

Child Abductions

330.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Vancouver Police Department investigates reports of child abductions in this jurisdiction. The Vancouver Police Department will assist other agencies with child abduction cases if requested.

This policy is a guide to the recovery of abducted children and is subject to change as investigative techniques and case law changes. Not all investigation strategies listed in this policy are mandatory. These investigation techniques should be considered and tailored towards what is necessary in the recovery of the abducted child.

This policy establishes guidelines and responsibilities regarding the response to child abductions.

330.2 INITIAL PATROL RESPONSE

330.2.1 PATROL OFFICER INITIAL RESPONSE

The responding officer should attempt to obtain permission to search the residence of reporting party and/or residence the child was last seen to verify the child is in fact missing and not hiding.

If it is determined that the disappearance is an abduction, the responding officer should determine the circumstances of the abduction. Information such as suspect description, victim description, suspect vehicle description, parental custody status, and the location the victim was last seen should be obtained.

For an AMBER Alert to be issued, the following information should be obtained:

- a. Where the abduction took place.
- b. Specific physical description of the child.
 - Clothing worn when last seen
 - Height
 - Weight
 - Age
 - Hair length/color
 - Skin/Eye color
 - Additional distinguishing physical characteristics
- c. A physical description of the abductor.
 - Suspect clothing
 - Height
 - Weight

Child Abductions

- Age
 - Hair length/color
 - Skin/Eye color
 - Additional distinguishing physical characteristics
- d. Location last seen.
- e. Suspect vehicle description.
- Make
 - Model
 - Year (approx. older or newer)
 - Color
 - License plate state/number
 - Additional distinguishing physical characteristics

The responding officer shall contact an on-duty supervisor and have them respond to the scene.

The responding officer shall contact dispatch (CRESA) to broadcast information about the abduction to other patrol units and surrounding law enforcement agencies. This should include suspect/victim description, suspect vehicle description and any other information that may be pertinent. If enough information is available, the responding officer should issue a BOLO.

The responding officer should attempt to obtain a recent photograph of the abducted child for media release. Digital photographs are preferred if available.

330.2.2 PATROL SUPERVISOR INITIAL RESPONSE

The on-duty supervisor shall respond and ensure resources are deployed as appropriate.

If the criteria is met for an AMBER Alert, the on-duty supervisor shall contact CRESA and have them issue an AMBER Alert per the instructions in the Public Alerts Policy.

Notify the District Lieutenant or Precinct Commander and contact the Digital Evidence Cybercrime Unit (DECU) supervisor for assistance.

The on-duty supervisor should contact the Public Information Coordinator (PIC) to address incoming media questions and release of information to the public as needed.

The on-duty supervisor should, if needed, contact Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) volunteers and have them respond to the scene.

330.3 INVESTIGATIONS RESPONSE

The primary DECU investigator will assign an Incoming Leads Team Leader, a MACE Missing/Abducted Child Excel (MACE) Team Leader, and a Neighborhood Canvass Team Leader.

Vancouver Police Department

Vancouver PD Policy Manual

Child Abductions

After AMBER alerts are issued and information is released to the media, a high volume of phone calls with potential leads are expected. In order to manage the incoming telephone leads, CRESA will provide phone lines to be utilized by VPD personnel. The Incoming Leads Team Leader will assign personnel to address incoming leads.

A command post should be established away from the area the abduction occurred and the missing child's residence.

A flyer with the abducted child's photograph should be generated for use during the neighborhood canvass.

Detectives/officers will be assigned to interview pertinent witnesses (e.g., family members, close associates, suspects). If interviews involve children witnesses, consider utilizing Child Justice Center (CJC) detectives.

A neighborhood canvass/search shall be performed. The Neighborhood Canvass Team Leader will supervise and address any questions concerning the search. Officers should document the address, who was contacted, and who else lives at each location.

An officer should be assigned as a family liaison to answer questions or concerns the family might have.

An officer should be assigned to video record the neighborhood the child is missing from. Focus should be made on vehicles in the neighborhood to include license plate numbers.

An officer should be assigned to locate nearby video surveillance (banks, ATMs, convenience stores, etc.) for possible leads. Seize video within 24 hours to prevent recording over.

In the case of suspected child abductions or mysterious disappearances of children, the federal kidnapping statute, 18 USC 1201, can be invoked and the FBI is authorized to immediately enter the investigation. The FBI National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) can provide assistance and resources if needed. Contact the local FBI office for these resources.

Consider the installation of recorders on all telephone lines coming into the missing child's residence as well as the ability to trap and trace incoming telephone calls. This could be important in the case of a ransom situation. The FBI can assist with this function.

Develop a detailed timeline of the missing child's known activities up to the time they were reported missing. Continue with timeline establishing when certain events are performed during the investigations. This timeline can be managed utilizing the MACE Application. VPD crime analysts also have the ability to provide this function.

If possible, seize and obtain consent to search for computers in the abducted child's residence for forensics.

Consider commercial garbage companies to coordinate trash dump of dumpsters.

Child Abductions

330.3.1 INCOMING LEADS TEAM LEADER

The Incoming Leads Team Leader will manage all incoming leads coming in through CRESA. The Incoming Leads Team Leader will assign available Police Service Technicians (PST) to answer incoming telephone calls. If a PST is not available, officers can be utilized for this function.

Missing/Abducted Child Excel (MACE) Lead forms will be provided to call takers to document all incoming telephone leads. MACE Lead forms and instructions are attached to the appendix. After a telephone lead has been obtained, the Incoming Leads Team Leader will send the MACE Lead form to the MACE Team Leader at the command post.

330.3.2 MACE (MISSING/ABDUCTED CHILD EXCEL) TEAM LEADER

MACE is a spreadsheet application that will run on Microsoft EXCEL (which is the standard spreadsheet application on most computers with the Microsoft Office Suite). It is designed as a simple system for tracking leads and other investigative steps in a missing or abducted child case.

The MACE Application is the leads management system utilized by the FBI. Instructions on how to use MACE and the MACE Application spreadsheet are attached to the appendix.

The MACE Team Leader will assign a PST or an officer to manage the MACE Application. All leads shall be reviewed by the MACE Team Leader and entered into the MACE Application prior to being assigned as follow-up.

Once a lead is entered into the MACE Application, the MACE Team Leader will assign the lead to officers for investigation. After the lead has been investigated, the MACE Lead form will be provided back to the MACE Team Leader for closure or reassignment.

The MACE Team Leader will provide all MACE Lead forms to the case officer for review.

330.3.3 NEIGHBORHOOD CANVASS/SEARCH TEAM LEADER

The Neighborhood Canvass/Search Team Leader will manage a physical search effort for the missing child. Prior to conducting a neighborhood canvass, consideration should be given in utilizing a search dog. Pacific Crest Search Dogs can be utilized for this purpose. Contact information for Pacific Crest Search Dogs is listed under resources in this policy.

Responsibilities of the Neighborhood Canvass/Search Team Leader include:

- a. Maintaining the Searcher Log which documents persons assigned to the search team.
- b. Assigning areas to be searched by team members and documenting the areas searched and persons contacted on the Neighborhood Canvass Log.
- c. Providing searchers with Neighborhood Canvass Forms.
- d. Providing the MACE Team Leader with results of search for input into the MACE Application for proper documentation.

Search teams will consist of two officers on each team. These teams will be assigned to contact all residences in the neighborhood the child resides and was last seen. When contacting home owners, attempt should be made to obtain permission to search their residence. A Ferrier Warning

Child Abductions

should be provided when obtaining permission. In addition to searching the living areas of the residence, attic and crawl spaces should be searched. If permission is denied document the residence and who contact was made with if possible. If anything suspicious or unusual is observed at the residence, contact a DECU detective immediately.

If a search is needed for wooded areas or bodies of water, contact the Clark County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) Search and Rescue for assistance via CRESA. CCSO will direct this search.

Neighbors on Watch (NOW) volunteers can be utilized to search wooded areas and with canvassing neighborhoods. NOW volunteers are not to be utilized in contacting home owners.

DECU Sex Offender Monitoring detective can provide sex offenders registered address for contact and search of residence.

Road blocks are not permitted in the state of Washington.

VPD Crime Analysts can generate neighborhood maps.

330.4 RESOURCES AND FORMS

Pacific Crest Search Dogs:

Sharon Ward (503) 704-2366 / pager (360) 690-0443

Kent Stuart (360) 567-8066 / pager (360) 690-6460

FBI-Vancouver: (360) 695-5661 during normal work hours.

FBI-Seattle: (206) 622-0460 after hours and weekends. They will contact Vancouver Special Agents.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC): 1-800-THE-LOST / (1-800-843-5678)

[See attachment: 330 MACE Instructions.pdf](#)

[See attachment: 330 MACE Lead Sheet.pdf](#)

[See attachment: 330 MACE Leads EXCEL Spreadsheet.xlsx](#)