

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATIONS – 2026

COURSE GOAL

This course provides students with the minimum topics and competencies required to conduct and support missing person investigations. The intent of the course is to develop and improve the student's working knowledge of statutory requirements, investigative strategies, digital evidence sources, interagency coordination, and case management practices related to missing persons investigations. The course consists of facilitated discussion, case study analysis, digital investigative review, and practical scenario-based exercises for in-service personnel.

COURSE DETAILS

Course Title: Missing Person Investigations

Duration: 1 Hour

Instructors: Detective Jorgenson, Sergeant Matson

Location: SCSO HQ; 5200 Soquel Ave. Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Dates: 02/11/2026 & 03/26/2026

MINIMUM TOPICS / EXERCISES

- Statutory requirements for missing persons investigations
- Initial patrol response procedures
- Investigative classification and risk assessment
- NCIC and CLETS entry requirements
- AMBER Alert and Endangered Missing Advisory criteria
- Search coordination and ICS integration
- Digital evidence and geolocation analysis
- Call Detail Records (CDRs) and CSLI analysis
- Google, Apple, and Meta account data review
- Proof-of-life analysis and articulation
- Interagency coordination
- Family liaison considerations
- Case documentation and articulation
- Scenario-based practical exercises

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate knowledge of statutory mandates regarding missing persons investigations.
- Demonstrate understanding of mandatory reporting and entry timelines.
- Demonstrate ability to articulate probable cause and exigent circumstances.
- Demonstrate understanding of digital geolocation sources and proof-of-life indicators.
- Demonstrate competency in investigative classification and resource allocation.
- Demonstrate ability to coordinate investigative and search resources.

Minimum standards of performance shall be evaluated through facilitated discussion, scenario participation, and instructor observation. Remediation will be provided until competency is demonstrated.

STATUTORY AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (V(a))

- California Penal Code reporting requirements
- No waiting period policy
- At-risk definitions and DOJ mandates
- NCIC entry timelines and federal requirements
- AMBER Alert and Endangered Missing Advisory criteria
- Emergency disclosure requests (18 USC 2702)
- CSLI warrant requirements (Carpenter v. United States)
- Search and seizure considerations in missing person cases

AGENCY POLICY REVIEW (V(c))

- Review of SCSO missing persons policy
- Supervisor notification requirements
- Documentation standards
- Evidence preservation procedures

CASE LAW REVIEW (V(b))

- Carpenter v. United States
- Relevant exigent circumstances case law
- Search warrant requirements for digital data

CLASS EXERCISES / STUDENT EVALUATION (V(h))

- Digital data interpretation exercise
- Risk classification scenario
- Exigency articulation drill
- Timeline construction practical
- Group case study analysis

Performance shall be assessed by instructor observation during facilitated discussions and practical exercises. Students must meet minimum competency standards prior to course completion.