



ACTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Operations		
POLICY & PROCEDURE # 1.21	DATE OF ISSUE: 02/24/2015	EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/28/2015
SUBJECT: SAFETYNET PROGRAM	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief Francis J. Widmayer III	
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission # None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X___NEW ___AMENDS ___RESCINDS	

I. PURPOSE

The Acton Police Department recognizes that a significant number of people in the community suffer from serious cognitive problems (i.e., dementia, cognitive developmental issues, Alzheimer's disease, and Autism). One of the greatest risks facing these individuals is their vulnerability of wandering off or becoming lost and disoriented. Once these individuals become disoriented in the community they are at serious risk for injury or death caused by exposure, victimization, other medical complications, or other forms of harm.

In the interest of quickly locating individuals who may have wandered off or who have gone missing, the Acton Police Department has entered into a collaborative partnership with the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, who have officers specifically trained in the use of the LoJack's SafetyNet Search and Rescue System and are available for call-out twenty-four hours and seven days a week in the case of a missing person in this program.

II. POLICY

The department will be leveraging tracking technology that is designed to provide greater peace of mind for caregivers of individuals who suffer from serious cognitive problems (i.e., dementia, cognitive developmental issues, or autism). Whenever an officer of this department learns of an individual who may have gone missing and who is in possession of a tracking device, the following protocols will be observed.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **The SafetyNet™ Search and Rescue System by LoJack®:** The SafetyNet™ and Rescue System is equipment that is specifically designed to track and locate radio frequency transmitters known as Personal Locator Units (PLU). Members of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office are trained in the use of tracking devices designed to locate a PLU once it has been activated.
- B. **Personal Locator Units (PLU):** Battery-operated devices that emit a radio frequency that can be tracked by the SafetyNet™ Search and Rescue System. Each PLU emits a unique radio signal and is worn on the subject's wrist or ankle 24 hours a day.

- C. **SafetyNet™ Project Lifesaver Client Management System:** A database that provides subscriber information and PLU frequencies. The database contains recent photos, contact information, subscriber diagnosis, and information regarding possible destinations the subscriber may be attracted to. The website address is www.lojacksafetynet.com/agency. The database can be accessed using the department's username and password, which will be maintained by the Emergency Communications Department and SafetyNet™ by Lojack®.

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

- A. Program Coordinator: Unless otherwise designated by the Police Chief, the Patrol Division Commander will serve as the Program Coordinator of the Sheriff's SafetyNet™ Program. The SafetyNet Program Coordinator will have the following responsibilities and oversee the following aspects of the program:
1. Serve as the principal point of contact for the Acton Police Department and the Sheriff's designated program coordinator.
 2. Acquaint various other town departments and social service providers and the general public on the availability of the Sheriff's SafetyNet™ Program.
 3. Respond to any inquiries relative to the Sheriff's SafetyNet™ Program to include but not limited to, enrollment in the program, any concerns that might exist with equipment problems, concerns expressed by caregivers, and serve as a resource to department personnel.
 4. Update any records that are being maintained on individuals who are subscribers to the SafetyNet™ Program.
 5. Maintain a master list of all residents and/or students and regular visitors to programs in Acton who have been enrolled in the SafetyNet™ Program.
 6. Serve as the principal point of contact with the Lead Dispatcher with respect to operational procedures and others matters involving this program.
 7. Ensure that alerts associated with the individuals and addresses locations are appropriately flagged and maintained with current data.
- B. Enrollment in the Program: Any inquiries about the SafetyNet™ Program and/or enrollment into the Sheriff's SafetyNet™ Program should be channeled through the department's Program Coordinator, providing the individual with the contact information for the Program Coordinator. The actual registration into the Sheriff's SafetyNet™ Program will be handled by the SafetyNet™ Program Coordinator (Phone (877) 434-6384)
1. The Sheriff's Program Coordinator will provide the department's Program Coordinator with the registration information on any new subscribers and any updates with existing accounts.

2. The department's Program Coordinator will ensure that the department's RMS is updated to reflect the most current information, to include ensuring that the appropriate warning flags associated with the MNI and address file have been appropriately updated.
3. The department's Program Coordinator will notify Lead Dispatcher of any additions, changes, or modifications to any of the records regarding SafetyNet™ Program's subscribers. Generally such notifications will be done by email.
4. Any inquiries for financial assistance with respect to enrollment into the Sheriff's SafetyNet™ Program will be assessed and coordinated through the vendor. The departments' Program Coordinator will assist in providing any additional information that might be required to adequately assess whether an applicant would qualify for any financial assistance.

V. PROCEDURES

- A. **Responding to Calls for a Missing Person:** Whenever officers are responding to a call for a missing person, the general provisions of our missing persons policy.
- B. **Missing Person Calls Received by Dispatch:** Whenever a call-taker receives a call involving a missing person, the following protocols should be observed:
 1. Typically, the dispatcher should ascertain the following information whenever a report is received on a missing person:
 - a. The identity of the missing person (name, address, etc.), to include any available clothing description, and any distinguishing characteristics, to include any mannerisms.
 - b. Whether the missing individual has any cognitive problems, which might account for the person being missing.
 - c. Whether there are any known medical conditions or other known factors that would place the person at a much higher risk or danger (e.g., special medications that must be received, a history of causing harm to themselves, not properly clothed for current weather conditions, etc.)
 - d. When and where the person was last seen? Whether there is a history of the person wandering to the same location?
 - e. Whether the missing individual has been enrolled into the SafetyNet™ and Rescue System, and whether or not the person is believed to be in possession of the PLU (SafetyNet™ tracking device).
 - f. Contact information on the person reporting the missing person.
 - g. Any other special considerations or other information that might be relevant to the person's disappearance.

C. **Dispatch Notification to the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team:** Once it has been learned that a missing person may be in possession of a PLU (SafetyNet™ tracking device) personnel from Dispatch will make a notification to the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team (Phone (978) 667-1711 Ext. 3111) for purposes of requesting a response, providing the pertinent information so as to activate the PLU radio transponder. While the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team is being notified, Acton Police units will be dispatched to the location, including the Patrol Supervisor.

D. **Safetynet™ Response Procedures:** In addition to the procedures outlined in the department's protocols with respect to missing adults or children, the following procedures will be observed as they relate to an incident involving a missing person who might be in possession of a PLU (SafetyNet™ tracking device):

1. The patrol supervisor will respond with other units, take command, and begin an investigative and search process.
2. As the supervisor obtains additional information, they will furnish that to dispatch who will relay it to the responding members of the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team.
3. The supervisor should determine the appropriateness of enlisting the assistance of the Acton Fire Department if there are some prevailing medical issues that might raise concerns for immediate medical attention.
4. Once members of the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team have arrived at the designated staging/meeting area, the patrol supervisor serving as the Incident Commander will coordinate the search efforts with all the resources deployed to search for the missing person.
5. If the person cannot be located within a reasonable amount of time, or if there are extenuating circumstances that might have led to the person's disappearance, the Incident Commander will determine the appropriateness of sending out a missing person alert through the BAPERN system, CJIS network, and/or requesting additional investigative resources.
6. An officer will be assigned to complete an incident report, which at a minimum will contain the following:
 - a. The identifying information of the parties involved, and the circumstances under which the individual went missing.
 - b. The efforts that were employed to locate the missing person;
 - c. Obtain the identity of the members of the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team who responded and assisted with the search.
 - d. Any additional information that is learned that might be helpful should there be a reoccurrence.
 - e. The outcome of the incident; and
 - f. Whether there needs to be any follow-up action with respect to the individual who went missing.

7. A copy of the completed report will be forwarded to the department's Program Coordinator, who will do the following:
 - a. Review the report for any additional information that should be incorporated into the RMS alerts that have been established for the individual.
 - b. Forward a copy of the report to the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Program Coordinator for their records.
 - c. Communicate any additional information to the lead dispatcher which might be useful should there be a reoccurrence.
 - d. Assess whether any other protective or preventive measures should be taken to avoid a reoccurrence.
 - e. Maintain a copy of the report and any other additional documentation as part of the file being maintained by the Program Coordinator.
- E. **Encountering a Person with a Safetynet™ PLU:** There may be occasions when an officer may encounter an individual who appears to be disoriented, confused, and/or lost. Because of the number of communities that are now using or having access to the Safetynet™ Search and Rescue System, an individual may have wandered off without anyone realizing it. Typically an individual who has a Safetynet™ tracking device will be wearing a bracelet on their ankle or wrist. If an officer discovers someone with Safetynet™ tracking device and cannot otherwise identify that person, the officer should do the following:
 1. Each Safetynet™ tracking device has a unique transmitter identification number. If the officer obtains that ID number from the tracking device, they can furnish that information to dispatch.
 2. Dispatch personnel will then make contact with the Sheriff's Safetynet™ Team who then can track the number through the database to learn the identity of the individual and other relevant information.

SAFETYNET PROGRAM INFORMATION

History: None