location to begin a missing persons investigation;
- **Notify the MET triage desk at[REDACTED TEXT] and**
- **Document the MET triage desk notification in the call remarks, i.e., "MET triage desk is 914N".**

  Note: Station desk personnel should not wait for station units to arrive on scene before calling the MET triage desk for Project Lifesaver/MET search team support. Immediately after receiving a missing persons call, when the missing person is wearing a Project Lifesaver wristband, notify the MET triage desk to allow a Project Lifesaver/MET search team the ability to move expeditiously in joining responding station units. Station desk personnel should update the MET triage desk as further details are ascertained, and/or if the person is located.

The MET triage desk can be reached at [REDACTED TEXT], 24 hours a day, and seven days a week. The reporting party shall not be directed to call the MET triage desk. The MET triage desk telephone number is a resource exclusively intended for law enforcement personnel use only.

In most cases, the responding Project Lifesaver/MET search team members will be dispatched to respond "Code-3" to the location. Therefore, it is imperative if at any time the missing person is located, an update must be provided to the MET triage desk, so all responding Project Lifesaver/MET search team members and Aero Bureau airship(s) can be canceled.

Station Unit Responsibilities

The station unit assigned the handle on the missing persons/critical missing call will retain the lead role in handling and conducting all search operations and possible subsequent investigation. Project Lifesaver/MET search team members and associated technical equipment are resources to

help support patrol operations. At no time are the responding Project Lifesaver/MET search team members to assume the exclusive or lead role in the search for the missing person or the subsequent investigation.

If a command post is established, the handling station unit should advise the MET triage desk of the command post location and tactical frequency. A Project Lifesaver/MET search team member will meet and liaison with patrol personnel on scene to help augment their search at the earliest opportunity.

Patrol stations are urged to retain and post the attached Project Lifesaver/MET reference bulletin in their station dispatch center as a reference for desk personnel. For any questions regarding Project Lifesaver and/or response protocols for Project Lifesaver, please contact MET Sergeant [REDACTED TEXT]

If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this newsletter, please contact Field Operations Support Services, at [REDACTED TEXT]

ATTACHMENTS

Project Lifesaver/MET Reference Sheet for Station Desk Personnel

REFERENCES

MPP Section 5-09/120.03, MISSING PERSONS

MPP Section 5-09/120.04, MISSING PERSON CHECKOFF FORMS

MPP Section 5-09/120.05, MISSING CHILDREN

MPP Section 5-09/120.50, MISSING ADULTS

MPP Section 5-09/120.55, RETURNING OR LOCATING A MISSING ADULT