

I. PURPOSE

To describe the organization and scope of the Sheriff's Office Project Lifesaver program (PLS). The purpose of Project Lifesaver is to utilize state-of-the-art technologies in conjunction with existing public safety operations for emergency service response to missing persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease, dementia, autism, Down syndrome, or other related disorders.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office that the Project Lifesaver program is an officially endorsed function of this Agency. All personnel on the Project Lifesaver team will be trained in the use of a mobile receiver, installation and maintenance of client transmitter equipment and response/search procedures. Team members will conduct bi-monthly maintenance checks of transmitters that have been issued to clients and will respond to search and rescue call-outs for clients in the program.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Organization of the Project Lifesaver program.

1. A Supervisor will be appointed as the Project Lifesaver Coordinator and organize all Project Lifesaver responses, training and staffing.
2. The Project Lifesaver Coordinator may appoint a deputy to act as an Administrative Supervisor. The Administrative Supervisor will be responsible for day to day operation and supervision of the Project Lifesaver program.
3. The Project Lifesaver Coordinator may appoint a deputy to act as a Training Supervisor. The Training Supervisor will be responsible for initial training for new members and recertification training for existing members.
4. The Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor shall maintain a database for all clients and caregivers. In addition, the Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor shall maintain statistics and provide reports for all Project Lifesaver activities.
5. The Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor shall ensure that new and/or replacement equipment is ordered, when necessary, and all team equipment is maintained in proper working order.
6. The Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor shall develop and maintain good relations with surrounding jurisdictions to ensure cooperation between our agencies. This may include search and rescue training exercises with other Project Lifesaver teams or training with search and rescue units in other jurisdictions.
7. The Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor shall ensure that three Sheriff's Office emergency vehicles are available for use by Project Lifesaver personnel in the event of a call out. The HHR is the only vehicle assigned to Project Lifesaver and must be utilized for battery changes. All other vehicle use needs authorization from the AIB on-duty shift supervisor. All vehicles, except the HHR, are to be utilized for call-out purposes ONLY
8. The Project Lifesaver membership will be limited to volunteers from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office or the Fairfax County Police Department Helicopter

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Division. Team members may be sworn, full or part-time deputy sheriffs or police officers, civilians assigned to the helicopter unit, reserve deputy sheriffs, civilian employees or agency approved volunteers.

9. Team members are responsible for the initial installation of clients, replacement of batteries, or other equipment, and other administrative support functions.
10. On-duty team members shall respond to missing client call-outs and assist with the search, recovery and safe return of clients.
11. In the event of a missing client, Department of Public Safety Communications and the appropriate police department Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Herndon, Vienna as well as the Fairfax County Helicopter Unit, shall be advised of the search as soon as possible.

B. Selection of Project Lifesaver Team Members

1. All team members of Project Lifesaver will go through the following process:
 - a. With authorization from their supervisor, potential members will register for an Operator Certification class through the Administrative Supervisor or the Project Lifesaver Training Supervisor.
 - b. These individuals will be required to attend the initial Operator's Certification class designed and authorized by Project Lifesaver International.
 - c. Minimum requirements for members
 - 1) Must have experience as a full or part-time deputy sheriff or police officer, reserve deputy sheriff, civilian employee or agency approved volunteer.
 - 2) Must have had no disciplinary actions within the past year and no pending actions.
 - 3) The Coordinator, the Administrative Supervisor and the Project Lifesaver Training Coordinator will determine what staff members will be selected to attend the Instructor Course.
 - 4) All Project Lifesaver members must sign and adhere to the Non-Standing Unit Project Lifesaver Expectations and Member Agreement (Attachment 1).

C. Client Selection and System Setup

1. All potential clients/caregivers who contact the Sheriff's Office will be directed to the Coordinator or the Administrative Supervisor.
2. The Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor will determine the capacity of the Project Lifesaver program and will create a waiting list for future clients based upon a first come, first served basis
3. The caregiver will be required to complete both the application and the Caregiver Contract.

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4. After the Administrative Supervisor receives both completed documents, and space for a new client is available, the deputy assigned to that client will contact the caregiver to set up an appointment, following the guidelines established for that purpose.
5. Before leaving the area, the assigned deputy will test the equipment to ensure that a signal is received from the transmitter and the best frequency will be recorded.
6. The Coordinator or Administrative Supervisor will update client/caregiver information in the database and make the necessary copies for the files in the PLS room.
7. At no time will equipment be placed upon a client without the consent of a legally responsible party.
8. In accordance with the Caregiver Contract, any client that voluntarily leaves the Program or is removed due to Program violations will return all Project Lifesaver equipment (to include self-purchased equipment) to the Sheriff's Office. The assigned deputy will respond to the client/caregiver's residence to retrieve all equipment.

D. Call Out Procedures

1. Initial Notification
 - a. An initial call will be placed by the caregiver to the Project Lifesaver phone line in the AIB Control Booth.
 - b. The AIB Control Booth deputy will take down the information and follow the instructions as listed on the AIB Call-Out Checklist.
 - c. The AIB Control Booth deputy will record the names of responding team members and ensure a minimum of three team members.
 - d. Any on-duty Civil Enforcement Branch team member, with Project Lifesaver equipment will be notified to proceed to the scene and assist with the search.
 - e. The AIB Control Booth deputy will then notify the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) supervisor and may request the services of helicopter.
 - f. The first unit arriving on scene will act as Incident Commander.
 - g. Any available team members may respond and assist with the search. All team members who do not have agency vehicles will be responsible for obeying all normal traffic laws during their response. No member is authorized to respond in an expedited manner without proper equipment and authorization.
2. Response Procedures
 - a. While the Sheriff's Office recognizes that any call out for a client search will be considered a medical emergency, this fact alone cannot be used as the sole justification for deputies expediting their response and

utilizing full emergency equipment when in route to the vicinity of the missing person. Other factors such as driving conditions (traffic, weather, time of day, etc.), environmental conditions affecting the client's exposure to the elements and the client's condition and history must all be taken into account in determining the appropriate response. When engaged in a search, vehicle emergency equipment (lights) can be activated to ensure visibility by other vehicles. All actions shall be in accordance with SOP 037, and most specifically Section III, D, 6.

- b. Sworn Sheriff's Office staff who are responding to an emergency shall use due diligence when operating vehicles in a manner consistent with the provisions of Section 46.2-920 of the Code of Virginia.
- c. The authority to drive contrary to regulatory codes does not relieve the deputy of the responsibility to exercise due regard for others. Speed will be that which is reasonable and prudent, taking into careful consideration such things as weather, traffic control devices, character of neighborhood or area, traffic volume, and road and vehicle conditions.
- d. Upon approaching a controlled intersection or other location where there is a reasonable possibility of collision, the operator of a sheriff's vehicle being operated under response or emergency driving conditions and having the right-of-way shall control the vehicle in such a manner so as to avoid a collision, reducing the vehicle's speed or stopping if necessary.
- e. All responding team members will inform the Incident Commander of their status by radio on AIB LSVR. The Incident Commander will direct all responding units to an appropriate location to assist with the search. All communications during the search will be conducted on AIB LSVR unless emergency communications are needed on another frequency.

3. On-Scene Procedures

- a. The highest-ranking team member on scene shall assume duties as the Incident Commander. He or she may be relieved of that duty by a more senior or higher ranking member of the team should that be necessary.
- b. The Incident Commander shall gather all available information from the care-giver, establish the Place Last Seen and relay that information to responding team members. The Incident Commander shall begin an initial electronic search of the Place Last Seen.
- c. The Incident Commander shall meet with the police supervisor on the scene, supply information regarding the ongoing client search, and provide appropriate look-out information for police units in the vicinity.
- d. The first team member to receive a signal will notify the Incident Commander via radio and hold his/her position. The Incident Commander will then direct other units to the appropriate search locations. Any member who receives a strong signal may announce that he/she is "going to ground." Any unit doing so will give their exact location.

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- e. In the event a search has been in progress for more than 30 minutes, the Incident Commander shall mobilize additional resources to assist with the search. This shall include, but is not limited to the following:
 - 1) additional personnel from the Sheriff's Office.
 - 2) additional personnel from other agencies.
 - 3) Fairfax County Police Department helicopter
 - f. At no time will any locating equipment be operated by non-certified individuals.
 - g. Under no circumstances will a search end until all reasonable efforts to find the client have been exhausted. The ranking team member on scene will determine when a search is to be terminated.
- 4. Post Search Procedures
 - a. Upon locating the missing client, the ranking team member present will determine the appropriate means of transporting the client home. The client should also be evaluated by team members to determine if medical care is needed.
 - b. Once the search has been concluded, the Incident Commander will debrief all Project Lifesaver members and document the incident through SIRS. Copies of any PLS call-out report will be forwarded to the Project Lifesaver Coordinator and the Administrative Supervisor.
- E. Training for Project Lifesaver
 - 1. Team members are expected to attend all scheduled training exercises. Members may only be excused from two sessions in a twelve-month period.
 - 2. Team members will be re-certified by working with the equipment during searches, mock searches or battery changes. The Project Lifesaver Training Supervisor will ensure that initial Operator Certification classes are held when necessary.
 - 3. All training records, including records of any squad level training exercises will be forwarded to and maintained by the Project Lifesaver Training Supervisor to ensure compliance with this SOP.
- F. Equipment Maintenance and Procurement
 - 1. All Project Lifesaver equipment is to be checked weekly by an assigned team member.
 - 2. All issued transmitters will have the batteries changed approximately every 60 days, but not more than 75 days, from the date of the last battery change.

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3. The Project Lifesaver Administrative Supervisor will purchase additional supplies and equipment as needed using the monies deposited in the FCSO account through PLSI.

07/05/05
DATE APPROVED

07/06/05
EFFECTIVE DATE



**STACEY A. KINCAID
SHERIFF**

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