

APPENDIX A



# GENERAL ORDER

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

**NUMBER**

January 17, 1997

97-2

**SUBJECT**

**DISTRIBUTION**

PROCEDURE FOR MISSING PERSONS

C

**REFERENCE**

**RE-EVALUATION DATE**

**RESCINDS**

January 17, 1998

87-10

## I. PURPOSE:

- A. The purpose of this order is to update the procedure for reporting and investigating Missing Persons.

## II. POLICY:

- A. It shall be the policy of the department to investigate all Missing Persons, following the New Jersey State Attorney General's Guidelines.

## III. PROCEDURE:

- A. There shall be **NO WAITING PERIOD** for reporting a missing person. Officers shall immediately record all information on the proper report form.

- B. The Responding Officer Shall:

1. Prepare a report with all pertinent information.
2. Immediately notify his/her supervisor.
3. Conduct a search utilizing all available resources and ensure all necessary steps are taken.
4. Record all actions initiated on the report, including the locations and areas searched, including all times.
5. Notify the on-duty detective and ensure he/she receives the report.
6. Ensure delivery of a copy of the Missing Person(s) report to the Communications Center for an immediate broadcast and NCIC entry.

- C. The Immediate Supervisor Shall:

1. Ensure all steps outlined above are completed.

- D. The Communications Center Supervisor Shall:

1. Ensure a broadcast is made on all police frequencies.
2. Ensure the proper NCIC entries are completed.

3. Ensure a File 6 teletype message is prepared with all pertinent information and properly submitted. The teletype should be expanded as required.
4. Ensure that a File 6 teletype message is broadcasted immediately regarding the return or locating of the missing person.
5. Ensure that a File 25 teletype message with all pertinent information regarding any unidentified person(s) is broadcasted concurrently with the entry into the **NCIC UNIDENTIFIED Personnel File**.
6. Ensure all NCIC Computer entries are properly canceled and removed from the system.

**E. The Youth Services Bureau Shall:**

1. Initiate the investigative process and exercise the appropriate degree of priority treatment.
2. In the absence of a Youth Services Detective, it shall become the responsibility of the detective on-duty.
3. When appropriate, the investigator shall notify the Youth Services Bureau Supervisor.
4. Conduct the follow-up investigation, noting all actions taken on the reverse side of the report.
5. When unable to do so, notify the Youth Services Supervisor for response by on-call investigator.
6. Update status at end of tour and advise the on-coming detective on status.
7. If located, note same, locations and time on the report.
8. Verify call-in returns in person to ensure the missing person's safety.
9. Sign all notations entered with time of entry.

**F. The Youth Services Supervisor Will Be Notified By Pager/Phone When:**

1. There is any indication of suspicious circumstances.
2. Questionable mental or emotional state of missing person.
3. Late report by complainant.
4. First time reported.
5. Those last seen in company of unknown persons.
6. A custody issue may be involved.
7. Any criminal activity is suspected.
8. Missing person's absence is, or is suspected to be "involuntary".
9. Life-threatening conditions or circumstances such as weather, etc.
10. The supervisor will determine when the on-call detective should respond and ensure all proper notifications have been made.

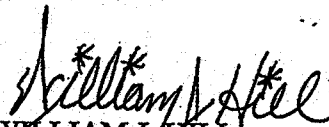
**G. The Missing Persons Investigator Will:**

1. Conduct thorough follow-up investigation.
2. Attach investigative log of actions taken.
3. Maintain contact with family/complaint.
4. Note circumstances and where located for future reference.
5. Respond in a timely fashion and conduct an exhaustive search when notified.
6. Notify supervisor of progress.
7. Maintain missing persons log and record monthly statistical data.
8. Maintain a log for persons missing for an extended period of time, continue follow-up search.
9. Maintain a file of "chronic or habitual" runaways.
10. Arrange support service/social service intervention.
11. Assist family in media broadcasts when necessary or applicable.
12. Make referrals to the victim/witness services coordinator as appropriate.
13. Ensure that located missing persons are cleared and a File 6 teletype message is broadcasted.
14. Ensure NCIC entry has been made or deleted as applicable.

**IV. RESPONSIBILITY:**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of all personnel to adhere to the provisions of this order.

BY ORDER OF:

  
WILLIAM J. HILL  
CHIEF OF POLICE

APPENDIX B

## **MISSING PERSONS**

### **Policy of the Attorney General Regarding Missing and Unidentified Persons Investigations**

Issued June 1984

Revised March 1985

Revised December 1987

The investigation and resolution of missing persons cases are an important responsibility of the law enforcement community in New Jersey. The difficult problems surrounding missing persons cases demand from the law enforcement community a prompt, informed and uniform response. It is imperative that missing and unidentified persons investigations be given the appropriate degree of priority treatment. Follow-up investigations and public safety activities should be timely and comprehensive. The victim's family should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and family referrals to the appropriate support services should be made as required.

All available law enforcement resources must be utilized in an appropriate fashion to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect our children and other missing persons. To better accomplish this objective each agency's chief law enforcement executive shall:

Provide leadership by developing a clear and concise written order or directive based upon these standards and disseminating it to all law enforcement officers of the agency.

These law enforcement standards will be meaningless unless the chief law enforcement executive of the agency provides direction and leadership through a well-defined written order or directive which provides an agency based framework for these missing and unidentified persons investigation standards.

## **PURPOSE OF MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INVESTIGATIVE STANDARDS**

From Donald R. Belsole  
First Assistant Attorney General  
Criminal Justice Director

At the direction of Attorney General W. Cary Edwards, and as the First Assistant Attorney General and Criminal Justice Director I have issued these investigative standards for missing and unidentified persons cases to be used by New Jersey law enforcement in conducting timely and comprehensive missing and unidentified persons investigations.

These procedural standards are effective December 4, 1987 and supersede all previous Attorney General directives relating to this issue.

In the first six months of 1987, 8,058 persons in the State of New Jersey were listed as missing in the National Crime Information Center missing persons file. These types of incidents present a unique and significant public safety problem to the law enforcement community. Law enforcement officers investigating missing and unidentified persons incidents are frequently faced with a case that generally lacks significant investigative leads. The investigative problems are compounded by readily available transportation networks which facilitate the rapid movement of victims and suspects. These same investigative complexities occur in non-criminal missing or unidentified person incidents.

In any case the accurate and comprehensive collection of information and personal descriptors entered in a timely manner in the National Crime Information Center computer system generally facilitates a successful resolution to the missing and unidentified persons case.

These investigative standards will provide an organized investigative framework for the timely and comprehensive investigation of missing and unidentified persons incidents.

#### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

1. Provide leadership by developing a clear and concise written order or directive based upon these standards and disseminating it to all law enforcement officers of the agency.
2. Ensure that all law enforcement officers receive appropriate training in all operational areas relating to missing and unidentified persons investigations as set forth in the agencies missing/unidentified persons written order or directive.
3. Ensure that an appropriate initial law enforcement response is provided to all reports of missing or unidentified persons and that an appropriate follow-up investigation is carried out.

4. Effectively calm the families of missing persons and reduce their fear through direct ongoing official communication regarding the missing person incident.
5. Reassure the family that appropriate investigative and enforcement methods will be utilized by the law enforcement agency in addressing the incident.
6. Interact with concerned community organizations and civic groups regarding the missing persons incident as necessary.
7. Ensure that appropriate and accurate media relations are maintained regarding missing and unidentified persons investigations.
8. Ensure that referrals to the county prosecutor's victim/witness services coordinator are made as appropriate.
9. Ensure that Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Programs are conducted regarding missing persons issues as appropriate.

#### MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INVESTIGATIVE STANDARDS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR NEW JERSEY LAW ENFORCEMENT

The missing and unidentified persons investigative standards establish the following procedural guidelines:

New Jersey Law Enforcement Agencies shall conduct a standard preliminary investigation as soon as a juvenile or adult is reported missing or an unidentified person is found and prepare a standard police incident report documenting the basic facts and circumstances surrounding the incident.

Prompt action shall be initiated in order to locate a missing juvenile or adult or to identify any unidentified person.

Law enforcement agencies shall undertake any other immediate action required to maintain order

and protect the public.

Follow-up investigative personnel shall conduct a thorough and timely follow-up investigation.

Investigators shall complete investigative reports documenting the facts and circumstances of the investigation.

#### FOR MISSING PERSON INCIDENTS:

As soon as a juvenile or adult is reported missing, pertinent information and identifying characteristics regarding the missing person shall be entered immediately into the National Crime Information Centers missing person files. (NCIC)

A File 6 (NJLETS) teletype messages with all available, pertinent information regarding the missing person shall be broadcast concurrently with the entry into the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File. The teletype shall be broadcast on a statewide basis and expanded as the need exists.

In addition to a General Police Incident Report, the Missing Person Report for NCIC Record Entry shall be adopted as the standard document for the collection of specific information regarding a missing person in accordance with Federal Bureau of Investigation - National Crime Information Center guidelines.

The New Jersey State Police Missing Persons Report Written Documentation Form shall be used as appropriate. This document is available for reproduction from the New Jersey State Police Missing Persons Unit.

The Missing Persons Investigation Packet entitled "Missing Person File, Data Collection Entry Guide" should be used to organize data collection and to collect additional information from the family of the missing person and other appropriate information sources during a missing person's investigation. This document is available from the Federal Bureau of Investigation - National Crime Information Center.

Upon the return or locating of the missing person the record shall be immediately cleared from

the National Crime Information Center missing persons file. (NCIC)

A File 6 (NJLETS) teletype message shall be broadcast immediately regarding the return or locating of the missing person.

It is the responsibility of each entering agency to clear NCIC entries and update NJLETS File Messages upon the return or location of a missing person.

**FOR UNIDENTIFIED PERSON INCIDENTS:**

In the case of Unidentified Persons, living or deceased the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File shall be utilized as soon as the individual identifying characteristics become available which are necessary for the basic file entry.

A File 25 (NJLETS) teletype messages with all available, pertinent information regarding the Unidentified Person shall be broadcast concurrently with the entry into the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File. The teletype will be broadcast on a statewide basis and expanded as the need exists.

In addition to a General Police Incident Report, the Unidentified Person Report for NCIC Record Entry should be used as the standard document for the collection of specific information regarding an unidentified person.

The Unidentified Persons Investigation Packet entitled "Unidentified Person File, Data Collection Entry Guide" should be used to organize data collection and to collect additional information from other appropriate sources during an unidentified persons investigation.

This document is available from the Federal Bureau of Investigation - National Crime Information Center.

When an unidentified person is identified, the record entry shall be immediately cleared from the National Crime Information Center Unidentified Persons File. (NCIC)

A File 25 (NJLETS) teletype message shall be immediately broadcast regarding the identification of the previously reported unidentified person.

It is the responsibility of each entering agency to clear NCIC entries and update NJLETS File Messages upon identifying the previously unidentified person.

#### FOR MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS INVESTIGATIONS

Law enforcement agencies engaged in a missing or unidentified persons investigation shall contact the New Jersey State Police Missing Persons Unit and other appropriate law enforcement agencies for assistance as required.

Where a crime or other unlawful act is suspected, law enforcement agencies engaged in a missing or unidentified person investigation shall work with the county prosecutor in developing the case for criminal prosecution as appropriate.

Referrals to the county prosecutor's victim/witness services coordinator shall be made as appropriate.

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Programs shall be conducted regarding missing persons issues as appropriate.

#### VIOLENT CRIMINAL APPREHENSION PROGRAM (VICAP)

The Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP), established by the Federal Bureau of Investigation is a nationwide data information center designed to collect, collate and analyze a variety of violent crime information. VICAP provides all law enforcement agencies reporting similar patterns of violent crimes with the information necessary to initiate coordinated multi-agency investigations.

In cases where investigation reveals that a missing person or unidentified person has been a

victim of a violent act, use of the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) should be explored.

Information regarding the VICAP Program is available from any local Federal Bureau of Investigation Office or by writing to VICAP Program, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA, 22135.

APPENDIX C



CDC Home

Search

Health Topics A-Z

**MMWR****Weekly**

December 04, 1998 / 47(47):1019-1022

## **Fatal Car Trunk Entrapment Involving Children -- United States, 1987-1998**

During July-August 1998, at least 11 U.S. children died in three separate incidents of car trunk entrapment. This report summarizes these three incidents, describes characteristics of car trunk entrapment incidents involving children since 1987, and reviews measures to prevent children from becoming trapped in car trunks. The findings indicate that at least nine incidents of fatal car trunk entrapment involving children occurred during 1987-1998, that all incidents occurred in hot weather and involved children aged less than or equal to 6 years, and that these deaths were preventable.

### **Case Reports**

**Incident 1.** On July 13, 1998, at approximately 6 p.m., four children aged 2-5 years were discovered inside the closed trunk of a car in Gallup, New Mexico. The children had climbed into the car's open trunk and had not been seen for 1 hour before a search began. They were found approximately 1 hour after the search began. The outside ambient temperature that afternoon was 90 F (32.2 C). The children were rushed to a local emergency department, where three were pronounced dead. The remaining child, a 5-year-old girl, was transported to a tertiary-care hospital, where her rectal temperature was recorded at 108 F (42.2 C); she died on July 14. No carbon monoxide was detected in blood samples of the children. The autopsy report cited hyperthermia and asphyxia as the causes of death.

**Incident 2.** On August 2, 1998, at approximately 1 p.m., two brothers aged 2 and 5 years from Greene County, Pennsylvania, were found dead in the trunk of their parents' car in front of their house. The boys had found the car keys, opened the trunk, and climbed inside. They were missing for several hours during the morning and early afternoon. The outside ambient temperature that afternoon was approximately 85 F (29.5 C). The autopsy report cited hyperthermia and asphyxia as the causes of death.

**Incident 3.** On August 8, 1998, at 4:15 p.m., five girls in West Valley City, Utah, aged 2-6 years, were found dead inside the trunk of a car owned by one of the children's parents. The car had been parked at one of the children's residence. The outside ambient temperature was 100 F (37.8 C). The vehicle's trunk-release lever was adjacent to the driver's seat, and at least one of the two 6-year-old girls reportedly knew how to operate the release lever. The children had not been seen for approximately 20 minutes before a search began and were found approximately 1-1/2 hours after the search began. Liver temperatures taken at the death scene 1-1/2 to 2 hours after the children were found ranged from 99 F to 117 F (37.2 C to 47.2 C). The autopsy report cited the cause of death as hyperthermia.

### Surveillance for Fatalities Associated with Trunk Entrapments, 1987-1998

The LEXIS-NEXIS database (1) was used to search newspapers, magazines, wire services, and broadcast transcripts for additional deaths associated with car trunk entrapment. During 1987-1998, nine incidents were identified of fatal car trunk entrapment involving children, including the three incidents described in this report. Medical examiner/coroner (ME/C) offices were contacted for information about death investigations and autopsy findings. ME/C offices provided written and verbal cause-of-death information for seven of the incidents, and for two incidents, information was obtained from media sources, who cited coroner's reports for cause-of-death information.

A total of 19 children aged less than or equal to 6 years died in the nine incidents. Eighteen children underwent autopsies. The cause of death for all children was either hyperthermia or a combination of hyperthermia and asphyxia. Three of the nine incidents occurred during the summer of 1998 and accounted for 11 (58%) of the 19 deaths. Eight incidents occurred when outside ambient temperatures were at least 90 F (32.2 C) (Table 1), and at least five (56%) of the cars involved were parked in direct sunlight.

The method of trunk entry varied among the nine incidents. In two incidents, children found the keys to their parents' cars and opened the trunks. In two other incidents, children entered trunks without using a key -- either a driver's side trunk-release lever or a manual release on the trunk itself was present. In one additional incident, four children climbed into an open trunk. The method of trunk entry could not be determined for the remaining four incidents. At least 15 children died in cars parked either at their own houses or at a relative's or neighbor's house. In three incidents, a dead child was alone in the trunk. In one incident, one 3-year-old child survived, and a 4-year-old child died. In six incidents, children were missing approximately 1 to 2-1/2 hours. In two other incidents, they were missing for 5-8 hours.

Reported by: AP Hart, MD, RE Zumwalt, MD, PJ McFeeley, MD, Office of the Medical Investigator, Univ of New Mexico School of Medicine, Albuquerque, New Mexico. B Marchant, TC Grey, MD, Office of the Medical Examiner, Salt Lake City, Utah. G Rohanna, Greene County Coroner's Office, Greene County, Pennsylvania. E Darby, Cherokee County Coroner's Office, Cherokee County, Georgia. S Hill, Riverside County Coroner's Office, Riverside County, California. M Day, Macon County Coroner's Office, Macon County, Illinois. Surveillance and Programs Br, and Health Studies Br, Div of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, National Center for Environmental Health; and an EIS Officer, CDC.

### Editorial Note

Editorial Note: Although heat-related deaths in the United States have been described previously (2,3), the number and characteristics of car trunk entrapment-related deaths have not been described, and the identified cases probably represent a minimum number of such deaths. No surveillance system exists to detect or report car trunk entrapment-related deaths, and no International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, external cause-of-injury code exists for deaths associated with car trunk entrapments.

Heatstroke (hyperthermia) is a medical emergency and is often fatal despite medical care (4). Heatstroke is usually designated when a rectal or core temperature reaches 105 F (40.6 C) (4,5). The car trunk entrapment-related deaths described in this report were mainly heat related -- no deaths were identified that occurred when the outside temperature was less than 85 F (less than 29.5 C), and all causes of death included hyperthermia.

Cars parked in direct sunlight can reach internal temperatures up to 131 F-172 F (55 C-78 C) when outside temperatures are 80 F-100 F (27 C-38 C) (6,7). Cars that are parked in direct sunlight and that are poorly ventilated also reach higher temperatures more rapidly than cars that are parked in the shade or that have windows completely opened (7). Most temperature increases inside cars occur during the first 15 minutes of being left in the sun (8). In at least two incidents during the summer of 1998, deaths occurred in dark cars, and the dark color probably contributed to the intense heat in the trunks (6).

The major mechanism for heat loss by the body in high ambient temperatures is evaporation (7). This mechanism is quickly defeated in the rising humidity of closed car trunks. Younger children are more sensitive to heat than older children and adults and are at greater risk for heatstroke (5). In addition to heatstroke, asphyxia was listed as a contributing cause of death in four of the seven incidents for which ME/C data were obtained. The combination of high temperature, humidity, and poor ventilation all contribute to the extreme danger of car trunks (7).

The findings in this report are subject to at least three limitations. First, because LEXIS-NEXIS may exclude cases in areas with minimal media coverage, may overlook cases that are not in the database because of search technique, and does not contain all newspapers in the country, the total number of cases identified may be underestimated. Second, because primary source ME/C data were not obtained for two incidents, information accuracy in media reports used for analysis is unknown. Third, because autopsy findings are often minimal or nonspecific, determining cause of death for these types of deaths is largely dependent on the circumstances and a thorough examination of the death scene.

State and local public health officials can use the findings in this report to guide prevention messages about children playing in or around car trunks. Effective public health strategies to prevent deaths associated with car trunk entrapments should include

1. preventing children's access to car keys; 2) keeping cars locked, with trunks closed, when cars are not in use; and 3) supervising young children closely when they are around cars.

## References

1. LEXIS-NEXIS {database online}. Dayton, Ohio: Reed Elsevier, 1998.
2. CDC. Heat-wave-related mortality Milwaukee -- Wisconsin, July 1995. MMWR 1995;45:505-7.
3. CDC. Heat-related mortality -- United States. MMWR 1998;47:473-6.
4. DiMaio DJ, DiMaio VJM. Forensic Pathology. Boca Raton, Florida: CRC Press, 1993:377-84.
5. Kilbourne EM. Heat waves and hot environments. Noji EK, ed. The public health consequences of disasters. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997:245-69.
6. Zumwalt RE, Petty CS, Holman W. Temperature in closed automobiles in hot weather. Forensic Sci Gazette 1976;7:7-8.
7. Surpure J. Heat-related illness and the automobile. Annals of Emergency Medicine 1982;11:263-5.

8. Roberts KB, Roberts EC. The automobile and heat stress. *Pediatrics* 1976;58:101-4.

**Table 1**

**Note:** To print large tables and graphs users may have to change their printer settings to landscape and use a small font size.

TABLE 1. Selected characteristics of deaths associated with car trunk entrapments among children, by year -- United States, 1987-1998

Year	No. children	Age (yrs)	Month	Cause of death *	Outside temperature +	Time missing (hrs)
1987	1	4	July	&	101 F (38.3 C)	8
1987	1	3	August	Hyperthermia	91 F (32.7 C)	2
1989	1	5	June	&	106 F (41.1 C)	2 1/2
1993	2	3,5	July	Hyperthermia/ Asphyxiation @	97 F (36.1 C)	&
1994	1	4	August	Hyperthermia	101 F (38.3 C)	1
1995	2	3,4	May	Hyperthermia/ Asphyxiation	90 F (32.2 C)	2
1998	4	2,3,5,5	July	Hyperthermia/ Asphyxiation	90 F (32.2 C)	2
1998	2	2,5	August	Hyperthermia/ Asphyxiation	85 F (29.4 C)	5
1998	5	2,3,5,6,6	August	Hyperthermia	100 F (37.7 C)	2

\*Medical examiners/coroners provided written and verbal cause-of-death information.

+ Outside temperatures are approximated.

& Data were not available.

@ Information was available only for the 3-year-old.

[Return to top.](#)

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Department of Health  
 and Human Services

This page last reviewed 5/2/01

APPENDIX D

**→40A:14-156. Police assistance in other municipality; payment; rights in event of casualty or death**

In the event of an emergency the chief or other head of any municipal police department and force or any park police department or system, municipal fire department and force, volunteer fire company, or first aid or ambulance squad, corps or company, or the mayor or chief executive officer of the municipality may request, from the chief or other head of the police department and force of any other municipality, assistance outside the territorial jurisdiction of the department to which such request is directed for police aid, in order to protect life and property or to assist in suppressing a riot or disorder and while so acting, the members of the police department and force supplying such aid shall have the same powers and authority as have the members of the police department and force of the municipality in which such aid is being rendered. Said members shall also have, while so acting, such rights and immunities as they may otherwise enjoy in the performance of their normal duties in the municipality, or other territorial jurisdiction, rendering such assistance.

The chief or head of the police department and force to whom such a request for assistance is made shall, in the case of a contiguous municipality, provide such personnel and equipment as requested to the extent possible without endangering person or property within the municipality rendering such assistance.

Any municipality receiving assistance hereunder shall pay to the police department and force providing the assistance a sum computed at the rate of \$3.00 for each member and \$5.00 for each vehicle for each hour supplied unless terms and conditions for payment are otherwise provided for in an agreement between the several municipalities.

If any member of such other police department and force in rendering such assistance shall suffer a casualty or death, he or his designee or legal representative shall be entitled to all salary, pension rights, workmen's compensation and other benefits to which such member or officer would be entitled if such casualty or death occurred in the performance of his normal duties in the municipality, or other territorial jurisdiction rendering such assistance.

APPENDIX E

**LAW ENFORCEMENT  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES  
FOR REPORTS OF  
MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN**

**— A MODEL —**

**— developed by —  
The National Center for  
Missing & Exploited Children®**

**Revised – January 2005**

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## The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

### *Model Law Enforcement Policy and Procedures for Reports of Missing and Abducted Children*

#### **Overview**

Reports of missing children can be among the most difficult, challenging, and emotionally charged cases a *law enforcement* agency will ever experience. The attitude and approach that an agency and its officers take in responding to reports of missing children may very well determine whether the child is recovered promptly and safely or remains missing for months or years or, even worse, is never recovered. Each stage of the case, therefore, from initial investigation through successful recovery, forms a critical component of a thorough *law enforcement* response.

A *law enforcement* agency must provide its officers with the tools that will enable them to act decisively when confronted with reports of missing children. The single, most important tool an agency can provide is a clearly worded policy directive containing understandable procedures that officers can follow as a guide through each stage of the investigation.

Policies and procedures are of limited value, however, unless an agency ensures that every member receives direct instruction about the policy's intent. Additionally, specific training and awareness about the overall issue of missing children will help each officer understand the critical role he or she plays in this important area of child protection. For example officers should be aware that they might encounter several types of missing child cases, each with their own unique response requirements. They include

- A. The **nonfamily abduction** in which a child is taken by an unknown individual, through force or persuasion, usually in furtherance of additional victimization.
- B. The **family abduction** in which a noncustodial family member flees with a child, usually in direct violation of a court ordered custody arrangement.
- C. The **runaway** child, most often a teenager, who leaves home voluntarily for a variety of reasons.
- D. The **lost or otherwise missing** child, who becomes separated from parents or caretakers under circumstances not indicating the likelihood of an abduction or voluntary absence.
- E. The **throwaway** whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child who has run away or who has been abandoned or deserted. While not necessarily reported to authorities as missing, children in this category frequently require the services of law enforcement.

It should be noted that not all missing child incidents occurring each year in this country result in a direct *law enforcement* response. Some incidents are resolved by parents, relatives, friends, or neighbors while others are over (*i.e.*, the child escapes or returns home) before law enforcement is notified.

What this discussion should point out to the *law enforcement* administrator is that law enforcement

is usually called upon to handle the most demanding missing child reports. That is those cases requiring decisive action and a carefully planned response.

When developing policy and procedures regarding missing children cases, it is essential that each response, regardless of what the initial indicators may be, should be governed by an assumption that the child is in jeopardy until significant facts to the contrary are confirmed. When officers respond with the missing child's safety as their foremost concern, they will be more likely to collect evidence or information that might otherwise be lost during the critical, early stages of an investigation.

### **Using the Model Policy**

The model policy on missing children that follows has been designed to serve as a general reference that can be modified to fit the specific needs of any agency, regardless of size. It attempts to present the missing child response process in a logical progression from case intake through first response and case investigation on to recovery and case closure.

From the basic outline presented in this model, administrators are encouraged to add those topics that are unique to their agency or region of the country and incorporate actions mandated by federal, state, or local statutes. It should also be noted that the text found in *italics* is offered as explanation, and its inclusion in an agency's final policy or procedures is optional.

Finally, much of the content of this model policy is based on material found in the NCMEC publication titled *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management*.

That publication contains chapters covering each type of missing child case and provides individual checklists that offer step-by-step recommendations for successful case investigation. A free copy of this publication can be obtained by calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

### **Pre-Incident Planning and Resource Development**

Along with the creation of a written policy and procedure - pre-incident planning and resource development are equally important to the formation of an effective law enforcement response to reports of missing children. When these three factors are given equal emphasis, a truly comprehensive response plan will result.

In an effort to more efficiently investigate, manage, and resolve cases of missing children and minimize the emotional stresses associated with these incidents, many communities, led by their law enforcement agencies, are holding pre-planning sessions to assess roles, identify resources, and agree on responsibilities. When implemented, this interagency protocol not only spells out specific responsibilities, but also serves as the basis for ongoing communication and cooperation.

When law enforcement responds to the report of a missing child without a plan, time is lost and opportunities are wasted. By adopting planned strategies, officers will be able to exercise more control over events, react more effectively to unexpected occurrences, and enhance the likelihood of swift and successful case resolution.

**Comments or questions regarding this Model Policy and Procedure are welcomed.  
Please contact NCMEC's Associate Director of Training at 1.877.446.2632, ext. 6080.**

# Model Missing Children's Policy

Directive Type	Effective Date	Directive Number
Subject <b>Missing Children</b>		Issuing Authority
Reference	Amends/Rescinds	
Distribution	Reevaluation Date	No. Pages

## I. Policy Purpose

*Describe the objective(s) of this policy.*

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and responsibilities regarding this agency's response to reports of missing children.

## II. Policy Statement

*Describe the agency's intent or philosophy regarding this policy.*

- A. It shall be the policy of this agency to thoroughly investigate all reports of missing children. Additionally this agency holds that every child reported as missing will be considered **at risk** until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.
- B. Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided when a child is reported missing. If a missing child either resides in, or was last seen in this jurisdiction, this agency will immediately initiate the required reporting process. If a child resides in this jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, but the law enforcement agency covering that jurisdiction chooses not to take a missing child report, this agency will assume reporting and investigative responsibility.
- C. Questions concerning parental custody occasionally arise in relation to missing child reports. It shall be the policy of this agency to accept the report of a missing child even if custody has not been formally established. Reporting parties shall be encouraged to obtain legal custody as soon as possible; however, since the safety of the missing child(ren) is paramount, members of this agency will open a case when it can be shown that the child has been removed, without explanation, from his or her usual place of residence.

### III. Definitions

*Describe what circumstances control report acceptance.*

- A. The term **missing child** refers to a person who is
1. Younger than 18 years of age and
  2. Whose whereabouts are unknown to his or her parent, guardian, or responsible party
- B. A missing child will be considered "**at-risk**" when one or more of the **unusual circumstances** noted in paragraph C are present
- C. The term **unusual circumstances** refers to a missing child who is:
1. 13 years of age or younger. *This age was established by the federal Missing Children Assistance Act 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 - or -*
  2. Believed to be one or more of the items noted below.
    - a) Out of the zone of safety for his or her age, developmental stage, and/or physical condition. *The zone of safety will vary depending on the age of the child and his or her developmental stage. In the case of an infant, for example, the zone of safety will include the immediate presence of an adult custodian or the crib, stroller, or carriage in which the infant was placed. For a school-aged child the zone of safety might be the immediate neighborhood or the route taken between home and school.*
    - b) Mentally diminished. *If the child is developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed, he or she may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address. The disability places the child in danger of exploitation or other harm.*
    - c) Drug dependent, including both prescription and illicit substances. *Any drug dependency puts the missing child at risk. The diabetic or epileptic child requires regular medication or his or her condition may become critical. The illicit drug abuser, on the other hand, may resort to crime or become the victim of exploitation.*
    - d) A potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation. *Risk to the child can be assumed if investigation indicates a possible abduction, violence at the scene of an abduction, or signs of sexual abuse.*

- e) In a life-threatening situation. *The environment in which the child is missing may be particularly hazardous. Examples of a dangerous environment could be a busy highway for a toddler or an all-night truck stop for a teenager.*
  - f) Absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing. *While some parents may incorrectly assume that 24 hours must pass before law enforcement 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 others who could endanger his or her welfare. *A missing child 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 have an established routine that is reasonably predictable. Significant, unexplained deviations from that routine increase the probability of risk to the child - or -*
3. Whose disappearance involves circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the child should be considered at risk.

D. Actions upon determination of **unusual circumstances**

- 1. If it is determined that **unusual circumstances** are involved in the report of a missing child, the child will be considered **at risk**, and an expanded investigation, including the use of all appropriate resources, will immediately commence. *While all missing child incidents should be investigated thoroughly, those involving unusual circumstances indicate a heightened likelihood of risk to the child and, therefore, require an intensive response.*
- 2. If appropriate, existing interagency response protocols - including the **AMBER Alert** system, if available - should be activated. *Pre-planned strategies for responding to missing child reports are essential for successful case resolution. By identifying all the services and resources a region has available to search for missing children, multiagency agreements can be reached beforehand and promptly activated when the need arises See Paragraph 7 of Section IV (A) regarding role of the call-taker and Paragraph 3 of Section IV(C) regarding the role of the supervisor for additional **AMBER Alert** commentary).*

## IV. Procedures

*Describe the responsibilities of agency members who may be involved in a missing child case.*

**A. Communications personnel receiving the report of a missing child shall**

1. Determine if circumstances of the report meet the definition of a missing child as set forth in Section III. *By questioning the caller about the circumstances of the report, the call-taker can make a preliminary assessment about the level of risk to the missing child. This assessment shall also prepare the call-taker to promptly activate additional response protocols if needed.*
2. Promptly dispatch an officer to the scene of the report. *The officer who routinely patrols the vicinity of the report is best suited to handle the first response since he or she should be familiar with the area and is likely to have knowledge of unusual activities, suspicious persons, known offenders, and other neighborhood dynamics. The handling of certain missing child reports, such as suspected runaways, over the telephone is discouraged since accurate assessments of risk to the child cannot be made. Note: The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 mandates law enforcement's immediate response to reports of missing children and the prompt entry of descriptive information into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File.*
3. Notify a supervisor. *Because of the complexity of some missing child cases, especially those that may require the immediate mobilization of investigative resources, call-takers should verify that a supervisor has been notified whenever officers respond to such an assignment.*
4. Transmit the appropriate radio alerts and other notifications. *A critical responsibility of the call-taker is to obtain sufficient information from the reporting party to broadcast a radio message that alerts other officers, and other agencies if necessary, about the circumstances of the child's disappearance. Information should include the child's height, weight, hair and eye color, and clothing, as well as the location where the child was last seen. Most importantly the radio alert should contain any information known about a possible abductor with special emphasis on the description of the suspect and vehicle used as well as direction of travel. Consideration should also be given to the use of "road-block plans," including those involving surrounding agencies, to apprehend a fleeing abductor.*
5. Search agency records for related information. *It is essential for responding officers to know if the child or family has been the subject of previous reports that might have a bearing on this incident. If possible, records should also be reviewed to learn if any incidents have been reported in the area that might have investigative value in this case. Complaints such as attempted abductions, prowlers, public lewdness, and suspicious persons will be of particular interest. 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.*

6. *Safeguard all pertinent records. The call-taker should also ensure that records of all communication related to this incident, such as telephone conversations with the reporting party, including written notes regarding the discussion, radio broadcasts, and all subsequent notifications, are safeguarded for future investigative reference.*
7. *Initiate media contact - including activation of the **AMBER Alert** system and/or other immediate, community-notification methods when appropriate. In agencies without a public-information officer, the call-taker, under direction of a law enforcement supervisor, may be best situated to provide information to the media that is designed to elicit public assistance in the search for a missing child. In preparation for such situations, call-takers should have available the telephone numbers of media contacts. Additionally the call-taker should also be prepared to immediately activate the appropriate immediate, community notification method if so directed by appropriate law enforcement personnel.*

**B.** *The initial officer or first responder assigned to the report of a missing child shall*

1. *Respond promptly to the scene of the report. Even if the assigned officer has been provided with initial information such as the missing child's description and other facts about the incident, it would be inappropriate to delay response to conduct a random search by doing things such as circling through parks, checking playgrounds, or stopping suspicious individuals. Unless in immediate response to the missing child's safety, these activities can be handled by other patrol units.*
2. *Interview the parent(s) or person who made the initial report. The purpose of this interview is to gain an insight into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and other information needed to conduct an initial assessment of the case. Note: Using a specifically designed missing-person report form to gather information will enable the first responder to more promptly reach an accurate risk assessment. One such form can be found in NCIC's Missing Person File Information Kit, available through your agency Terminal Control Operator.*
3. *Obtain a description of the missing child including photograph(s) and videotapes. The collection of information about the missing child, including 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. Several recent photographs and/or videotape, if available, should be secured. Again, the use of a missing-person report form will expedite the collection of descriptive information.*
4. *Verify that the child is in fact missing. 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 missing child was last seen elsewhere.*

5. *Confirm the child's custody status. First responders should ascertain whether a dispute over the child's custody might have played a role in the disappearance. Questions regarding whether the reporting party has full legal custody, if the noncustodial 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.*
6. *Identify the circumstances of the disappearance. First responders need to ascertain whether the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance are such that a heightened level of response is warranted. If "unusual circumstances" exist, as defined in Paragraph B of Section III, then the decision to employ additional response methods is clear. In other situations where the circumstances are not clear, officers should keep the missing child's safety in mind and act accordingly.*
7. *Determine when, where, and by whom the missing child was last seen. This information is needed to determine factors such as abduction time frame, windows of opportunity, and verification of previously received information. Comparison of information gathered from the reporting party, witness, and other sources may prove vital to case direction.*
8. *Interview the individual(s) who last had contact with the missing child. Effective questioning of those individuals who last saw or spoke with a missing child is crucial in the case-assessment process. While seeking information about the child'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.*
9. *Identify the child's zone of safety for his or her age, developmental stage, and physical and mental state. Responding officers should attempt to determine how far a missing child 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.*
10. *Make an initial determination of the type of incident. By employing all available assessment tools (i.e., completion of standardized forms; interviews*

*with parents, other family members, and friends; statements of witnesses; and search of scene) an officer should be able to reach a preliminary determination regarding the type of case and the need for additional resources. Note: Officers must be cautious in "labeling" or classifying a missing child 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.*

11. Obtain a description of the suspected abductor(s) and other pertinent information. *Officers need to immediately record witness information, 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 the 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.*
12. Determine the correct NCIC Missing Person File category and ensure that a notification is promptly transmitted. *There are 5 categories within the Missing Person File that apply to children. They are disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile, and catastrophe. Simply because the child is younger than 18 does not require that the juvenile category be used. The circumstances of the disappearance should govern category selection. Note: NCIC suggests that family and nonfamily abductions be entered in the involuntary category. Runaways are most commonly entered in the juvenile category unless unusual circumstances exist.*
13. Provide detailed descriptive information to communications unit for broadcast updates. *As information becomes available regarding the missing child'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.*
14. Identify and interviewing everyone at the scene. *The name, address, home and work telephone numbers of everyone present at the scene, along with his or her relationship to the missing child, 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 will be instrumental in resolution of the case.*
15. Conduct a thorough search of the scene. *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 child'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 should also search a missing child's school locker as*

*well as any computer or electronic messaging systems to which a child has access.*

16. *Secure and safeguard the area as a potential crime scene. 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 missing child's home, and particularly his or her bedroom, should be secured and protected until evidence and identification material such as hair, fingerprints, and bite marks are collected.*
17. *Record if the child has access to an online computer, cellular telephone, and/or pager. Before making an initial decision that the child has run away, an officer should determine if the child may have left to meet someone he or she encountered while online. Since predators are known to use the Internet to identify vulnerable children, what appears at first to be a runaway case, may, in fact, be a child abducted or kidnapped by someone the child first met online. Additionally, since many children have their own pagers and cellular telephones and may have them while missing, an officer should note these devices during the information-gathering process.*
18. *Prepare necessary reports and completing appropriate forms. Information gathered by the first responding officer(s) may be instrumental in the eventual case resolution. 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. Reports should include everything, not just those events that seem to have a direct bearing on the case.*

C. **The supervisor assigned to the report of a missing child shall**

1. *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 develop an appropriate response. The briefing should be conducted away from family, friends, or any other individuals who may be present. Doing so will allow officers to speak freely about the events that have transpired and pass along initial impressions and opinions that might be misconstrued by others.*
2. *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.*
3. *Consider activation of the AMBER Alert system and/or other immediate community notification methods. If circumstances indicate the chances for the child's safe recovery would be increased by immediate public awareness, a supervisor should promptly activate such efforts.*

4. Establish a command post. *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 inquires, 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.*
5. Organize and coordinate search efforts. *Systematic searches are common features of missing child investigations. A supervisor should appoint a search operation coordinator who can oversee the search effort while the supervisor remains available to manage the entire investigation.*
6. Ensure that all required notifications have been made. *Because dissemination of information is an integral part of the search for a missing child, the supervisor should ensure that all officers, other departments and agencies, and all investigative networks are supplied with accurate details.*
7. Establish a liaison with the victim family. *Families of a missing child 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.*
8. Confirm that all agency policies and procedures are observed. *In addition to providing the innovative direction required during a missing child investigation, a supervisor must also ensure that the rules and regulations of a professional law enforcement organization are adhered to. Established policies and procedures, especially those related to missing children, should be regularly reviewed to ensure compliance.*
9. Manage media relations. *Many missing child 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.*

D. The investigator assigned to the report of a missing child shall

1. Obtain a briefing from agency personnel at the scene. *This briefing should be conducted prior to interviews with family members of the missing child 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. *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 be able to 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. A 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 are otherwise 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, coworkers, and witnesses, can offer valuable insights into what may have happened to the missing child 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 obtained and 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. *An information-management system is an essential part of the overall investigative process. 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. Note: NCMEC can provide computer software designed for effective case management.*
7. Evaluate the need for additional resources and specialized services. *The complexity of many missing child 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; state missing children's clearinghouses; and National Center for Missing & Exploited Children — in particular **Team Adam**, which is a rapid-response team of experienced law enforcement investigators.*
8. Update descriptive information. *If it appears that the case will not be promptly resolved, investigators should ensure that the descriptive record, especially that entered into the NCIC Missing Person File, is updated to include dental characteristics, scars, marks, tattoos, and 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 child case, investigators should review all notices prior to release to ensure that investigative objectives are not unintentionally compromised.*

- E. An officer assigned to the report of an **unidentified person**, whether living or deceased, who appears to be a child, shall
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 child'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 child. *The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children; state missing children's clearinghouses; and other organizations, such as state medical examiners, may be of assistance in the identification.*
  4. Cancel all notifications after identification is confirmed.
- F. An officer assigned to the **recovery or return** of a missing child shall
1. Verify that the located child is, in fact, the reported missing child. *An officer should personally verify all returns. The benefits of this practice include assessing the child's safety, gaining intelligence about possible predators, and helping to prevent future episodes.*
  2. Secure intervention services, if indicated. *During the verification process, officers should be alert for indications that additional services may be needed before the child can be safely reunited with his or her family. These services may include mental and/or physical health examinations and arrangements for family counseling.*
  3. Arrange, 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, the return of the child to his or her legal guardian or an appropriate children's shelter.
  4. Place, in the case of a runaway from another jurisdiction or from out-of-state who has been located and for whom a warrant exists or for whom an NCIC missing-person "hit" is verified, the child in custody and transporting him or

her to the appropriate facility for admission.

5. Complete the appropriate supplemental reports and cancel all outstanding notifications. *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 child's activities while missing and circumstances of the recovery/return.*

**Note:**

*If appropriate, this section might also include a proviso concerning an agency's limited authority regarding 16 and 17 year-old missing children who, when located, may not be detained or required to return home unless certain conditions exist.*

**Comments or questions regarding this Model Policy and Procedure are welcomed. Please contact NCMEC's Associate Director of Training at 1.877.446.2632, extension 6080.**

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