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TUESDAY 29TH APRIL, 2025

THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE 29TH APRIL, 2025
LEGAL SUPPLEMENT – B

NOTICE

GUYANA POLICE FORCE
HANDLING REPORTS OF MISSING CHILDREN/PERSONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines uniform procedures for all police personnel stationed at Police Stations, Outposts, and within the Missing Children/Persons Unit (MCPU) regarding the receipt, documentation, investigation, and resolution of missing person reports.

1.2. The SOP ensures that all reports are treated with seriousness, urgency, and sensitivity and that responses are lawful, rights-based, and aimed at safeguarding the safety and welfare of the missing children/persons and the reporting party.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This SOP applies to:

2.1.1. Ranks at Police Stations and Outposts across all Divisions.

2.1.2. The Missing Children/Persons Unit (MCPU).

2.1.3. Ranks assigned to Criminal Investigation Departments (CIDs) tasked with investigation and follow-up actions.

2.1.4. Force Control and Command Centres personnel who receive or relay missing persons alerts.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

ACT NAME	CAP. NO.	RELEVANT SECTIONS	SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS
Police Act	Cap. 16:01	Sec. 3, Sec. 24	Authorizes police duties including maintaining order, preventing crime, and making arrests.
Criminal Law (Offences) Act	Cap. 8:01	Sec. 50–51, Sec. 92	Addresses abduction, kidnapping, and unlawful confinement.
Juvenile Justice Act	Cap. 10:03	Sec. 3(b), 10(1), 13(2), 22	Protects child rights; requires parental notification; promotes diversion and dignity.

Childcare and Protection Agency Act	Cap. 46:07	Sec. 5, 10, 14	Mandates child protection interventions and cooperation with the police.
Sexual Offences Act	Cap. 8:03	Sec. 50–52	Criminalizes grooming, exploitation, and abuse—relevant to vulnerable missing persons.
Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act	Cap. 10:26	Sec. 3–5	Defines human trafficking and outlines protections for victims, especially minors.
Standing Orders – GPF	S.O. #68	Full Order	Provides official guidelines for reporting and investigating missing persons.

4. DEFINITION

4.1. **Missing Child/Person**: is defined as anyone whose whereabouts is unknown and:

4.1.1. Where the circumstances are out of character; or

4.1.2. The context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or

4.1.3. The person is at risk of harming themselves or another.

4.2. **High Risk**: The risk posed is immediate, and there are substantial grounds for believing that the missing child/person is in danger through their own vulnerability, may have been the victim of a serious crime, or the public is in danger.

4.3. **Medium Risk**: The risk posed is likely to place the missing child/person in danger or cause them to be a threat to themselves or others.

4.4. **Low Risk**: the apparent threat of danger to the missing child/person or the public is low (a child should not be graded as low as a risk).

4.5. **Red Alert**: Police must circulate an emergency message when a child goes missing, requiring an immediate national response.

4.6. **Adult:** any person 18 years of age or over.

4.7. **Juvenile:** any person under 18 years of age.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. **First Responding Rank**: Receive, record, and initiate the reporting process immediately.

5.2. **Rank-in-Charge (Station/Outpost)**: Supervise documentation and initial actions.

5.3. **Divisional Operations Room**: This room serves as the regional coordination hub, managing all missing person reports within the division. It verifies whether a Red Alert is needed, relays report to the Command Centre (Force Control), facilitates communication among stations, coordinates search efforts, and ensures all actions are recorded and supervised under the guidance of the Regional Commander.

5.4. **Force Control:** This department receives and logs missing person reports from all Regional Divisions and is responsible for broadcasting alerts, including photos and case details, across all police regions and special units.

5.5. **Missing Children/Persons Unit (MCPU)**: This unit takes the lead on high-risk or complex missing person cases. It maintains the national registry, supports regional teams with forensic and investigative expertise, and collaborates with international law enforcement when cross-border elements are involved.

5.6. **Child Care and Protection Agency (CC&PA)**: Must be notified in all cases involving missing children under 18 years old. The agency conducts welfare checks when children are recovered and works with the GPF to identify abusive environments or high-risk family situations.

5.7. **Corporate Communications Unit (CCU)**: The CCU issues public notices about missing or recovered Children/persons only when authorized by the Commissioner of Police. It shares updates through press releases, media, and social media in coordination with the MPU to ensure accuracy and timeliness.

5.8. **Commissioner of Police**: The commissioner must be informed of all active missing children/persons cases within four hours. The Commissioner authorizes public alerts and provides senior oversight, especially for sensitive or high-profile investigations.

5.9. **Regional Commanders**: Oversee investigation and inter-agency coordination

5.10. **Missing Children/Persons Unit (MCPU)**: Lead investigations of complex or cross-divisional missing child/person cases.

5.11. **Force Control**: Disseminate alerts and updates across all Regional Divisions.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1. When a missing child/person report is received via the 911 system, the Call Taker at the Command Centre must carefully record all pertinent details. This includes the physical description of the missing child/person, their last known location, and the contact information of the individual making the report. Once documented, this information must be promptly transmitted to the Police Station or Outpost with jurisdiction over the area where the person was last seen. Upon receiving the report, the responding rank must immediately contact the reporting party to initiate appropriate follow-up actions without delay.

6.2. When a missing child/person report is received at a Police Station or Outpost, there is no mandatory 24-hour waiting period. The Responding Rank must immediately record the report's details in both the Missing Child/Person Book and the Occurrence Book. They must also gather essential details such as the name, age, and description of the missing person, the last known location, and the circumstances of the disappearance coherent to Standing Order #68-Missing Children/Persons.

6.3. The responding rank must immediately take a formal statement from the reporting party. This statement should include information such as the full name, age, gender, and known associates of the missing person, their last known location, clothing, recent behaviors, and any threats made. If available, the responding rank should collect photographs of the missing person. A Red Alert must be issued immediately through Force Control if the missing person

is a child. Additionally, the Child Care and Protection Agency (CCPA) must be notified for any cases involving minors.

6.4. The Responding Rank must promptly notify the Station Sergeant of the missing person report. The Station Sergeant is responsible for informing both the Regional Operations Room and the Missing Children/Persons Unit (MCPU) without delay. Additionally, Force Control must be officially notified of the case, after which a message containing the relevant details will be circulated to all police stations within the respective Regional Division to initiate a coordinated response.

6.5. The **Station Sergeant** or Officer-in-Charge must promptly designate an **Investigating Rank** to lead the case. The Investigating Rank must:

6.5.1. Visit the location where the missing child/person was last seen to conduct a scene assessment.

6.5.2. Interview relatives, neighbors, shopkeepers, security guards, or anyone nearby who might have seen the child/person or suspicious activity.

6.5.3. Find and secure **CCTV footage** from nearby homes, businesses, or public institutions.

6.5.4. Collect any physical evidence, such as personal belongings left behind.

6.5.5. Ensure all actions and observations are recorded in the case log.

6.6. When the missing person is a child, an elderly individual, or someone with cognitive, mental health, or physical impairments, the case must be immediately classified as **high risk**. This classification triggers the urgent deployment of additional police resources, including vehicular patrols, coordinated search teams, and expanded community engagement. A preliminary risk assessment must be conducted by the Investigating Rank in collaboration with the Station Sergeant or Officer-in-Charge, using the available information to guide the response. Several key criteria should guide the determination of high-risk status:

6.6.1. The missing person is under the age of 10.

6.6.2. The individual has known disabilities, mental illness, or suffers from severe medical conditions.

6.6.3. The disappearance is considered out of character, or the individual has a history of exposure to threats, violence, or abuse.

6.6.4. There is credible evidence of possible abduction or foul play.

6.6.5. The individual was last seen in a dangerous, remote, or high-crime area.

6.6.6. The disappearance occurred in the context of a dispute, domestic violence incident, or other violent confrontation.

6.7. If the risk level is high, the case must be escalated without delay, and the Missing Children/Persons Unit (MCPU) will assume operational leadership of the investigation. The MCPU provides expert support to regional investigators, including applying advanced investigative and forensic methods. It coordinates closely with the Regional Commander and Force Control to ensure a unified national-level response. In addition, the MPU will engage external agencies and support partners—such as the Child Care and Protection Agency, the Immigration Department, local hospitals and shelters.

6.8. The Regional Commander must inform the Commissioner of Police of the Missing Child/Person Case. Based on its nature, the Commissioner will instruct the Corporate Communications Unit to assist in the information bulletin about the Missing Child/Person.

6.9. The assigned investigator and supervisory officers must review all missing child/person investigations regularly. The MCPU and Regional Commander must receive daily updates until the case is resolved or closed. The Reporting Party must also be informed of the investigation's progress.

6.10. When any child or person reported missing is found, the assigned investigator shall document the missing child or person's location in the appropriate report, notify the relatives and/or reporting party, as appropriate, and other involved agencies, and refer the case for additional investigation if warranted.

6.11. Once the missing child/person is located, the police station must inform the regional commander immediately. The Regional Division Operations Room must then send a follow-up message to Force Control, who will ensure that all other Police Regional Divisions are informed that the missing child/person has been found.

6.12. If no criminal activity is suspected, the case may be closed after proper documentation. However, if the investigation reveals signs of abduction, abuse, trafficking, or other criminal elements, it must be referred to the Criminal Investigation Department or an appropriate specialized unit for further action.

6.13. The Commissioner of Police will notify the Heads of Services, which comprise the Chief of Defence, Chief Fire Officer, and Director of Prisons, about a missing person report of a child or individual.

7. COMPLIANCE

7.1. Any rank who fails to comply with the provisions of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) without lawful justification shall be subject to administrative review and disciplinary action in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Guyana Police Force and the Police (Discipline) Act, Chapter 17:01.

8. REVISION

8.1. Approval of any revisions to this SOP will be determined by the Commissioner of Police and his/her Executive Leadership Team.



HON. ROBESON BENN M.P
MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS