



Minneapolis Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Number:
8-200

Volume Eight - Minors – Policies and Procedures

Specific Call Procedures for Minors

8-201 Missing Minors

(04/30/02) (10/03/03) (08/01/06) (10/07/08) (10/10/08) (10/05/09) (10/09/14) (10/10/22)
(01/30/23) (09/09/23) (xx/xx/24)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) members when responding to and investigating cases involving missing minors. This policy emphasizes the need for swift, compassionate, and effective actions to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable minors. MPD members must use trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate language and practices when engaging with minors, recognizing the unique challenges they may face, and aiming to minimize re-traumatization.

The MPD recognizes there is a critical need for immediate and consistent response to reports of missing minors. The decisions made and actions taken during the preliminary stages may have a profound effect on the outcome of the case. Therefore, this agency has established the following responsibilities and guidelines for the investigation of missing minors.

II. Policy

A. Accept Reports

Members shall accept, without delay, any report of a missing minor. Members shall not refuse to accept a missing minor report on the basis that (MN Statute section 299C.53 Subd. 1(a)):

- The circumstances do not indicate foul play.
- The minor has been missing for a short amount of time.
- The minor has been missing for a long amount of time.
- There is no indication that the missing minor was in the jurisdiction served by the law enforcement agency at the time of the disappearance (see [II-D]).
- The circumstances suggest that the disappearance may be voluntary.
- The reporting party does not have personal knowledge of the facts.
- The reporting party cannot provide all of the information requested.
- The reporting party lacks a familial or other relationship with the missing minor.
- Any other reason, except in cases where the MPD has direct knowledge that the minor is, in fact, not missing, and the whereabouts and welfare of the minor are known at the time the report is filed.

B. Court-Ordered Placement

A minor under court-ordered placement who is reported missing, shall require an MPD squad response.

C. Report by any Person for Runaway from a Minneapolis Facility

A minor at a Minneapolis facility (e.g. YCC) who has run away, can be reported as missing by any person, regardless of the reporting person's relationship to the minor, and whether or not the stay was a court-ordered placement.

D. Jurisdiction

Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided when a minor is reported missing.

1. Any missing minor believed to be in imminent danger shall have a squad response and NCIC Entry protocol initiated, regardless of jurisdiction. Members shall complete a Police Report with the code ARMISP.
2. If a missing minor either resides in or was last seen in this jurisdiction, the MPD will immediately initiate the required reporting process as detailed below.
3. If a minor resides in this jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, MPD will confer and coordinate with the law enforcement agency covering that jurisdiction.

III. Procedures**A. Initial Response**

1. Reporting and MECC response
 - a. Any person wanting to report a missing minor shall be directed to call 911 or the Minneapolis Emergency Communication Center (MECC) at all times.
 - i. If a member is approached in-person the best practice is for the member to facilitate a call between 911 or MECC and the reporting party so that the reporting party can communicate the information directly.
 - ii. If the reporting party is not able to participate in the call with 911 or MECC, the member shall report the information they have to ensure MECC is provided with adequate information to complete the NCIC entry.
 - b. MECC will dispatch a squad to the incident address.
 - c. A squad shall respond as soon as possible to verify the status of the minor.
 - i. If the minor is found at the incident scene, the report shall be considered unfounded.

- ii. If the member confirms the minor is missing, the member shall notify MECC.
- d. MECC staff, responding members, and investigators shall advise the reporting party to call 911 if the missing minor returns or is located.
- e. MECC will enter all missing minors into NCIC immediately, after the report is made, or within 2 hours of the time reported if the report or squad was delayed (including cases where the minor's status has not been confirmed).
- f. If a minor who is on a 72-hour health and welfare hold placed by the MPD runs away prior to the expiration of the hold, a squad shall respond.

2. Scene of the incident

Upon arriving at the incident address, members shall:

- a. Interview the reporting party

Members shall interview the reporting party (if available).

- b. Request permission to search

If reasonable, members shall ask for permission to search the residence to verify that the minor is missing.

- c. Confirm missing minor status

Members shall contact MECC Channel 7 upon determining whether the report of the missing minor is confirmed or unfounded.

- i. If no contact is made or the status of the missing minor is not determined, members shall notify MECC that the call was not serviced, so that MECC can attempt a callback and if necessary, return the call to pending status until contact is made.

ii.

- iii. If the missing minor report is determined to be unfounded, the member shall inform MECC Channel 7 so that MECC can clear the missing minor record from NCIC.

- d. Determine "at-risk" status

While conducting the initial investigation, responding members shall determine whether the missing minor is considered "at-risk."

- i. A missing minor will be considered "at-risk" when one or more of the following **suspicious or unusual circumstances** are present:

- The minor is 12 years of age or younger.
 - This minor is in imminent danger.
 - This includes situations where the environment in which the minor is missing may be particularly hazardous, such as near a busy highway or body of water for a toddler or a minor on the autism spectrum, a bus or train station for a teenager, or an outdoor environment in inclement weather for a minor of any age.
 - The minor is missing as a result of a confirmed abduction or under circumstances that indicate that the minor’s disappearance was not voluntary.
 - This minor is believed to be with a person who could endanger the minor’s welfare.
 - The minor has been the subject of past threats or acts of violence.
 - The minor is outside of the zone of safety as designated by the family or guardian.
 - The minor has a developmental or physical disability or behavioral health condition, that limits their ability to care for themselves.
 - There is evidence the minor is in need of medical attention or prescription medication, and it will have a serious adverse effect on the minor’s health if they do not receive the needed care or medication.
 - The minor has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement as missing.
 - The minor is absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior.
 - The minor’s disappearance involves any other circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the minor should be considered at-risk.
- ii. If the missing minor is determined to be “at-risk,” the members shall contact and inform the on-duty precinct shift supervisor of the circumstances.
- iii. The members shall describe the reasons for their determination in their Police Report.
- iv. The code ARMISP shall be used for the Police Report if the missing minor is determined to be “at-risk.”
- e. Complete a report

If the minor is confirmed missing, members shall complete a Police Report with the code ARMISP (for “at-risk” missing children) or MISPER (for missing minors not determined to be “at-risk”) ,and document if a search was conducted and who gave consent.

3. At-risk missing minor response

If a missing minor is determined to be “at-risk,” the following shall occur:

- a. The precinct shift supervisor shall notify the MECC on-duty supervisor that the minor has been determined to be “at-risk” (MECC can add an alert to the call as necessary).
 - i. The precinct shift supervisor shall notify the Watch Commander or Inspector (when the Watch Command is not on duty), and Car 710/Car 712. The Watch Commander or Inspector shall immediately contact the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) to notify them of the missing “at-risk” minor and consult with them (MN Statute section 299C.53 Subd. 1(b)).
 - ii. If the case involves abduction, the Watch Commander or Inspector shall refer to P&P 8-202 Amber Alerts.
- b. The precinct shift supervisor shall respond to the scene.
- c. The precinct shift supervisor shall evaluate facts as they are known at the time and determine if the totality of the circumstances requires further action.
 - i. Depending on the situation, the supervisor may determine that additional personnel, including specialized units, should be called to the scene or otherwise assist in the investigation (including the Watch Commander, Car 710/Car 712 or Juvenile Missing and Absentee Investigations).
- d. If further action is needed, the precinct shift supervisor shall assume Incident Command of the call and:
 - i. Coordinate search and investigative efforts, and through the precinct Lieutenant or Watch Commander request additional resources deemed necessary.
 - ii. The Watch Commander will monitor the missing child case and assist the Incident Commander with resource management.
 - iii. Ensure that precinct or patrol responders continue the response and search.
 - Investigators are there to assist the Incident Commander with the search.
 - Investigators from the Juvenile Missing and Absentee Investigations unit will be the lead investigators when available, otherwise Car 710/Car 712 will be the preliminary lead investigators.
 - iv. Any time the missing minor is found or located, contact MECC to provide a brief summary and request MECC make required notifications.
- e. If the minor is still missing at the end of the precinct supervisor’s shift, the supervisor shall coordinate with the incoming supervisor to ensure the search operations

continue, and that the Watch Commander, Car 710/Car 712 and Juvenile Missing and Absentee Investigations are updated.

- f. The “at-risk” missing minor case shall be noted on the Watch Commander Log and the precinct shift bullets.

B. Investigating Missing Juveniles

1. Investigator responsibilities

The Juvenile Missing and Absentee Investigations unit shall be responsible for the follow-up investigations on all missing minor cases. Once an investigator is assigned a missing minor case, the investigator shall:

- a. Contact the reporting party by phone or in-person within 24 hours of the initial contact by the reporting party, or as soon as feasible. The time and summary of the contact shall be documented in the case file for audit purposes.
- b. Determine if the minor has returned or if additional information is available. Contact MECC, designated Juvenile staff or the Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC) in the Business Technology Unit (BTU) if changes need to be made in the NCIC entry.
- c. Perform necessary follow-up as prompted by the nature of the case. Record all systems used. Applicable RMS, DVS, Criminal History and DOC Portal information must be available in the case file for audit purposes.
- d. Consider contacting the Strategic Information Center to request a bulletin on the Daily Information Brief.
- e. Complete closing supplements and Disposition Sheet.

2. NCIC packets

- a. The Commander who oversees the Juvenile Missing and Absentee Investigations unit will designate staff for handling NCIC packets, entry of the NCIC information and updates to the NCIC entry.
- b. When a minor remains missing for 30 days or if investigators determine the information needs to be collected earlier, designated staff shall provide the following materials to the reporting party (MN Statute section 299C.535):
 - A packet titled “NCIC Missing Person File Data Collection Entry Guide.”
 - The form titled “Minnesota Missing Person Bulletin Information & Release Form.”

These documents are available on the MPD intranet in the “Forms” section.

- c. Designated staff shall enter a case supplement noting the date these materials were distributed.
- d. The Data Collection Guide packet will be returned to the designated staff member, who shall review the information and enter a case supplement stating the date the packet was received.
- e. Designated staff shall update the NCIC entry with any additional identifying information as soon as it becomes available.
- f. The designated staff member shall scan the Data Collection Guide and attach it to the Police Report .

C. Located/Returned Juveniles

1. MECC notified directly

- a. When MECC receives a direct notification that a missing minor who is considered “at-risk” has returned or been located, they will immediately dispatch a squad to the incident address to verify that the missing minor has returned..
- b. Upon verifying the minor has returned, the member shall ensure that MECC Channel 7 is notified so that MECC can remove the minor from NCIC. Investigators will follow up as appropriate with interviews of the minor.

2. Member encounters missing minor

a. Release or transport

When a member encounters a listed missing minor and the minor cannot be released to a parent or legal guardian, members shall transport the minor to the Youth Connection Center. This includes minors who live outside of Minneapolis.

b. Notify MECC

When members encounter a listed missing minor, the members shall ensure that MECC Channel 7 is notified so that MECC can remove the minor from NCIC.

3. Runaways

- a. Responding members shall not issue a Hennepin County Juvenile Citation to runaways.
- b. When the missing minor is located, the member shall document the return via a narrative text in the original Police Report.

IV. Definitions

Minor: A person who is under the age of 18.

Missing Minor: A person who is:

- Under the age of 18 years .
and
- Whose whereabouts are unknown to the minor’s parent, guardian, or responsible party.

NCIC: The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database helps criminal justice professionals apprehend fugitives, locate missing persons, recover stolen property, and identify terrorists. It also assists law enforcement officers in performing their official duties more safely and provides them with information necessary to aid in protecting the general public.

Runaway: An unmarried minor who is absent from the home of a parent or other lawful placement without the consent of the parent, guardian, or responsible party.