

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Title Welfare Checks		
Topic	Series	Number
OPS	304	02
Effective Date June 4, 2018		
Rescinds: SO-10-02 (Check on Welfare Calls for Service), Effective Date, February 22, 2010		
Related to: GO-SPT-302.01 (Calls for Police Services) GO-OPS-304.03 (Missing Person Reports)		

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I. PURPOSE

As part of the mission of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to safeguard District of Columbia residents and visitors by providing the highest quality of police service with integrity and compassion, MPD officers conduct welfare checks to verify the status of members of the public.

The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for conducting welfare checks. This directive also specifies procedures for relaying appropriate information to MPD officials, MPD Youth and Family Services Division (YFSD), the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and any other involved parties.

II. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meanings designated:

1. Adult – any person 18 years of age or older.
2. Juvenile – any person under 18 years of age unless the person has been emancipated by the court.
3. Welfare check – service offered by the MPD wherein a member responds to a location to determine the well-being or safety of one or more persons.

III. REGULATIONS

- A. **All** subjects whose welfare cannot be verified, regardless of age, shall be investigated according to the facts and circumstances related to each incident.
- B. Members conducting welfare checks shall prepare an incident report in **all** cases that result in a *bona fide* welfare check. These reports shall be classified as a “Check on Welfare of Adult” or “Check on Welfare of Juvenile” incident in the MPD Records Management System (RMS).

Example 1: A son has been unable to reach his elderly mother for two days but she has not answered the phone or responded to knocks at the door. The son calls MPD to perform a welfare check at his mother’s residence. This **is** an example of a “Check on Welfare of Adult” incident.

Example 2: A call is received from a concerned member of the community regarding a homeless person who appears to be in distress. A member is dispatched to respond to that location and determines the need for an ambulance from District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DCFEMS). This **is not** an example of a “Check on Welfare of Adult” incident.

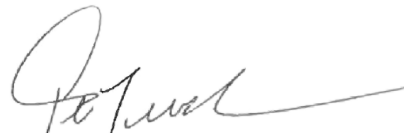
IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Members shall respond to and investigate **all** “Check on Welfare of Adult” and “Check on Welfare of Juvenile” incidents.
- B. In **all** incidents where welfare cannot be verified:
 - 1. The responding member shall notify an official at their element.
 - a. The notified official shall review the available facts and circumstances and direct further inquiry or action as appropriate.
 - 2. In cases involving a juvenile, the responding member shall ensure that YFSD and CFSA are notified. CFSA can be reached by telephone at (202) 671-SAFE.
 - 3. The responding member shall ensure that his or her contact information and the Central Complaint Number (CCN) are left with the person from whom information was obtained or at the location of unverified welfare check, whenever possible.
 - 4. In cases where welfare cannot be determined prior to the end of the shift, the watch commander shall determine whether follow-up is

necessary and notify the relieving watch commander accordingly.

- C. When CFSA requests a welfare check and the juvenile is located, but CFSA cannot provide an estimated time of arrival:
1. The responding member shall notify an official at their element; and
 2. The element official shall review the available facts and circumstances and direct appropriate action (e.g., transport the child to CFSA, force entry).
- D. Members shall complete an incident report in response to **all** welfare checks, regardless of the subject's age.
1. The incident shall be classified as either a "Check on Welfare of Adult" or "Check on Welfare of Juvenile" report, unless otherwise evidenced by the facts and circumstances of the preliminary investigation.
 2. All RMS report fields shall be completed appropriately (i.e. the "Reporting Person" shall contain the name of the person who requested the welfare check and the "Subject Person" shall contain the name of the person whose welfare required verification).
 3. All related facts and circumstances shall be documented, including:
 - a. The identity of the person from whom information was obtained ("Reporting Person");
 - b. Whether the subject is a juvenile or otherwise vulnerable;
 - c. How the welfare of the subject was verified, if applicable;
 - d. A detailed description of all investigative steps taken toward verification of the subject's welfare;
 - e. All notifications made as the result of unverified welfare checks; and
 - f. That the responding member's contact information and the Central Complaint Number (CCN) were left with the person from whom information was obtained or at the location of unverified welfare check. If it was not possible to provide the contact information and CCN, members shall document, the reason that the information was not provided.

4. The official reviewing and approving the incident report shall submit the report to the element watch commander via RMS prior to the end of the shift in which the report was taken.
5. The element watch commander shall ensure that incident reports involving juveniles are submitted to the YFSD commander via RMS prior to the end of the shift in which the report is taken.
 - a. The YFSD commander shall ensure that the reports are emailed to the CFSA director or his or her designee on the following business day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Newsham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Newsham
Chief of Police

PN:KDO:MOC:SMM