



NORTH MIAMI POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



NORTH MIAMI POLICE DEPT. GUARDIAN PROGRAM 400.24

EFFECTIVE DATE: 04-12-23

APPROVED: 
Chief of Police

SUPERSEDES: N/A

CFA: N/A

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I. PURPOSE

To reduce the potential for injury or death of individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's, or developmental disabilities, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder who, due to their condition, may wander from safe environments. In addition, to facilitate the recognition of households that voluntarily notify the Department where persons with autism spectrum disorder reside, and to provide those residents with the opportunity to register their family member's condition with the Department to facilitate the Department's response and communication with said individuals.

II. POLICY

The North Miami Police Department Guardian Program, in partnership with community members, consists of the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program, the online Autism Outreach Program, and the Autism Decal Program. Members encountering North Miami residents who may benefit from any of the

programs described herein will advise said residents of the existence of the program(s) and will refer them to the designated Guardian Program Coordinator for follow-up.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Department.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Guardian Program Coordinator (hereinafter referred to as “Coordinator”) - Agency member trained in all aspects of the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program search equipment and trains all authorized designees and Operators. The Coordinator is also knowledgeable of the Autism Outreach and Decal Program. Coordinator designees will consist of Investigators. Operators will consist of supervisors.
- B. Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Operator (hereinafter referred to as “Operator”) – Sergeants and commanders trained to electronically track persons registered with the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program.
- C. Registrant - An individual registered with the Department’s Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program who has a medical diagnosis of Alzheimer’s, Dementia, Autism, or other developmental or cognitive disability where the individual has or is believed to have the potential to wander.
- D. Wristband/Transmitter - A transmitter device (Apple AirTag) assigned to the Registrant. The transmitter, which is affixed onto the wristband, tracks the Registrant in real time to their location.
- E. Registrant Number – An exclusive number assigned to a wristband/transmitter at the time of enrollment with the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program.
- F. Caregiver - The person responsible for the care of the Registrant, such as a parent, legal guardian, spouse, or other family member.
- G. Registrant Profile – Documents completed by the Caregiver that contain vital information about the Registrant enrolled in the Missing Persons Tracking

and Recovery Program. The profile will contain personal information useful during search and recovery efforts.

V. MISSING PERSONS TRACKING AND RECOVERY

The Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program consists of a means for the Department to electronically track (with consent) persons with forms of dementia, or developmental disabilities, who have registered with the Department and are later discovered to be *and* are reported missing.

A. Program Administration:

1. The Coordinator's and assigned designee's (Investigators) responsibilities are as follows:
 - a. Arrange for individual registrations, Caregiver instructions, Supervisor/Operator training, and overall program maintenance.
 - b. Maintain all registration forms containing medical information in a secured location with access only to the Coordinator, assigned Investigators, and supervisors.
 - 1). To facilitate the immediate access to the Registrant's profile during program-related search efforts, at any time or day of the week, the Coordinator will scan all Registrants' profile documents, and all other transmitter number and software application access information, into a network file. Said file will have strict permissions accessible only to the Coordinator, Investigators, and Uniform Patrol sergeants and commanders.
 - 2). The Coordinator, or Investigator, will ensure that the profile information is available in the network file as soon as a Registrant is assigned a tracking device after completion of the required documentation.
 - c. Make monthly contact with the Caregiver to verify the Registrant's status/residence, wristband status, and will maintain a log of said contacts.
 - d. The Coordinator shall not register any person for tracking, or provide equipment to any person for said purpose, without prior written consent and completion of the approved registration process.

e. The Coordinator will be responsible for managing the access to Registrant personal information, and will immediately restrict the access of any Supervisor or Investigator who has: 1) separated from service, or 2) conducted negligent, improper, or unauthorized use of the system.

f. Training:

1). The Coordinator, or Investigator, shall deliver the equipment and provide all applicable instruction to Caregivers and Supervisor/Operators.

2. Supervisor/Operator duties and responsibilities:

a. Under no circumstances shall any Investigator or Supervisor/Operator utilize, access, or view a Registrant's location information for personal use or any reason other than law enforcement purposes in connection with their official duties.

b. Supervisor/Operators will be trained by the Coordinator or assigned Investigator.

3. Qualifications for Participation:

a. Upon receipt of a request for participation in the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program, the Coordinator will process the request and ensure the following conditions are met:

1). The applicant must be diagnosed by a licensed physician with Alzheimer's, dementia, or any other qualifying developmental or cognitive disability that has, or may cause the individual to wander from his or her safe environment.

2). The Registrant must have a qualified Caregiver that has daily interaction with the Registrant and is actively involved in the Registrant's ongoing care.

3). The qualified Caregiver must agree to participate in the program on behalf of the Registrant and be responsible for the daily testing of the assigned equipment and status call checks conducted by the Coordinator, or designee.

- 4). The Registrant must voluntarily agree to participate in the program; however, if the Registrant is cognitively unable to make a necessary decision for him/herself, his/her Caregiver's wishes to enlist the participant in the program shall be sufficient if the criteria for enrollment is met.
- 5). The Coordinator, or Investigator, shall communicate to the Caregiver at the time of enrollment that they may withdraw from the program at any time for any reason.

4. Enrollment:

- a. The Coordinator shall be the point of contact for scheduling interviews with potential Registrants/Caregivers to determine whether they meet the criteria for participation in the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program.
- b. To complete the enrollment, personal information must be collected from the Caregiver, to include the Registrant's physical description, medical diagnosis, and significant behaviors and characteristics that may help a search team. The information will be obtained by the Caregiver's completion of a Registrant Profile Questionnaire form to be provided by the Coordinator.
- c. Once eligibility requirements for enrollment are met, the Coordinator, or Investigator, will issue the tracking equipment to the Registrant.
- d. The following will be obtained by the Coordinator, or Investigator, at the time of delivery:
 - 1). Signed Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program Agreement.
 - 2). Registrant Profile Questionnaire.

5. Equipment:

- a. Caregivers will be advised that in order to address any issues with the tracking equipment they must contact their assigned Investigator during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

B. Search and Recovery Efforts:

1. The Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program is an extra tool to assist the Department with the tracking of Registrants with a documented disability. Uniform Patrol officers will continue to coordinate all missing persons search and rescue efforts pursuant to the Missing Persons policy, 300.23.
2. Early identification of a missing person as a Registrant of the Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program is critical to the program's success, as the Registrant's electronic location information should be accessible through the AirTag tracking system.
3. As soon as possible upon learning that a Registrant is reported missing, the on-duty Uniform Patrol sergeant or commander will access the tracking application and account information and will relay information to the officer(s) conducting the search of any pertinent profile information and any available location information.
4. Once the Registrant is located, the lead officer will complete the necessary field report and will include information indicating whether the electronic tracking system assisted in the recovery efforts.
5. Any Investigator or Supervisor/Operator encountering any issues with the program's equipment or software will notify the Coordinator as soon as possible.
6. Missing Persons Tracking and Recovery Program equipment is not designed or intended to replace any of the normal search and recovery efforts conducted by the North Miami Police Department, such as using:
 - a. K-9 Units
 - b. Aviation Unit
 - c. Flyers
 - d. BOLOs
 - e. Canvasses
 - f. Amber, Silver, or Purple Alerts

VI. AUTISM OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Department, in partnership with residents, has a unique opportunity to foster positive encounters with members of the community by understanding, prior to those encounters, sensitivities, behaviors, or preferences for communication of persons with Autism.

Parents or guardians who may wish to register their address and family member information with the Department may do so by visiting the **Autism Outreach Program** link on our website at:

[**https://www.northmiamifl.gov/1045/Autism-Outreach-Program**](https://www.northmiamifl.gov/1045/Autism-Outreach-Program)

Once registered, the registration information will be logged by the Communications Unit, who will alert any officer responding to the listed location of the information entered by the resident. This information will assist officers at the scene to understand the behaviors and type of communication observed and will be better equipped to navigate through the interaction.

VII. AUTISM DECAL

Also in partnership with residents, relatives of household members, who live within the Autism spectrum, can display the decal depicted below on the front window of their home. The sticker will inform North Miami officers, and other first responders, that a person with Autism lives at the residence.



VIII. PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Members, throughout their interaction with the public, are encouraged to communicate to North Miami residents the existence of the programs listed in this policy if, in their estimation, the residents may benefit from their participation given the existence of an individual meeting the required criteria.
- B. Members must be cognizant that residents may choose to enlist their relative in one program, but not all. In other words, a relative who may

register their family member with the online Autism Outreach Program may chose not to have the Autism Decal on their window, and vice versa.

- C. All AirTag and wristband equipment referred to in this policy disseminated to Caregivers for missing Registrant tracking is the property of the North Miami Police Department and shall not be altered in any way or used in any capacity other than the legitimate search and rescue of a registered missing person.
- D. All information, including Registrant medical information, will be securely kept and will be subject to public record laws, including all applicable exemptions therein.