

**CHILD ABDUCTION  
FIRST RESPONDING OFFICER CHECKLIST**

**RESPOND**

RESPOND to ANY **disappearance of a child as an Abduction Case until further information is developed.** CHILD ABDUCTION BY A FAMILY MEMBER **must be treated as an urgent missing child investigation.** ALWAYS consider **the child endangered until proven otherwise.**

**WITHOUT DELAY BROADCAST SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION TO: All police communication channels, other patrol officers, other law enforcement agencies, and consider AMBER ALERT**

**INITIAL INVESTIGATION**

- Interview parent(s)/guardian(s)/person who made the initial report
- Verify child is missing
- Missing child's name/biographical info/monikers/nicknames
- Description of child/photo
- Identify the circumstances/type of disappearance
- Perform a thorough and detailed search of the child's residence
- Determine when, where, and by whom the missing child was last seen
- Interview the individuals who last had contact with the child
- Make an initial assessment based on the available information. The type of incident: whether nonfamily abduction; family abduction; runaway; lost; injured; otherwise missing; or a child with special needs. Children on the autism spectrum are at high risk and may be drawn to water. Immediately call for additional responders, search nearby bodies of water and notify a supervisor.
- Enter information into (MUPS/NCIC)
- PIO, press release, county alert system, social media blast, media relationships

**INVESTIGATION**

- Establish and secure the crime scene
- Obtain a detailed description of the missing child, abductor, and any vehicles used
- Obtain photos and videos of the missing child (and the abductor if known). Be sure to ask about photos on cell phones/mobile devices
- Evaluate whether the circumstances meet:
  - AMBER Alert criteria and/or other immediate community notification protocol if not already activated. Discuss plan activation with supervisor.

- Determine the need for external rapid deployment support, such as:
  - FBI's Child Abduction Rapid Deployment (CARD) team
  - Local or regional Child Abduction Response Teams (CARTs)
  - NCMEC's Team Adam
- Ensure information regarding the missing child is entered into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) missing person file as soon as confirmed, and no more than two hours after receipt of the report
- Ensure confirmed information about the abductor is entered into the NCIC's Wanted Persons File
- Relay detailed descriptive information to the communication unit for broadcast updates

**CONTACTS AND RESOURCES**

DOJ Missing & Unidentified  
Persons Unit..... (916) 227-3290

DOJ Missing Children Hotline ..... (800) 222-FIND  
(3463)

California Highway Patrol **or**  
nearest CHP Communications (800) TELL-CHP  
Center..... (835-5247)

**AMBER Alert (ENTAC)..... (916) 843-4199**

**FBI**

Los Angeles..... (310) 477-6565  
Sacramento ..... (916) 481-9110  
San Diego..... (858) 565-1255  
San Francisco ..... (415) 553-7400

National Center for Missing &  
Exploited Children ..... (800) 843-5678

Missing Children Organizations:

District Attorney's Child Abduction  
Unit

Produced by

The Child Abduction Training Project of the Center for Innovation and Resources, Inc. (CIR) in partnership with the California Child Abduction Task Force with funding awarded by the Children's Justice Act (Grant Subaward number AC21 14 8567) through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES).

This checklist is a suggested guide but is not all-inclusive. Local jurisdictions may have protocols with varying requirements.

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**INVESTIGATION CONTINUED**

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- Determine need for additional personnel including investigative and supervisory staff
- Brief and update all additional responding personnel
- Obtain and note consent to search home or building where incident took place even if the premises have been previously searched by family members or others
- Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the missing child's home even if the child was reported missing from a different location
- Inquire if the child has access to the internet and evaluate its potential role, do not overlook activity on social media accounts or other online apps and platforms

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**CHILD ABDUCTION & RISK OF DANGER TO CHILD ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

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**ALWAYS consider the child endangered until proven otherwise.**

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**ABDUCTOR-SUSPECT INFORMATION**

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- Local/state criminal history
- Registered sex offender
- History of reported/unreported violent acts including domestic violence
- Prior threats to abduct child(ren)
- Mental illness
- Unreported threats to self-harm/suicide
- Former victim of crime (violent/sexual)
- Substance abuse
- Recently terminated/quit employment
- Custody battle/recent divorce or separation
- Has ties/affiliations to family/friends out of state/country
- Potential of international abduction
- Has a current passport
- Signs of pre-abduction plans to leave state/U.S.

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**VICTIM INFORMATION**

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- Is within at-risk age group
- Knows own address and telephone number
- Knows how to call 911
- No or limited English-speaking ability
- What language(s) does the child speak?
- Immediate health concerns
- Requires medication (time-sensitive)
- Developmental delay
- Physical disability
- Is child drug dependent?
- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse victim
- Smart/cellphone-social media accounts

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**CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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- Potential unwilling victim of "marriage abduction"
- Victim seen as rightful property of abducting subject(s)
- Parents and/or primary care provider are members of a religious cult, militia, or other extremist group

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