

## MISSING PERSON GUIDE

Version	Date	Comments
1	December, 2009	Initial <i>Missing Person Guide</i>
2	April, 2012	Routine review
3	February, 2015	Routine review

### A. INTRODUCTION

This Guide is designed to help familiarize university employees and students with the procedures that must be followed if an employee or student is suspected missing. All higher education institutions that provide on-campus housing and are subject to the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 are required to establish missing student notification procedures for students who reside in on-campus housing.

### B. SCOPE

A missing person is an individual whose whereabouts are unknown; they have disappeared for no known reason and there is reasonable concern for their well-being and safety. If a student or employee is believed to be missing and there is reasonable concern for his or her well-being and safety, the Department of Police and Public Safety must be contacted immediately.

### C. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

If you suspect someone you know is missing, notify the Department of Police and Public Safety immediately (703) 993-2810 and provide a detailed description of the missing person to include the following information:

- The missing person's full name and nicknames or aliases.
- Full description to include: sex, race, date of birth (age), height, weight, eye color, and hair color.
- Photograph.
- Medications.
- Vehicle information.
- Unusual or visible physical attributes such as birthmarks, tattoos, scars, or piercing.
- Date and time of last contact.
- Last known whereabouts.
- What they were last seen wearing.
- Who they were last seen with.

Fingerprints, recent photos, dental records, and all other significant and relevant information should also be shared with the police, if available.

## **D. RESPONSE**

Once University Police determines or suspect that an individual is missing, University Police will conduct the following activities as appropriate or necessary:

- Collect all other pertinent information about the missing person and conduct interviews if necessary.
- Notify the appropriate federal, state, and local officials using official notification procedures and University Police policies.
- Notify the appropriate university administrators and law enforcement officials if suspicious circumstances are involved or if the person's physical or mental health is in jeopardy.
- Involve external law enforcement and emergency response agencies as appropriate to assist in locating the missing individual.
- Conduct a search of university property and surrounding areas.
- Notify the Office of Housing and Residence Life (OHRL) and request assistance from staff, if the individual is a student resident.
- Contact all local hospitals, detention centers, and police agencies to inquire about the individual.
- Complete an official police investigation.
- Contact the emergency contact(s) identified by the employee or student.

University Police and the OHRL maintain internal and confidential plans to respond to reports of missing students and employees.

## **E. STUDENT RESIDENTS**

Student residents should notify the OHRL Resident Director or Resident Advisor as soon as they suspect that a fellow student resident is missing. OHRL will attempt to locate the student, report missing students to the Department of Police and Public Safety within 24-hours, and lend assistance to University Police and local law enforcement as necessary.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act requires that the university:

- Allow each student the option to identify an individual(s) who will be contacted by the university if the student is determined to be missing.
- Provide each such student a means to register confidential contact information in the event that the student is determined to be missing for a period of more than 24 hours.

All student residents must complete the following steps prior to registration or complete this process at registration before they will be provided with a key to their residence hall room:

1. Access the Housing and Residence Life Webpage <http://housing.gmu.edu>.
2. Select the "Student Web" tab on the left of the webpage.
3. Log into your Student Web account.
4. Enter or update emergency contact information.

Students may identify emergency contacts other than their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) unless they are younger than 18 years of age and are not emancipated in which case they must identify their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) as emergency contacts. Emergency contacts will be notified in the event that a student is suspected missing. Parents of students who are less than 18 years of age and not emancipated will be contacted within 24-hours from the time that the student is suspected or determined to be missing. Notification of emergency contacts, parents, or legal guardians may be made sooner if necessary.

## **F. EMPLOYEES AND NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS**

George Mason University provides an easily accessible and secure electronic record for non-resident students and employees to record one or more emergency contacts. To register confidential emergency contact information on the university's student record and employee information web portal, <http://patriotweb.gmu.edu>, use the following steps:

1. Log into "patriotweb"; [patriotweb.gmu.edu](http://patriotweb.gmu.edu)
2. Select "Personal Information"
3. Select "Update Emergency Contacts"
4. Select "New Contact" and complete the template
5. Select "New Contact" again to add one or more additional emergency contacts

Emergency contacts will be contacted if student or employee is suspected missing, is injured, or is otherwise unable to contact their emergency contact(s).

## **G. RESOURCES**

George Mason University Department of Police and Public Safety: <http://www.gmu.edu/police/>  
Let's Bring Them Home - National Center for Missing Adults: <http://lbth.org/>