

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA  
September 18, 2015**

**PI 15-18**

**TO:** County Social Service  
Division of Juvenile Services  
Tribal Offices  
Regional Supervisors  
Chafee Independent Living

**FROM:** Kelsey Bless, Permanency Administrator  
Dean Sturn, Foster Care Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Foster Care Missing Children 624-05-15-50-34

**PROGRAMS:** Foster Care

**EFFECTIVE:** September 29, 2015

**RETENTION:** Until Manualized

Children and Family Services (CFS) will issue many new policies this month to meet full compliance with the PL 113-183 "Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act". This federal legislation can be viewed at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4980/text>.

Effective September 29, 2015; North Dakota will enhance our missing children policy to engage in the nationwide effort to ensure the foster children who have runaway or are missing are expeditiously located and screened upon returning to foster care.

**Missing Children 624-05-15-50-34**

The custodial case manager, upon determining that a foster child is missing, must make a report immediately, and in no case later than 12 hours using three specific steps:

1. Immediately report the incident and pertinent information to local law enforcement. This includes requesting that law enforcement enter the pertinent information into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).
2. Immediately report the incident and pertinent information to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).
3. Immediately report the incident and pertinent information to the Regional Supervisor.

**Pertinent Information** means, but is not limited to the following:

Circumstances of the “missing” report:

- Who, what, where, when, exact time.
- Description of the child’s appearance; i.e. hair color/style, clothing, identifying marks. Supply photo if available.
- Provider name, address, and telephone number.
- Who saw the child last?
- Date, time, relevant content from the last case manager visit.
- Is this the first time the child has been “missing”? If not, provide a brief history of prior “missing” episodes.
- What was going on with the foster child at the time, including the possible primary factors that contributed to the foster child being absent from care?
- Is there any suspicion of foul play such as abduction, human trafficking, or sexual exploitation?

Return of the foster child.

Once the foster child is found, the above three steps should be repeated to inform all involved parties that the foster child is no longer missing or on the run.

The case manager must screen the foster child to determine both the primary factors that led to the foster child running away, and the foster child’s experiences while absent from foster care. This includes determining if the foster child was a possible human trafficking victim. The ND Runaway & Missing Youth Screening (SFN 573) shall be used to help the custodial agency identify if a child missing from foster care was a victim or exploited. The custodial agency should determine how to best integrate this screening tool upon the missing child’s return to foster care. Attention should be paid to the child’s ability and willingness to participate in the screening. Every effort should be made to complete the screening before NCMEC is notified that the child has been located.

**In the follow-up contact being made to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), the case manager will be asked if there was suspicion of or actual human trafficking/sexual exploitation while the child was absent from foster care.** If the screening is not completed prior to contacting NCMEC and later it is determined the child was exploited, case management shall notify NCMEC of the findings.

In the event it is determined that the foster child was a victim or sexually exploited; case management will work to ensure needed medical screenings are initiated, services are provided to the child and all required documentation (960, safety planning, sentinel events, etc.) is completed.

Additional resources to assist case management with runaway clients can be found on [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

### **Documentation by the Custodial Case Manager**

The case manager must document information in the appropriate data fields in FRAME:

- What action was taken by the case manager and foster care provider to expeditiously locate the missing foster child?
- What primary factors led to the foster child running away?
- How will case management respond to the primary factors identified in current and subsequent placements?
- The date and the results of the screening determining whether or not the child was a victim or exploited while missing from foster care.

Reminder: Children and Family Services (CFS) must be notified by the Regional Supervisor when a foster child is missing.

**\*\*\* The FRAME FIELDS have not been created. It will be the responsibility of the case manager to document these efforts in case notes in the case file or FRAME case activity log until further notice.**

Policy will be manualized as soon as possible. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Children & Family Services.

Attachments: SFN 573 "Runaway & Missing Youth Screening" (new form attached).  
SFN 573 EXAMPLE of the screening

Thank you.