

ATTORNEY GENERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DIRECTIVE No. 2008-4

CHILD ABDUCTION RESPONSE TEAM

WHEREAS, the Criminal Justice Act of 1970, N.J.S.A. 52:17B-97 et seq., declares it to be the public policy of this State "to encourage cooperation among law enforcement officers and to provide for the general supervision of criminal justice by the Attorney General as chief law enforcement officer of the State, in order to secure the benefits of a uniform and efficient enforcement of the criminal law and the administration of criminal justice throughout the State," N.J.S.A. 52: 17B-98;

WHEREAS, protecting our children remains among the highest priorities for every law enforcement agency in the State of New Jersey;

WHEREAS, reports of missing children can be among the most difficult, challenging, and emotionally charged cases a law enforcement agency experiences;

WHEREAS, time can be lost and opportunities wasted when law enforcement responds to a report of a missing child without a plan;

WHEREAS, the approach that a law enforcement agency takes in responding to a report of a missing child may determine whether the child is promptly and safely recovered;

WHEREAS, each stage of a missing child case, from initial investigation through successful recovery, is critical;

WHEREAS, all law enforcement agencies must develop, implement, and periodically refine uniform policies and procedures to ensure swift, decisive, and appropriate action when responding to a report of a missing child;

WHEREAS, cooperation, communication, and coordination among law enforcement agencies is essential to the prompt and successful resolution of missing child cases;

WHEREAS, a standardized response will enable law enforcement to exercise more control over events, react more effectively to unexpected occurrences, and enhance the likelihood of swift and successful resolution of missing child cases;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ANNE MILGRAM, Attorney General of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Criminal Justice Act of 1970, N.J.S.A. 52:17B-92 et seq., do hereby DIRECT that all law enforcement agencies operating under the authority of the laws of the State of New Jersey shall adhere to the policies and procedures set forth below:

1. Child Abduction Response Team Leaders

Each county prosecutor shall designate two (2) individuals to serve as child abduction response team (CART) leaders. CART leaders, exercising the authority of the county prosecutor, shall oversee all missing child investigations in the county. CART leaders shall also receive standardized child abduction training and oversee CART-related training for law enforcement in the county.

2. County Preparedness

Each county prosecutor shall ensure that his or her county satisfies requirements established by the Attorney General, or her designee, for CART training and CART resources.

Each county prosecutor shall prepare an annual assessment of his or her county's CART resources. The first such assessment shall be submitted to the New Jersey State Police on January 1, 2010.

3. CART Activation

Upon receipt of a report of a missing child, the agency receiving the report shall notify its county CART leader(s) of the report, and shall immediately begin a missing child investigation. The agency receiving the report shall remain the lead agency unless or until the county prosecutor determines otherwise.

For the purposes of this Directive, "missing child" means a person 13 years of age or younger whose whereabouts are not currently known. See N.J.S.A. 52:17B-212.

Nothing in this Directive shall be construed to limit the authority of a county prosecutor to activate a CART response for any missing person.

4. Missing Child Investigations

The State Police shall disseminate and periodically re-issue guidelines, protocols, and/or best practices for investigating missing child cases. Each county prosecutor shall ensure that all missing child investigations in his or her county are conducted in accordance with the guidelines, protocols, and/or best practices disseminated and periodically re-issued by the State Police.

5. Mutual Aid

When investigating a missing child, the county prosecutor responsible for the investigation, or that prosecutor's CART leader(s), may request resources to assist in the missing child investigation from any other law enforcement agency. Any reasonable request for such assistance shall not be denied.

6. AMBER Alert

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:17B-194.3, the State Police activate AMBER Alerts. Upon the request for an activation of an AMBER Alert, the State Police shall immediately notify the CART leader(s) in the county where the AMBER Alert request originated.

7. After Action Reporting

The State Police shall create and distribute to all CART leaders a standardized After Action Report form. Within thirty (30) days of a report of a missing child who is thirteen (13) years of age or younger, the county prosecutor, or the CART leader(s), in the county receiving the initial missing child report, shall complete and submit to the State Police an After Action Report. The State Police shall utilize After Action Reports to evaluate the effectiveness of the CART Program, and enhance guidelines, protocols and best practices.

8. Implementation Instructions

The State Police shall conduct, make available, and/or coordinate periodic trainings throughout the State for personnel involved in missing child cases.

9. Implementation Questions

Questions concerning the implementation of this Directive shall be addressed to the Superintendent of the State Police, or his designee, or where appropriate, to the Attorney General or her designee.


10. Disclaimer

Nothing in this Directive shall be construed to create any rights not otherwise provided by law.

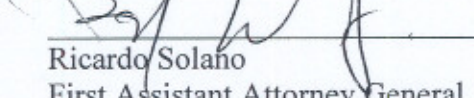
11. Effective Date

This directive shall take effect on January 1, 2009 and shall remain in full force and effect unless and until repealed, modified, or superseded by Order of the Attorney General.

Dated: DECEMBER 1, 2008



Anne Milgram
Attorney General

Attest: 

Ricardo Solano
First Assistant Attorney General