

# TEXARKANA POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Juvenile Runaways</b>		
<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>1105.07</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	<b>April 12, 2011</b>
<b>Scheduled Review Date</b>	<b>May 01, 2016</b>	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	<b>April 12, 2011</b>
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>April 08, 2014</b>	<b>REVISION DATE</b>	
<b>APPROVED BY</b>		<b>(Reserved for Expansion)</b>	

### I. Purpose and Scope

- A. The purpose of this policy is to establish responsibilities and guidelines for the Texarkana Police Department's response to reports of juvenile runaways.

### II. Policy

- A. It shall be the policy of the Texarkana Police Department to expeditiously respond to and thoroughly investigate all reports of runaways and missing children. A child who is reported missing under **unusual circumstances** will be considered **at risk** until sufficient 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, the Texarkana Police Department will immediately initiate the required reporting process.
1. If a child normally resides in this jurisdiction and was last seen in another jurisdiction, but the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction contiguously located with the jurisdiction of the Texarkana Police Department chooses not to take a missing child report and forgoes investigative protocols, the Texarkana Police Department will initiate the investigative actions and reporting responsibility.
- C. Questions concerning parental custody occasionally arise in relation to missing child reports. It shall be the policy of the Texarkana Police Department 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 and/or produce the legal documentation that establishes custody; however, since the safety of missing children is paramount, members of the Texarkana Police Department will initiate the investigative actions and reporting responsibility whenever the circumstances indicate the child has been removed, without explanation, from his or her usual place of residence.
- D. All members of the Department shall recognize and adhere to the guidelines set forth within this policy.

### III. Definitions

- A. The term **missing child** shall refer to a person meeting the following criteria:
1. Younger than eighteen (18) years of age; and

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2. Whose whereabouts are unknown to his/her parent, guardian or some other responsible person under circumstances that are believed uncustomary for the child or those circumstances that cause reasonable concern.
- B. **Runaway**—Any minor child under the age of eighteen (18) who has failed to return to a designated location or has left without the consent and/or knowledge of the child’s parent or guardian and has been reported as a runaway. All children under the age of ten (10) will be classified as a missing child and not as a runaway.
- C. **Unusual Circumstances**—Those circumstances associated with a missing child thirteen (13) years of age or younger whose disappearance causes a reasonable person to conclude the child should be considered at risk. Those circumstances should include the following:
1. Circumstances that indicate the child is out of his or her **zone of safety** which corresponds to his or her age and developmental status;
  2. Those circumstances that indicate the child is mentally incapacitated to include those children who are developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed;
  3. Those circumstances that indicate the child is drug dependent. This dependency includes those drugs or other chemical compounds, hormones or insulin medically necessary for the health of the child;
    - a. Because illicit drug dependence may place the missing child at risk for exploitation or other criminal involvement, any circumstances that demonstrate a child’s illicit drug dependence shall be included within these sets of circumstances.
  4. Those circumstances that indicate the missing child has become a victim of foul play or sexual exploitation;
  5. Those circumstances that otherwise indicate the missing child is involved in a life-threatening situation;
  6. Circumstances that involve a delay on the part of the parents, guardians or other responsible person to report the child’s disappearance to the police;
  7. Circumstances that demonstrate the missing child is accompanied with adults or older juveniles who might endanger his or her welfare; and/or
  8. Circumstances that demonstrate inconsistent patterns of the missing child’s established behavior.
- D. **Zone of Safety**—The total distance a child could travel from the location where the missing child was last seen to the location that would most likely place the missing child at risk for injury or exploitation. The determined zone of safety should be based upon the missing child’s age, developmental stage, physical condition or other related circumstances.

#### IV. Procedures

- A. After responding to any report of a juvenile runaway, officers must first determine if the circumstances of the incident fall within those that define a juvenile runaway. Should the officer discover the circumstances exceed the classification of a juvenile runaway, and if the missing child is determined to be missing under unusual circumstances, the officer shall refer to the procedures outlined within [General Order 1105.06--Missing Children](#). No incident involving a juvenile who is missing under unusual circumstances shall be handled as a simple juvenile runaway investigation.

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- B. Upon determining a juvenile has ran away from his/her home or environment—and there exists some concern among family members for the welfare of the juvenile—the officer will collect the necessary information and complete an offense report classifying the report as a runaway investigation. In the event more than one (1) juvenile is reported as a runaway from the same location, a separate offense report shall be generated for each runaway.
- C. As soon as possible after taking the initial report, the reporting officer shall broadcast a complete description of the runaway and—if known—a possible direction of travel and means of transportation. Officers should attempt to collect a recent photo of the juvenile at the time the report is taken. Once a picture is obtained the photo should be placed within the Patrol Briefing Room so other officers are made aware of the child's missing status and likeness.
- D. In accordance with applicable Federal law, all reports of juvenile runaways and/or missing juveniles shall be entered immediately into NCIC.
  - 1. The reporting officer shall send an email via his/her MDC to the appropriate dispatcher containing all of the relevant information. Within the email, the officer will request that the dispatcher enter the applicable information into NCIC without delay.
  - 2. After receiving the information from the officer in the field, the entering dispatcher will create a supplemental report within the ADSI module that documents the entry of the information within NCIC.
- E. The family or person reporting the juvenile runaway need not have information relevant to the juvenile's whereabouts prior to the officer taking the report; however, if the family or person reporting the juvenile runaway has reason to believe they know where the missing juvenile might be located, the officer taking the report shall follow-up on any information provided within an appropriate amount of time.
- F. Officers will inform the reporting person/family to contact the Texarkana Police Department in the event the reported juvenile returns home or they become aware of the juvenile's location.

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