

Instructions for Youth Missing From Placement

975.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide officers with guidance when the whereabouts of a child subject to an order of foster care placement is unknown to the county child welfare agency or probation department, or when the county child welfare agency or probation department has located a child subject to an order of foster care placement in a location not approved by the court that may pose a risk to the child, taking into account the age, intelligence, mental functioning, and physical condition of the child. Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 16501.35 requires probation departments to implement policies and procedures for runaway/missing youth.

As described in ACL 16-15, and 25-67, active efforts considering harm reduction shall be made to locate foster youth missing from placement. This includes making all mandated notifications within 24 hours. All Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) who supervise placement cases should review AC 16-15, and 25-67. Because of potential dangers to youth, probation officers are to consider youth missing from care as a major event that requires intensive intervention.

All HCPD juvenile officers are trained in CSEC 101 and 102. These trainings teach officers to identify youth vulnerabilities placing them at risk of CSEC, trauma informed care, psychological impacts for youth, boundaries, cycle of change, interventions, harm reduction, complex and vicarious trauma. Additional information found in Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Procedure.

All missing foster youth must be reported to NCIC; only CSEC youth are reported to NCMEC.

975.2 PLACEMENT CASES

Instructions for youth missing from a resource family home or from an STRTP.

- (a) HCPD should document placement youth identified as a victim or at risk of CSEC in CWS/CMS/CARES
- (b) HCPD will document in the client notebook the CSEC type in the CSEC data grid located on the identification page. There are six CSEC types:
 - (a) At Risk
 - (b) Victim before foster care
 - (c) Victim during foster care
 - (d) Victim in open case not in foster care
 - (e) Victim while absent from placement
 - (f) Victim with closed case

975.3 INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUTH MISSING FROM A RESOURCE FAMILY HOME OR

FROM AN STRTP

As described in ACL 16-15, active efforts shall be made to locate foster youth who abscond from placement. All officers who supervise placement cases should review ACL 16-15 and 25-67. Because of potential dangers to youth, placement probation officers are to consider runaway youth as a major event that requires intervention.

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For foster youth who are at risk of becoming victims or who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC), additional measures apply. Probation shall immediately, and in no case more than 24 hours, report to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the case that the youth has gone missing. Law Enforcement will then enter the information into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Further, the Officer will report the missing youth to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

All missing Foster youth must be reported to NCIC; only CSEC youth are reported to NCMEC as permitted by 11166(j)(3).

975.4 CONTACT AND NOTIFICATION

For all foster youth, officers (or the supervisor in their absence) are required to notify the individuals, agencies, and organizations described in these procedures upon learning that a youth is missing. As soon as HCPD is notified that a probation foster youth has absconded, the DPO must contact the placement provider to ensure a missing person's report has been filed with law enforcement. Care providers are required to notify HCPD within two hours of the youth having absconded. WIC 16501.35 mandates notification to the following entities and/or person(s) immediately and no later than 24 hours after receipt of notice that a youth has runaway/is missing from care. The notice shall contain contact information for the assigned officer and their supervisor. The Officer shall contact the following:

- (a) Local law enforcement agencies (including Tribal law enforcement agencies) where the youth physically resides and/or the county of jurisdiction to ensure that a verbal report was made by the care provider, provide any additional information/missing person's report, and to make sure that the matter is entered in NCIC
- (b) Youth or Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) parent(s), guardian(s), or Indian custodian(s) if a youth is a Native youth
- (c) Any known sibling of the youth/NMD who is 10 years or older and adjudged to be a dependent of the juvenile court, where it is not contrary to the safety and wellbeing of that youth
- (d) Attorneys for the parent(s), guardian(s), or Indian custodian(s) applicable
- (e) Youth/NMD Tribe and/or Tribal Representative
- (f) The assigned officer should report youth as AWOL to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 800-THE-LOST (800-843-5678). [Missing Child Reports to NCMEC](#)
- (g) Youth's school and request that they contact the officer if the youth contacts or arrives at school
- (h) Youth's court appointed special advocate (CASA) as applicable
- (i) Youth or NMD attorney
- (j) Court of jurisdiction (where the youth/NMD was adjudged a ward of the court)

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- (k) Assigned officer should review the safety plan and contact the person whom the youth identified to maintain contact regardless of AWOL Status.
- (l) Other CFT members
- (m) Local homeless youth liaison to inform them of the runaway/missing youth status.
- (n) The assigned officer should ensure a CFTM/MDT occurs immediately and continue on-going for an AWOL youth.
 - (a) CFTM/MDT discussions include reasons the youth is a runaway/missing from care, current whereabouts, the youth's experience while absent from care, and to explore the possibility of exploitation while AWOL.
- (o) The officer should file court notification and/violation paperwork within 24 hours of being informed of AWOL status of placement youth.
- (p) Per [ACL 16-15](#), and ACL 25-67, the assigned officer is expected to provide active efforts to locate youth no less frequently than monthly. Efforts to locate a missing youth should include, yet not be limited to:
 - 1. Contact significant persons in the youth's life (parents, siblings, relatives, youth's best friend, former caregivers, school, and service providers, etc...).
 - 2. Request caregiver/parent make inquiries to the above individuals and report back information obtained.
 - 3. Physically check places where youth is likely to be.
 - 4. Follow up on leads received regarding youths' whereabouts.
 - 5. Conduct visits to relevant addresses, or request LE assist with a welfare check.
 - 6. Search social media websites.
- (q) Search public located databases (California Missing Children's Clearing house 800-222-FIND, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children <http://missingkids.org/home>).
- (r) The officer will discuss the CSE-IT score in court reports and discuss indications of clear concern with coordination of identification of services to mitigate the concern.
- (s) The officer should call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children once the young person has been located.

975.5 ACTIVE EFFORTS

Per ACL 24-18 officers must provide affirmative, active, thorough, and timely efforts to locate a youth/NMD who may be or are identified as an Indian child. The tribe must be noticed of missing/runaway youth status immediately and no later than 24 hours after learning the youth is missing/runaway. The officer must continue to collaborate with the tribe to locate the youth/NMD and throughout the case to provide services to the youth/ NMD and their family.

975.6 EFFORTS TO LOCATE MISSING YOUTH/WARRNT SUBJECTS

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The officer is responsible for investigating the runaway/missing incident, specifically: what were the primary factors that contributed to the youth's running away or otherwise being absent from care placement. Where was the youth/NMD, who were they with and did anything occur that instigated the runaway/missing status?

The assigned officer is required to:

- Determine the primary factors that contributed to the youth running away/being absent from care.
- Address those factors in subsequent placements.
- Determine the youth's experiences while absent from care.
- Determine if the youth is a possible CSEC victim.
- Discuss these activities in a CFTM or MDT, and document for federal reporting purposes in CWS/CMS/CARES.

Diligent efforts should be made to locate runaway/missing foster youth. This could include requesting a warrant. The assigned officer must attempt to locate the youth/NMD as information is provided but no less than once per month. All attempts to locate a youth/NMD must be chrono'd in JAMS and in CWS/CMS/CARES Contact Notebook. Efforts to locate should also be documented in "runaway" status review reports. These attempts should include residential contacts according to policy, contact with parents/guardians/Indian custodian, phone calls, certified mail, and follow-up investigation. In addition, the efforts below should be included:

- contacting relatives, lifelong connections, and other significant persons in the youth's life (e.g. parents/guardians/Indian custodian, siblings, relatives, best friends, former caregivers, former and current schools and service providers, if applicable)
- requesting caregiver and/or parent make inquiries to the above individuals and report back with any information obtained
- physically checking all the places where the youth/NMD is likely to be including local homeless shelters, transition age youth programs
- following up on leads received regarding the youth/NMD whereabouts
- conducting visits to relevant addresses
- when available, consultation with or referral to internal Runaway/Missing Children Liaisons
- searching social media (if authorized)
- search of public locator databases (e.g. California Missing Child Clearing House, NCMEC, etc.)

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975.7 LOCATING AND RETURNING A YOUTH/NMD TO CARE

LOCATING AND RETURNING A YOUTH/NMD TO CARE

When the youth is located or detained, a debriefing interview should be conducted by an adult the youth/NMD chooses and/or trusts with the youth to try to determine the reason why the youth absconded/went missing and any experiences while absent from care. ACIN 1-13-17 includes the optional document, "Missing/Runaway Youth Debriefing Form," and can be used to support CFT conversations, appropriate services/treatment needs, case plans, and data collection.

HCPD addresses ACL 22-100 through a placement preservation CFTM to develop, implement, and document strategies to preserve the youths placement when possible.

Once a youth returns to care the officer informs NCMEC and the local law enforcement agency who initially received the missing person's report so they can update the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

This information should be shared with the officer to address and evaluate the youth's current placement needs, assist in stabilization, and any needs or traumas created while missing.

Further, the officer shall assess the youth's immediate needs including, but not limited to the following:

- Medical care for injuries, illness, or harm experienced while absent from placement
- Mental health or foster youth services
- Law enforcement help due to victimization and/or sexual exploitation

Per WIC 16010.7 except for with an emergency placement, HCPD is required to serve written notice of the placement change 14 days prior to the change of placement to the parent/guardian/Indian Custodian, caregiver, attorney, youth, and tribe. Family Urgent Response System (FURS) could be a preservation strategy.

Upon investigating the circumstances of the youth/NMD missing status, including what transpired while the youth was absent from care, per ACL 19-26, prior to making a placement change the officer will convene an MDT/Child Family Team Meeting (CFT) to discuss the case, address possible trauma, identify ways to improve the youth/NMD's wellbeing and resilience, and consider possible placement options and develop a placement preservation strategy documented in the contact notes of CWS/CMS/CARES. The matter should be staffed to support the officer in making an appropriate recommendation to the court for disposition. Subsequent placements should be considered with regard to the youth/NMD reason for runaway or missing status and address concerns resulting from experiences while in missing status.

An Integrated Practice Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (IP-CANS) survey should be updated within 30 calendar days of determining a change in conditions. This information will support appropriate services and interventions for the youth/NMD and family.

Attachments

MCD 365_New Case Management Enterprise System.pdf



CASE WORKER QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: MISSING CHILD REPORTS TO NCMEC

When making a missing child report to NCMEC, please be aware that certain information is required before a report can be taken. Additional information is requested and helpful to each missing child's case. Please review the below items to help you better prepare for reporting a missing child to NCMEC.

The following information is **Required** when reporting a missing child to NCMEC:

1. Caller information, including full contact information
2. Child's full name
3. Child's date of birth, gender, height, weight
4. Date child went missing
5. City and state from where child went missing
6. Case Worker information including name, agency name, relationship to child (guardianship status), full contact information (telephone number(s) and email address). If you are a service provider, provide the legal guardian information, whether it's a bio family member or an assigned case worker from the agency that maintains guardianship over the child.
7. Law enforcement information including agency name, telephone and missing persons police report number

Other Information Requested:

1. Missing Child

- Alias, Nickname
- School attended
- Specific missing location
- Group home information (if applicable)
- Contact information (e.g. last known home address, email address, cell phone)
- Child descriptive information (e.g. hair, eyes, scars, marks, tattoos, clothing, jewelry)
- Child endangerments (e.g. run away before, medical condition, mental health condition, special needs, life threatening condition, on medication, suicidal, self-harm, pregnant, drug/alcohol use, carrying weapon, gang involvement, online enticement/luring)
- Child internet activity – online activity, user names
- Circumstances surrounding missing event

2. Case Worker Information

- Supervisor contact Information (telephone number(s) and email address)

3. Bio Family Contact Information

- Name and relationship to child
- DOB, gender
- Contact information (telephone number(s), physical address, email address)
- Speaks foreign language



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Other Information Requested:

4. Companion or Other Person with Information

- Name, Alias, Nickname
- Relationship to the child
- DOB, gender
- Descriptive information (e.g. hair, eyes, scars, marks, tattoos, clothing, jewelry)
- Last known information (e.g. address, telephone phone number(s), email, Driver's license)
- Any known warrant information
- Endangerments (e.g. run away before, medical condition, mental health condition, special needs, life threatening condition, on medication, suicidal, self-harm, pregnant, drug/alcohol use, carrying weapon, gang involvement, online enticement/luring)
- Internet activity – online activity, user names
- Circumstances surrounding missing event

5. Law Enforcement Information

- Date/time reported
- Assigned Officer (if known)
- Unit/Area/Precinct
- Email address, fax number

6. Vehicle Information

- Make, model, year, color, VIN, Tag
- Owner of vehicle

7. Additional Information

- Is there any concern of exploitation or trafficking of the child?
- Does child have any unexplained items (examples: money, hotel keys, prepaid credit cards, additional phones), access to high cost items (hair or nails done, jewelry or clothing)
- Does child have a history of sexual or physical abuse, stripping, pornography, or sex trafficking
- Are there any known pimps; older, controlling boyfriends/girlfriends; or gang affiliations
- Is there any indication that child has traded sex in exchange for place to sleep, drugs, or money, food, something of value, or been traded by anyone including family members
- Known direction of travel
- Places they may frequent
- Did they take any belongings with them