14-17 - Incident/Watch Commander Checkoff List for Missing Children-Watch Commander Checkoff for Missing Children Form

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411

INCIDENT/WATCH COMMANDER CHECKOFF LIST

FOR MISSING CHILDREN FORM

In cases of missing children, the Department's goal is to reunite the parent and child as quickly and efficiently as possible.

During Phase I of the critical missing person investigation, the watch commander shall complete the attached *Watch Commander Checkoff List for Missing Children*form (SH-R-12B) for every child under 12 years of age and any person under the age of 21 who qualifies as an "at risk" (MPP §5-09/120.00, Missing Persons Definitions) missing person as per Manual of Policy and Procedure, Section 5-09/120.04 Missing Person Checkoff Forms. The checkoff form will assist watch commanders in ensuring policies and/or procedures are followed.

Prior entry into NCIC is not the only criteria that dictates a prior missing case. A parent's statement about unreported runaways may also be considered as part of a pattern. Prior runaway status should be considered, whether "officially" reported or not.

In handling a missing child case, the watch commander is required to make several critical decisions, for example: when to call a station detective and notify the station Detective Bureau commander, whether an Amber Alert should be initiated, determining the necessity to notify the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, when it is appropriate to notify the District Attorney's office, et cetera. The below information will assist watch commanders in making these decisions.

When should the station detective bureau be notified? Pursuant to MPP, §5-09/120.15 Child - Critical (Phase I), if the child has not been located after four hours of searching, Phase II of the incident begins and the station detective bureau assumes responsibility of the investigation. When the investigation enters Phase II, the detective bureau commander shall be notified by the watch commander to ensure proper pass-on information.

At the watch commander's discretion, the station detective bureau may be notified prior to the four hour mark based on unusual circumstances including, but not limited to, potential need to open station EOC, number of potential witnesses to be interviewed, volume of leads/tips from the public that require investigative assistance, et cetera.

When should Homicide be called? Pursuant to MPP, §5-09/120.20 Child - Critical (Phase II), Homicide Bureau shall be notified when the station detective determines there is an indication of foul play or homicide associated with the missing person/child.

Any request for scent tracking dogs/handlers must be made through the Homicide Bureau desk.

In addition, pursuant to MPP, §4-16/020.00 - Missing or Found Persons, stations shall notify Homicide Bureau, Missing Persons Detail, by phone when a missing person is:

- Suffering from Alzheimer's Disease;
- Suffering from severe mental or physical handicap;
- Suffering from advanced senility;
- Missing under suspicious circumstances;
- Missing with any condition requiring continuing medication or care;
- Infected with a highly communicable disease; or
- Suicidal.

When should Major Crimes Bureau be called? Pursuant to MPP, §4-14/005.00 - Kidnapping, and §4-08/035.00 - Extortion, Major Crimes Bureau shall be notified immediately if the missing person/child has not been located and there is an indication the victim was kidnapped for ransom, extortion, robbery, or there is credible information that the victim is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death. If a real fear exists for the victim's safety after the first stages of the Station detective's investigation is completed, notify Major Crimes Bureau immediately.

In addition, MPP 5-09/120.07, Amber Alert, states that Major Crimes Bureau shall be notified once the decision to activate an Amber Alert has been made by the watch commander.

When should Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau (SHB) be called? Pursuant to MPP, §4-16/020.00 - Missing Child (Phase Three), SHB shall be notified after the child has been missing for four hours and the child is 16 years of age or under, or missing for four hours and is under the age of 21 and classified as "at risk."

At the watch commander's discretion, Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau may be notified at any time based on unusual circumstances including, but not limited to, suspected foul play, high profile case, media interest, and/or to expedite the press release and seek public assistance, et cetera.

When should Alert LA be initiated? Pursuant to FOD 11-03, Alert Los Angeles County, this system is a geographic mapping telephonic notification system that can send a message to a targeted area, which may help find the missing child. The watch commander should evaluate the need to activate the Alert LA. There are circumstances when an alert message could be disadvantageous; therefore, consultation with the handling detective is required prior to taking this step.

Should an Amber Alert be initiated? Pursuant to MPP 5-09/120.07, Amber Alert, an Amber Alert shall be initiated when all four of the required conditions are met:

1. A confirmed abduction;
2. The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or has a proven mental or physical disability;
3. The victim is in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or death; and
4. Information disseminated to the public could assist in the recovery of the child.

Should the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) be notified? The watch commander (Phase I) and Detective Bureau commander (Phase II and III) should continually evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services regarding the missing child incident. The watch commander or Detective Bureau commander may request additional resources by contacting the NCMEC. Some of the

resources provided by NCMEC are:

- Poster and Photo Distribution Unit - Circulates pictures throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. They may also coordinate national media exposure;
- Case Analysis and Support Division - Analyzes the case for leads, patterns and possible links to other cases;
- The Lost Child Alert Technology Resource (LOCATER) - Creates professional quality posters and disseminates them locally, statewide, or across the nation;
- Team Adam - A rapid-response team made of specialists who assist law enforcement in serious child abductions and child sexual exploitation cases; and
- Family Advocacy Division - Provides technical assistance, referrals, and crisis-intervention services to families, law enforcement, and family-advocacy agencies.

These programs can be viewed at: http://www.missingkids.com

Should the District Attorney's (DA) office be notified? The DA's office should be notified If there is substantial evidence that the child has, or will be, taken out of the country.

Information regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services.