

Missing Persons

Effective Date:	09/09/2024
Revised Date:	12/17/2025
Issuing Authority:	

416.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for handling missing person investigations (50 ILCS 722/5).

416.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

High-risk missing person - A person whose whereabouts are not currently known and whose circumstances indicate that the person may be at risk of injury or death. The circumstances that indicate that a person is a high-risk missing person include but are not limited to any of the following (50 ILCS 722/10(a)(1)):

- (a) The person is missing as a result of a stranger abduction.
- (b) The person is missing under suspicious circumstances.
- (c) The person is missing under unknown circumstances.
- (d) The person is missing under known dangerous circumstances.
- (e) The person is missing more than 60 days.
- (f) The person has already been designated as a high-risk missing person by another law enforcement agency.
- (g) There is evidence that the person is at risk because:
 1. The person is in need of medical attention, including persons with dementia-like symptoms, or in need of prescription medication.
 2. The person does not have a pattern of running away or disappearing.
 3. The person may have been abducted by a non-custodial parent.
 4. The person is mentally impaired, or is developmentally or intellectually disabled.
 5. The person is under the age of 21.
 6. The person has been the subject of past threats or acts of violence.
 7. The person has eloped from a nursing home.
 8. The person is a veteran, active duty, or reserve member of the United States Armed Forces or National Guard, and is believed to have a physical or mental health condition related to their service.
- (h) Any other factor that may, in the judgment of the law enforcement official, indicate that the missing person may be at risk.

Missing Persons

Missing person - Any person who is reported missing to law enforcement when that person's location is unknown. This includes a person under the age of 18, reported to the [Department/ Office] as abducted, lost, or a runaway, whose identity is entered into the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) (325 ILCS 55/1(c)).

Missing person networks - Databases or computer networks that are available to law enforcement and are suitable for obtaining information related to missing person investigations. This includes the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), and LEADS (20 Ill. Adm. Code 1291.40).

416.2 POLICY

The Alsip Police Department does not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and assumes that the missing person is in need of immediate assistance until an investigation reveals otherwise. The Alsip Police Department gives missing person cases priority over property-related cases and does not require a specific amount of time to have passed before beginning a missing person investigation.

416.3 REQUIRED FORMS AND DNA COLLECTION KITS

The Investigation Unit supervisor shall ensure the following forms and kits are developed and available:

- Missing Person Report Form (50 ILCS 722/5(c))
- Missing Person Investigation Checklist that provides investigation guidelines and resources that could be helpful in the early hours of a missing person investigation
- Missing Person School Notification Form
- Medical Records Release Form
- DNA collection kits

416.4 ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS

Any member encountering a person who wishes to report a missing person or runaway shall render assistance without delay. This can be accomplished by accepting the report via telephone or in person and initiating the investigation. Those members who do not take such reports or who are unable to give immediate assistance shall promptly dispatch or alert a member who can take the report.

A report shall be accepted in all cases and regardless of where the person was last seen, where the person resides or any question of jurisdiction (50 ILCS 722/5(a)).

416.4.1 REPORTS OF MISSING CHILDREN

Any member taking a report of a missing person under the age of 18 shall provide the reporting party with the following information (325 ILCS 40/7.2):

Missing Persons

- (a) The 24-hour toll-free telephone numbers for:
 - 1. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® (NCMEC).
 - 2. The National Runaway Safeline.
- (b) A description of the services provided to families of missing children by NCMEC and the National Runaway Safeline.

416.5 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

Officers or other members conducting the initial investigation of a missing person should take the following investigative actions as applicable:

- (a) Respond to a dispatched call as soon as practicable.
- (b) Interview the reporting party and any witnesses to determine whether the person qualifies as a missing person and, if so, whether the person may be a high-risk missing person.
- (c) Notify a supervisor immediately if there is evidence that a missing person is either high-risk or may qualify for a public alert, or both (see the Public Alerts Policy).
- (d) Broadcast a radio alert (e.g., internal broadcast, interagency broadcast) if the person is under 18 years of age or there is evidence that the missing person is high-risk. If the missing person is under 18, the alert should be broadcast immediately or as soon as practicable, but in no event more than one hour after determining the missing person may be high-risk (325 ILCS 40/7).
- (e) Ensure that entries are made into the appropriate missing person networks:
 - 1. Immediately in LEADS (50 ILCS 722/5).
 - 2. In all other networks, as soon as practicable, but not later than two hours from the time of the initial report (34 USC § 41308).
- (f) Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely and initiate a search as applicable according to the facts.
- (g) Collect and/or review:
 - 1. A photograph and fingerprint card of the missing person, if available.
 - 2. A voluntarily provided biological sample of the missing person, if available (e.g., toothbrush, hairbrush).
 - 3. Any documents that may assist in the investigation, such as court orders regarding custody.
 - 4. Any other evidence that may assist in the investigation, including personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, computers).
- (h) When circumstances permit and if appropriate, attempt to determine the missing person's location through their telecommunications carrier.
- (i) Contact the appropriate agency if the report relates to a missing person report previously made to another agency and that agency is actively investigating the report and has made the required LEADS entry. A report the information received from the

Missing Persons

reporting individual shall be completed and forwarded without delay to the appropriate investigating agency (50 ILCS 722/5). If the information relates to a high-risk missing person, the member should notify a supervisor and proceed with reasonable steps to locate the missing person.

- (j) If the missing person is a child, immediately contact the State Missing Persons Clearinghouse (325 ILCS 40/7(b)).
- (k) In the event that a missing child is not found during the shift in which the report was made, information regarding the missing child shall be disseminated to all sworn officers in the [Department/Office] (325 ILCS 40/7(b)).

416.6 REPORT PROCEDURES AND ROUTING

Members should complete all missing person reports and forms promptly and advise the appropriate supervisor as soon as a missing person report is ready for review.

416.6.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the supervisor shall include but are not limited to:

- (a) Reviewing and approving missing person reports upon receipt.
 - 1. The reports should be promptly sent to the Records Unit.
- (b) Ensuring resources are deployed as appropriate.
- (c) Initiating a command post as needed.
- (d) Ensuring applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented.
- (e) Ensuring that records have been entered into the appropriate missing person networks.
- (f) Taking reasonable steps to identify and address any jurisdictional issues to ensure cooperation among agencies.
 - 1. If the case falls within the jurisdiction of another agency, the supervisor should facilitate transfer of the case to the agency of jurisdiction.
- (g) Initiating a search of the area if applicable. Steps to initiate a search may include:
 - 1. Arrange for a search team of [department/office] members or volunteers.
 - 2. Determine the locations to be searched.
 - 3. Establish a search pattern.
 - 4. Arrange for other resources as needed (e.g., divers, air support, canines).

416.6.2 RECORDS UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Records Unit member shall include but are not limited to:

- (a) As soon as reasonable under the circumstances, notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction for the missing person's residence in cases where the missing person is a resident of another jurisdiction.

Alsip Police Department

Policy Manual

Missing Persons

- (b) Notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency in whose jurisdiction the missing person was last seen.
- (c) Notifying and forwarding a copy of the report to the agency of jurisdiction for the missing person's intended or possible destination, if known.
- (d) Forwarding a copy of the report to the Investigation Unit.
- (e) Coordinating with the NCIC Terminal Contractor for Illinois to have the missing person record in the NCIC computer networks updated with additional information obtained from missing person investigations (34 USC § 41308).

416.7 INVESTIGATION UNIT FOLLOW-UP

In addition to completing or continuing any actions listed above, the investigator assigned to a missing person investigation:

- (a) Should ensure that the missing person's school is notified within 10 days if the missing person is a juvenile.
 - 1. The notice shall be in writing and should also include a photograph.
 - 2. The investigator should meet with school officials as appropriate to stress the importance of including the notice in the child's student file, along with the investigator's contact information if the school receives a call requesting the transfer of the missing child's files to another school.
- (b) Should recontact the reporting party and/or other witnesses within 30 days of the initial report and within 30 days thereafter to keep them informed, as appropriate, and to determine if any additional information has become available.
- (c) In cases involving a person missing for 60 days, shall generate a report of the missing person within the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) and shall enter case information into the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program database if those reporting requirements are met. If not previously received, attempt to obtain the following and enter each into the appropriate databases in the time frame required by law (50 ILCS 722/5(d); 50 ILCS 722/10(c)):
 - 1. Biological samples from family members or from the missing person along with any needed documentation, including any consent forms, required for entry of the DNA profile into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), including but not limited to the Local DNA Index System (LDIS), State DNA Index System (SDIS), National DNA Index System (NDIS), and NamUs partner laboratories.
 - 2. Any additional photographs of the missing person that may aid with the investigation or an identification (34 USC § 41308). No written authorization to publicly release any photograph that would aid in the investigation or identification of the missing person is required.
 - (a) If the missing person is under 18 years of age, the photographs should be forwarded to the Illinois State Police and LEADS.
 - 3. Dental information and X-rays.
 - 4. Fingerprint records.

Alsip Police Department

Policy Manual

Missing Persons

- (d) Should consider contacting other agencies involved in the case to determine if any additional information is available.
- (e) Shall verify and update LEADS, the NCIC, and any other applicable missing person networks within 30 days of the original entry into the networks and every 30 days thereafter until the missing person is located (34 USC § 41308).
- (f) Should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document these efforts at least every 30 days.
- (g) Shall maintain a close liaison with state and local child welfare systems and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) if the missing person is under the age of 21 and shall promptly notify NCMEC when the person is missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution (34 USC § 41308).
- (h) Should make appropriate inquiry with the [MedicalExaminer/JOP].
- (i) Should obtain and forward medical and dental records, photos, X-rays, and biological samples, as applicable.
 - 1. If a biological sample for DNA analysis is obtained, it shall be submitted to a CODIS or other accredited laboratory where DNA profiles are entered into local, state, or national DNA index systems within 90 days (50 ILCS 722/5; 50 ILCS 722/10).
- (j) Shall attempt to obtain the most recent photograph for persons under 18 years of age if it has not been obtained previously and forward the photograph to the Illinois State Police and enter the photograph into applicable missing person networks (34 USC § 41308).
- (k) Shall immediately begin an investigation and notify the Illinois State Police if information is received that a request for the birth certificate, school record, or any other information concerning a missing child has been made (325 ILCS 55/6).
- (l) In the case of a high-risk missing person or a person who has been missing for an extended time, should consult with a supervisor regarding seeking federal assistance from the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service (28 USC § 566).

416.7.1 NOTIFICATION TO REPORTING PERSON

The investigator shall notify all persons required by law of the following (50 ILCS 722/5(d)(1)):

- (a) General information about the handling of the missing person case or about intended efforts in the case to the extent that the disclosure would not adversely affect the ability to locate or protect the missing person or to apprehend or prosecute any person criminally involved in the disappearance.
- (b) Information regarding the collection of documents and biological samples that could assist in the identification of a missing person.
- (c) That the person should promptly contact the Alsip Police Department if the missing person remains missing in order to provide additional information and materials that will aid in locating the missing person such as the missing person's credit cards, debit cards, banking information, and cellular telephone records.

Missing Persons

- (d) That any DNA samples provided for the missing person case are provided on a voluntary basis and will be used solely to help locate or identify the missing person and will not be used for any other purpose.
- (e) That, dependent upon the missing person's age, NCMEC and NamUs may be contacted.

416.8 WHEN A MISSING PERSON IS FOUND

When any person reported missing is found, the assigned investigator shall document the location of the missing person in the appropriate report, notify the reporting party and other involved agencies and refer the case for additional investigation if warranted.

The Records Clerk shall ensure that, upon receipt of information that a missing person has been located, the following occurs:

- (a) Notification is made to the Illinois State Police.
- (b) If the person is a child, the child should be interviewed prior to returning him/her to their parent or guardian.
 - 1. The interview should be focused on the child's wellbeing in order to prevent the child from being returned to an abusive or sexually exploitative environment.
 - 2. The interview should be documented in a supplemental report.
- (c) A missing child's school is notified.
- (d) Entries are made in the applicable missing person networks.
- (e) When a missing person is high-risk, the fact that the person has been found shall be reported within 24 hours to the Illinois State Police.
- (f) Notification shall be made to any other law enforcement agency that took the initial report or participated in the investigation.

416.8.1 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS

Members investigating a case of an unidentified person who is deceased or a living person who cannot assist in identifying themselves should:

- (a) Obtain a complete description of the person.
- (b) Enter the unidentified person's description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File and the NamUs database.
- (c) Use available resources, such as those related to missing persons, to identify the person.

416.9 CASE CLOSURE

The Investigation Unit supervisor may authorize the closure of a missing person case after considering the following:

- (a) Closure is appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned, located, or evidence matches an unidentified person or body (50 ILCS 722/5).

Alsip Police Department

Policy Manual

Missing Persons

- (b) If the missing person is a resident of Alsip or this [department/office] is the lead agency, the case should be kept under active investigation until the person is returned or located. Exhaustion of leads in the investigation or the end of the missing person's anticipated life span shall not be reasons for closing a case (50 ILCS 722/5).
- (c) If this [department/office] is not the lead agency, the case can be made inactive if all investigative leads have been exhausted, the lead agency has been notified, and entries are made in the applicable missing person networks, as appropriate.
- (d) A missing person case should not be closed or reclassified because the person would have reached a certain age or adulthood or because the person is now the subject of a criminal or civil warrant.

416.10 TRAINING

Subject to available resources, the Services Supervisor should ensure that members of this department whose duties include missing person investigations and reports receive training that includes:

- (a) The initial investigation:
 - 1. Assessments and interviews
 - 2. Use of current resources, such as Mobile Audio/Video (MAV)
 - 3. Confirming missing status and custody status of minors
 - 4. Evaluating the need for a heightened response
 - 5. Identifying the zone of safety based on chronological age and developmental stage
- (b) Briefing of department members at the scene.
- (c) Identifying NCIC Missing Person File categories (e.g., disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile, catastrophe).
- (d) Verifying the accuracy of all descriptive information.
- (e) Initiating a neighborhood investigation.
- (f) Investigating any relevant recent family dynamics.
- (g) Addressing conflicting information.
- (h) Key investigative and coordination steps.
- (i) Managing a missing person case.
- (j) Additional resources and specialized services.
- (k) Update procedures for case information and descriptions.
- (l) Preserving scenes.
- (m) Internet and technology issues (e.g., internet use, cell phone use).
- (n) Media relations.