Effective Use of the National Crime Information Center Database With Missing-Child Incidents

A Reference Guide for Public-Safety Telecommunications Personnel

Proper Message-Key and Code Use • Record Packaging and Linking • Timely and Accurate Data •

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN®

OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
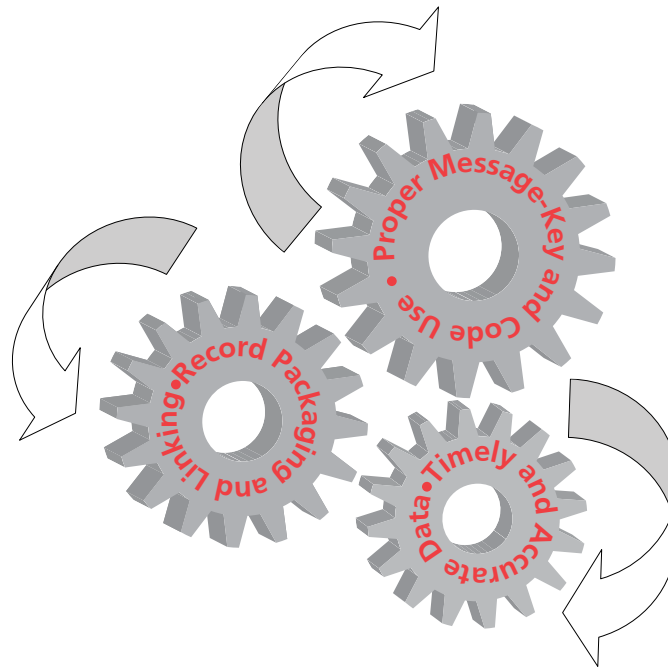Office of Justice Programs ♦ U.S. Department of Justice

AMBER® ALERT

Table of Contents

The pages noted below will outline best-practice information for using the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing-Person File. In addition to the information noted below, detailed lists of the codes required for entry fields in NCIC may be found in the "Missing Person File" chapter of the *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual*, sections 1.5 and 1.9 and the "Personal Descriptors" chapter of the *NCIC 2000 Code Manual with TOUs* (Technical and Operational Updates) *incorporated as of 1/26/2010*, sections 1 through 34. Click on the links in the list to the left to be taken to that section of the guide.

1. Getting Started

Public-safety telecommunications personnel responsible for first response to incidents of missing children are entrusted with the critically important function of gathering, organizing, and entering identifying information into the NCIC database. Beyond initial record entry, public-safety telecommunicators play a central role in making queries as well as performing record updates, modifications, and cancellations.

This reference guide is designed to provide clearly outlined, best-practice information in support of these processes as they relate to the use of NCIC during missing-child incidents. This guide is not intended to replace or override state/territorial- or agency-level policies and procedures regarding criminal-history and/or file-record systems. It should be used in conjunction with these policies, procedures, and all official Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), and NCIC training manuals and procedural publications.

About NCIC and Missing-Child Incidents

What Is It?

NCIC is a computerized index of criminal-justice information (*i.e.*, criminal-record-history information, fugitives, stolen properties, missing persons, unidentified bodies). Records contained in NCIC are provided by federal, state/territorial, local, and foreign criminal-justice agencies, as well as authorized courts. The index is available to federal, state/territorial, and local law-enforcement and other criminal-justice agencies and is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

What Does NCIC Contain?

NCIC includes data submitted by federal, state/territorial, local, and foreign criminal-justice agencies, as well as authorized courts. Submitted data includes files regarding

- Individuals with Criminal History Record Information (CHRI)
- Fugitives, Including Those from Foreign Countries
- Stolen Properties
- Missing Persons
- Unidentified Persons/Bodies
- Sex Offenders
- Identity-Theft Victims
- Immigration Violators
- Protection Orders
- Individuals on Supervised Release (Probation/Parole)
- Individuals with U.S. Secret Service Protective Files

- Criminal Gangs and Their Members
- Appropriately Suspected Terrorists

NCIC and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Missing children, missing adults who were reported missing while children, and unidentified living and deceased persons may be disclosed by NCIC to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC). This supports NCMEC's role of providing technical assistance and education regarding the problems of missing and sexually exploited children to families of victims and the professionals who support them. This also supports the ability of NCMEC to operate a nationwide, toll-free Hotline, 1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678), to permit members of the public to contact NCMEC from anywhere in the United States and internationally with information about a missing child.

Public-safety telecommunicators and field officers must be fully aware of and compliant with federal statutes which establish mandates for the incident intake and entry into NCIC of all missing-child reports. Statutes include the National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990, Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today (PROTECT) Act of 2003, and Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006.

A Child Is Missing: NCIC Readiness for Response

All authorized public-safety telecommunications personnel should be comprehensively trained in
- Entry
- Update/Modification
- Location
- Supplemental Entry
- Clearing
- Cancellation
- Query

2. Federal/NCIC-Level Codes

These codes are used by the NCIC system for missing-person record functions. **Many states/territories run record/hot-file systems that parallel NCIC and have their own sets of message-key (MKE) codes**. Your state/territory may have its own set of MKE codes corresponding to those used by NCIC as noted below. The two routes state/territory-level entries/records generally take are the
- State/territory-level record with its own MKE coding populates a state/territory record/file system such as in a state/territory wanted/hot file
- Record passes through to the federal NCIC system via the state/territory's data switch, at which point the state/territory record's MKE coding is translated to the appropriate NCIC category as the record enters the NCIC system

If a state/territory runs a parallel-record system, be sure to understand the manner in which that system's codes communicate with the federal NCIC coding system.

NCIC Function Codes for Missing-Person Entries	Function Codes
Enter Missing	EM
Modify Existing Entry	MM
Locate Missing	LM
Supplemental Entry	EMN
Clear Missing	CM
Cancel Supplemental Record	XMN
Query to Missing	QW

3. NCIC System of Searchable Descriptors

The **best practice** for initial-information entry in the record is to include the
- **Name of the Missing Person**
- **Date of Birth**

When **date of birth** is included with **name**, the searchable identifiers noted below **will cross check against the name**.
- Age
- Driver's License Number If Applicable
- Eye Color
- Hair Color
- Height
- Originating Agency Case Number If Applicable
- Race
- Sex
- Social Security Number
- Weight

When the date of birth is **not** included with the name as the primary search identifier, the other identifiers **will not** cross check against the name.

4. Minimum Fields Required for Entry of a Missing-Person Report

When entering information about a missing person (EM), the fields noted below **must** be populated in order for the record to be accepted.
- Name (NAM)
- Sex (SEX)
- Race (RAC)
- Date of Birth (DOB)
- Date of Emancipation (DOE)*
- Height (HGT)
- Weight (WGT)
- Eye Color (EYE)
- Hair Color (HAI)

- Missing Person (MNP)
- Date of Last Contact (DLC)
- Originating Agency Case Number (OCA)

*It is important to accurately interpret and populate the DOE field. The DOE field is only mandatory when Juvenile (EMJ) is used as the MKE. It should remain blank for all other MKEs. When entering information in the DOE field
- Enter the exact date the child will reach 18 or the appropriate emancipation age for your state/territory.
- Do not confuse DOE to mean **date of entry**. If this error is made the record will display the child as emancipated from the first date of entry.

States/territories may have different emancipation age requirements. Be sure to confirm the requirements applicable in the filing state/territory.

5. Applicable Message-Key Categories for Missing-Person Entries

Properly applied MKE coding for Missing-Person (MNP) entries is essential to effectively capture the missing-child incident record in NCIC. Entering agencies also want to be sure they have accurately conveyed the nature of the incident through correct MKE application along with thorough documentation in other areas of the record where the incident is further defined through identifying data and information.

MKE Code	Incident Type/Definition
Disability (EMD)	A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting him- or herself or others to personal and immediate danger
Endangered (EME)	A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating his or her physical safety may be in danger
Involuntary (EMI)	A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance may not have been voluntary (*i.e.*, abduction or kidnapping)
Juvenile (EMJ)	A person who is missing and not declared emancipated as defined by the laws of his or her state/territory of residence and does not meet the criteria for Disability (EMD), Endangered (EME), Involuntary (EMI), Juvenile (EMJ), or Catastrophe Victim (EMV)
Catastrophe Victim (EMV)	A person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe
Other (EMO)	A person aged 21 or older not meeting any other category who is missing and for whom there is reasonable concern for safety **or** a person who is **younger than age 21** and declared **emancipated** by the laws of his or her state/territory of residence

REMINDER
Many states/territories run record/hot-file systems that parallel NCIC and have their own sets of MKE codes. Thus states/territories may have their own set of MKE codes corresponding to those listed here. Be sure to understand how state/territory system-specific codes may align with the categories outlined above.

6. Effective Use of the Missing-Person Field

The MNP field is mandatory for all entries. It must be completed with one of the MNP category codes noted below before the record will be allowed into NCIC. Omission will result in a record reject.

Missing-Person Categories and Codes

- Missing Person (MP)
- Disaster Victim (DV)
- Child Abduction (CA)
- America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert (AA)

In order for MNP entries to be accepted into NCIC, you must **ensure the MKE and MNP codes are compatible**.

If the MKE used is	The MNP must be
Catastrophe Victim (EMV)	DV
Disability (EMD)	MP
Endangered (EME)	MP, CA, or AA
Involuntary (EMI)	MP, CA, or AA
Juvenile (EMJ)	MP
Other (EMO)	MP

Effective Use of Child Abduction Codes/Flags

When entering or modifying the Child Abduction (CA) code in the MNP field
- The missing person must be younger than 21 years of age
- There must be reasonable indication or suspicion a child has been abducted and/or is missing under circumstances suggesting foul play or a threat to life

When entering or modifying to the CA code an automatic notification is sent to the entities noted below enabling them to provide assistance if needed
- NCMEC
- FBI's Crimes Against Children Unit

Effective Use of AMBER Alert Codes/Flags

When entering or modifying to the AMBER Alert (AA) code in the MNP field
- The activation of an AMBER Alert is necessary
- The procedures or protocols for activating an AMBER Alert do not change

- Law enforcement is alerted about the status of the missing child and an immediate notification is sent to the FBI and NCMEC enabling them to deploy resources, when needed, in the most serious cases of child abduction
- NCMEC is able to modify the MNP field to AA once an AMBER Alert has been issued if given permission by the original entering agency

7. Effective Use of the Missing-Person Circumstances Field

The **Missing-Person Circumstances (MPC)** field is optional and provides additional information concerning the **nature of the disappearance. MPC field categories include**
- Abducted By Non-Custodial Parent (N)
- Abducted By Stranger (S)
- Adult Federally Required Entry (F)
- Runaway (R)

8. Missing-Person Record Functions

Entering Information About a Missing-Person Record

When entering information about a missing-person (EM) record
- Add information in as many additional data fields as possible.
- Check the record for accuracy before submitting.
- Include items in the Miscellaneous (MIS) field for which there is no defined field or for which more specific/detailed information pertaining to a field is necessary such as
  - Build.
  - Clothing description/last seen wearing.
  - Other descriptors such as fingernail polish, right/left-handed, smoker/type.
  - Explanation of additional descriptors.
  - Possible destination.
  - Medication, medical needs, diseases, illness.
  - Conditions under which a juvenile is listed as missing.
- Information entered in the MIS field **is NOT searchable**.
- Utilize all Caution and Medical Conditions (CMC) such as Armed and Dangerous, Suicidal, or Diabetic when appropriate. The Reason for Caution must be entered in the MIS field as the **first item in the field**.
- Enter vehicle information if there is reason to believe the missing person may be
  - Operating a vehicle bearing a license plate.
  - A passenger in a vehicle bearing a license plate.
- Remove vehicle information from the record, via a record modification (MM), if the vehicle is recovered.

Linking Entries of Two or More People Associated With the Same Incident

When linking entries of two or more people associated with the same incident
- First complete MP entries for all individuals involved with a particular incident
- Second go to the first associated person and modify his or her entry by listing the name and NCIC reference number (NIC) of each individual to be linked in the MIS field
- Then repeat this step for all other individual MP records, so the linkage appears in the MIS field of each record

Updating/Modifying a Missing-Person Entry

When updating/modifying a Missing-Person Entry (MM)
- Identification of the record to be updated/modified may be made with one of the combinations noted below in the shown order, and where NAM is entered exactly as it is in the original record
  - NAM and NIC
  - NAM and OCA
  - NIC and OCA
- Make needed changes, additions, or deletions. An entry cannot be modified once a Locate (LM) has been placed on it.
- Check the record for accuracy before submitting.

Locating a Missing-Person Entry

When locating a Missing-Person Entry (LM)
- Identification of the record to be located may be made with one of the combinations noted below in the shown order, and where NAM is entered exactly as it is in the original record
  - NAM and NIC
  - NAM and OCA
  - NIC and OCA
- Enter one of the codes noted below in the Disposition (DISP) field
  - Detained **(DETN)** – agency entering record advises locating agency arrangements have been made to return missing person
  - Released **(RELD)** – missing person should not be detained
- Check the record for accuracy before submitting

Supplementing an Existing Missing-Person Record

When supplementing an existing Missing-Person Record (EMN)
- Identification of the record to be supplemented may be made with one of the combinations noted below in the shown order, and where NAM is entered exactly as it is in the original record
  - NAM and NIC
  - NAM and OCA
  - NIC and OCA

- Enter data intended to supplement existing missing-person record
- Enter additional identifiers of various kinds such as alias names; dates of birth; scars, marks, and tattoos; and social security numbers
- Check the record for accuracy before submitting

For information about cancelling a supplemental missing-person record refer to sections 8.10 through 8.14 of the "Missing Person File" in the *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual.* Registered users may access this manual at www.leo.gov.

Clearing a Missing-Person Record

When clearing a Missing-Person Record (CM or XM)
- Identification of the record to be cleared may be made with one of the combinations noted below in the shown order, and where NAM is entered exactly as it is in the original record
  - NAM and NIC
  - NAM and OCA
  - NIC and OCA
- The entire record, including supplemental and dental data, will be removed from the file
- Check the record for accuracy before submitting

For more information about clearing a missing-person record, refer to sections 7.1 through 7.6 of the "Missing Person File" in the *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual.* Registered users may access this manual at www.leo.gov.

Completing Query Functions for a Missing-Person Record

To perform Query (QW) Function; with record pulled up, enter a combination of the codes noted below. **A negative response will return "RECORD NOT FOUND."**
- NAM and DOB
- NAM and Social Security Number (SOC)
- NAM and Operator's License Number (OLN)
- NIC

9. Automatic Cross-Search With Unidentified-Person Files

When entered or modified, a missing-person record will be compared to all unidentified-person records. Comparison includes all of the items noted below plus additional identifiers that may be found in the *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual*.

Missing	Unidentified
Date of Birth (DOB)	Estimated DOB
Sex (SEX), Race (RAC), Eye Color (EYE), Hair Color (HAI), Height (HGT), Weight (WGT)	SEX, RAC, EYE, HAI, Estimated HGT and WGT
Date of Last Contact (DLC)	Estimated Date of Death, Body Found
Scars, Marks, Tattoos, Fingerprints, Jewelry	Scars, Marks, Tattoos, Fingerprints, Jewelry
Entering Agency Code	Originating Agency Case Number (OCA) Code
Blood Type, Dental Records	Blood Type, Dental Records

10. NCIC Offline Search Functions

An **Offline Search** is a special technique used to obtain information from the NCIC databases that is unobtainable via an online inquiry. Examples include data such as partial numeric identifiers, manual name checks, and inquiries about personal descriptors.

Transaction Log Search

Used to determine if an agency or agencies have made an inquiry about a particular individual or item of property, and are able to
- Substantiate or discredit an alibi
- Track the route of an individual (e.g., suspects, witnesses, runaways)
- Place an individual near the scene of a crime or miles away from the scene

Purged Records Search

A purged records search may be used to determine if a record for a person or item of property was previously entered into NCIC and subsequently removed. **There are important considerations to take when using offline searches**. While offline searches are useful as an investigative/analytical tool in these cases, be aware
- Requests may be submitted via telephone or e-mail, through your state/territory CJIS interface/contact if online submission is set up, or at www.leo.gov
- Responses are not automatic and may take a number of days to receive

11. Additional High-Leverage NCIC Functions

Photographs are critically important to recovery of a child. NCMEC is able to enter images into the record with the originating agency's permission if the originating agency is unable to do so. **Users of NCIC are also able to enter the image of a missing child**
- Enter as much descriptive information as possible
- Link all suspect and vehicle information to the missing-child entry
- Update records with new information as quickly as possible

12. Supplemental Dental Records

Supplemental dental records may be a key tool in identification. When dental records are available
- Supply and incorporate the records into the entry
- **Enter note in record indicating dental records are available**
- Maintain accuracy of the entry
- Work closely with investigative personnel when entering these records
- Be prepared to communicate with dentists who are usually called upon to complete the initial forms from which the record entry is made

For additional assistance contact your state/territory CJIS systems administrator for contact information about the more than 500 available forensic odontologists who have trained with the FBI about how to take the dental record and translate it into NCIC format/language. If the state/territory CJIS administrator cannot assist, contact NCIC directly at 1-877-FBI-NCIC (324-6242).

For more information about entering dental records refer to sections 9.1 through 9.10 of the "Missing Person File" in the *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual*. Registered users may access this manual at www.leo.gov.

13. Additional Resources

NCIC Contact Information

Nlets: DCFBIWAQ9
Fax: 304-625-5393
Internet: IOAU@LEO.gov
For operational assistance: 304-625-3000
For training assistance: 1-877-FBI-NCIC (324-6242)

Related Resources

The resources noted below may be obtained through your agency's CJIS Coordinator by calling 1-877-FBI-NCIC (324-6242) or registering at www.leo.gov.
- *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual*
- *NCIC 2000 Code Manual with TOUs* (Technical and Operational Updates) *incorporated as of 1/26/2010*
- *NCIC Missing Person File Data Collection Entry Guide*
- *NCIC Unidentified Person File Data Collection Entry Guide*

Additional Resources for Missing-Child Incident Response
- The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International's (APCO) ANS 1.101.2-2010: *Standard for Public Safety Telecommunicators when Responding to Calls of Missing, Abducted, and Sexually Exploited Children*
- *Checklist for Public-Safety Telecommunicators When Responding to Calls Pertaining to Missing, Abducted, and Sexually Exploited Children*