

# St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: SPECIAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: SO 0402
SUBJECT: MISSING/AT-RISK CHILDREN/CART/AMBER ALERT SYSTEM		
ISSUE DATE: 7/16/04	REVISIONS: 7/21/06, 1/24/18	AMENDS/RESCINDS: N/A
REVISIONS CONTINUED:		DISTRIBUTION: A

## I. POLICY:

Missing/at-risk children shall be a priority of the St. Joseph Police Department. The Department will utilize the Child Abduction Response Team (CART) and the Missouri Amber Alert System. The purpose of participation is to enhance the likelihood of the safe and swift return of missing children in the serious child-abduction/at-risk investigations through a collaborative effort with other public entities.

## II. PROCEDURES:

Runaway, missing, or abandoned child calls involving children under the age of twelve (12):

- A. Dispatchers receiving runaway, missing, or abandoned child calls involving children under the age of twelve (12) must ensure notification of a patrol supervisor. Calls of this nature should not be held.
- B. Officers investigating calls of this nature shall ensure that appropriate follow-up is completed (see GO 0115 Juvenile Operations reference custody of runaways, etc.), and that a 'try-to-locate' is issued in a timely manner.
- C. "Locates" should contain a detailed description of the child, possible destinations, and any other facts that may aid in the location of the child. Other agencies shall be contacted if it is believed an at-risk child may be in or headed towards their jurisdiction.
- D. Supervisors may direct efforts beyond the normal response if it is believed that a child is at risk and immediate follow-up, searches, or other activities are necessary. The Patrol Commander shall be notified if a call-out is deemed necessary.

## III. CART ACTIVATION AND AMBER ALERT PROCEDURES

- A. Criteria for Activation of the CART or the Amber Alert System - CART and/or the Missouri Amber Alert System may be activated/requested when a child abduction is reported and investigation reveals that:
  1. The child's age is 17 or under;

2. The child's safety is at risk,
  3. There is a likelihood someone provided with a description of the abductor, the child, or the vehicle involved may observe and report the whereabouts of this person(s) to the police;
  4. Parental disputes do NOT apply unless a possibility of harm to the child has been determined.
- B. Notifications-** The Chief of Police shall designate representatives of the St. Joseph Police Department who have the authority to activate/request the appropriate CART response and Amber Alert.
1. Dispatchers shall notify a supervisor when they receive a call that may meet the activation criteria.
  2. Members investigating incidents of missing/at risk children which may meet the activation criteria are responsible for ensuring the prompt notification of a supervising officer if one is not present.
  3. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the prompt notification of the Chief's designee/s if the investigation indicates the activation criteria may be present.
  4. If the designated personnel elect to activate/request a CART response, that person shall ensure notification of the Chief of Police/Acting Chief of Police.
  5. The Communications Center is equipped for transmission of the AMBER Alert and Nixel which disseminates to participating media outlets and other participating agencies at the direction of the Chief's designee/s. Alert messages under this plan will contain the following information;
    - a. That a child has reportedly been abducted or reported missing and at risk;
    - b. The location of abduction or where the child is missing from;
    - c. A description of the child;
    - d. A description of the abductor or who the child was last with;
    - e. A description of the vehicle(s) involved, if any;
    - f. The last known direction of travel or last known location;
    - g. A telephone number to contact the police with any information and a statement that person(s) who may locate the abductor should take no action other than to call the local police as soon as possible with the information.

This alert may be broadcast up to 3 times per hour, or whenever new information dictates an updated broadcast.
- C.** If a child is located, or the Amber Alert is otherwise ended, the Detective Division shall be responsible for the direction of any follow-up investigation, including any interview(s) with the victim, suspect(s), crime scene and etc.
- D. Debriefing-** Any incident in which the plan is activated shall result in a debriefing by participating members to determine how the system operated, training needs, etc.

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Chris Connally, Chief of Police

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Date