
1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the university's response to reports of missing students, staff and/or faculty, as required by federal law. This document shall serve to facilitate procedures and protocols for administering "Missing Persons" investigation and notification through the Texas Southern University Department of Public Safety for persons missing from campus property, campus events, or residential housing that is university-affiliated, both on and off campus.

For purposes of this policy, a campus affiliated person will be considered missing, if a roommate, classmate, faculty member, staff member, family member or other campus person has not seen the person in a reasonable amount of time. A reasonable amount of time may vary with the time of day and information available regarding the missing person's daily schedule, habits, punctuality, and reliability. Individuals will be considered missing immediately, if their absence has occurred under circumstances that are suspicious or cause concerns for their safety. If the initial report that a person is missing is made to a department other than the TSU Department of Public Safety, the person receiving the report will ensure that the Department of Public Safety is contacted immediately.

2. POLICY PROVISIONS

A. Students eighteen (18) years of age or older and students deemed emancipated minors will be given the opportunity during each semester registration process to designate an individual(s) to be contacted by the university "in case of emergency." In the event a student is reported "missing" the Department of Public Safety, in conjunction with other university personnel, will attempt to contact the student's emergency designee no more than twenty-four (24) hours after the time the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedures set forth below. An emergency contact designee will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.

B. In the event a student under the age of eighteen (18) years and who is not emancipated is determined to be missing pursuant to the procedures set forth below, the university is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian no more than twenty-four (24) hours after the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

3. OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR MISSING PERSONS

A. Any individual on campus who has information that a student, staff, faculty member or visitor/guest of the university may be a "missing person" shall notify the TSU Department of Public Safety immediately: . Note: In order to avoid jurisdictional conflicts when a commuter student is believed to be missing, the reporting person should immediately notify local law enforcement authorities if the person is "missing" from a location other than university governed property. The TSU Department of Public Safety . will assist outside agencies with these investigations as requested.

B. The TSU Department of Public Safety will gather information about the "missing person" from the reporting person and from the known acquaintances (description, clothes last worn, where the person might be, who the person might be with, vehicle description, information about the physical and mental well being of the person, an up-to-date photograph, class or work schedule, etc.). Appropriate campus staff will be notified to aid in the search of the campus for the "missing person."

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- C. If the above actions are unsuccessful in locating the person within a reasonable time of the initial report or it is immediately apparent that the person is a missing person (e.g., witnessed abduction), the TSU Department of Public Safety will contact the Houston Police Department and the Harris County Sheriffs Office, and any other local law enforcement agency needed to assist with the investigation.
- D. No later than twenty-four (24) hours after determining that a student, staff, faculty member or guest/visitor is missing from campus or from property under the control of the university, the TSU Department of Public Safety, in cooperation with other appropriate university departments, shall notify the emergency contact (*for students 18 and over) or the parent/guardian (for students under the age of 18) that the student, staff, faculty member or guest/visitor is believed to be missing. *Contact is contingent upon the correct emergency contact information being made available by the student.

4. CAMPUS COMMUNICATION ABOUT MISSING STUDENTS

A. In all cases of a missing student, where the student is declared missing by the TSU Department of Public Safety after an initial investigation, the law enforcement agency conducting the subsequent investigation will provide information to the media that is designed to obtain public assistance in the search for any missing student. The Office of Communications is available to provide consultation with the investigating law enforcement agency on appropriate communications. Any media requests to the University will be directed to the Office of Communications.: Prior to providing the Texas Southern University community with any information about a missing student, the Office of Communications shall consult with the TSU Department of Public Safety and with law enforcement authorities to ensure that communications do not hinder the investigation.

B. In all cases of a "missing person" that occurs from university campus or property under the control of the university, the TSU Department of Public Safety shall distribute a "campus security alert" flyer informing the campus community of the event, depicting as much information as possible, and requesting the assistance from the TSU community for bringing the investigation to resolution.