

## **Minors in a Disaster Procedures for Reuniting Minors**

This procedure, Reuniting Minors in a Disaster is designed as a guide only. This is not law, has not been checked by a lawyer and in no way holds a CERT member to laws covering children in a disaster. The following information was taken from the National Center for Disaster Medicine & Public Health and Emergency Management & Response Information Sharing & Analysis Center Post Disaster Reunification of Children: A National Approach.

Amid the chaos of a natural, technological, or human-caused disaster, there is an increased possibility for children to become separated from their parents or legal guardians. This separation could occur during the evacuation or sheltering process, or because children who are located in a childcare, educational, medical, juvenile justice, recreational, or other facility may be unable to reconnect with their parents or legal guardians.

Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC's) hotline for those events received over 34,000 calls. Children comprised approximately 25 percent of the Nations population. Reunifying unaccompanied minors and separated or missing children with their parents or legal guardians in the aftermath is a priority. Accomplishing this goal requires the efficient, coordinated use of resources and efforts from across the whole community at the local, state regional and national levels.

The following procedures will be used when LAHCFD CERT Members find an unaccompanied minor during a disaster.

- CERT members are activated
- CERT member performs zone survey
- CERT member comes across unaccompanied minor.
- CERT member asks minor about parent location, nearby relative, guardian, and neighbor next door.
- CERT member notifies ARK regarding unaccompanied minor.
- Scribe documents on Scribe board unaccompanied minor address, time and who found them.

ARK notifies LAH Town EOC regarding unaccompanied minor. Town EOC to contact Sheriff's Officer regarding CERT's finding unaccompanied minor.

Bring unaccompanied minor back to ARK, if there are 2 CERT members working as a team.

If CERT member is by himself or herself, stay with unaccompanied minor, contact ARK to send 2 people from Staging to come to your location to retrieve the unaccompanied minor and return to the ARK.

Unaccompanied minor arrives at ARK.

ARK Command staff will assign 2 Qualified CERT members to stay with Unaccompanied minor either in ARK Command area or in the fire station office.

ARK will notify Town EOC of unaccompanied minor status.

Parent or legal guardian arrives at ARK. They must show proper ID.

Observe how unaccompanied minor reacts to parent or guardian, if in doubt do not release child to parent or guardian.

Document unaccompanied minors name, address, birthdate, and picture of minor. Make copy of information, have parent or guardian sign and print on document, give a copy to parent, keep copy for records with Incident Commander.

\*\*\* Qualifications for dealing with unaccompanied minors:

Must have taken ICS 100, 200, 700 with certificates turned in to ESC.

Have been finger printed and background check by SCC Sheriff's Office.

Fingerprints and background check on file with Town of LAH.

Qualification listed on Town ID Card.

Have attended training on dealing with Unaccompanied Minor's.

If the need arises and you need to contact a "Clearinghouse" for reuniting children separated from parents or legal guardians, use the information listed below.

California Department of Justice

Missing/Unidentified Persons Unit

P.O. Box 903387 Sacramento Ca 94203-3870

(916) 227-3290 (800) 222-3463 Fax: (916) 227-2370

<http://ag.ca.gov/missing>