



FORT LAUDERDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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FLPD CREATES ENDANGERED PERSONS UNIT

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is proud to announce the creation of the Endangered Persons Unit. This new unit will concentrate on investigating crimes and incidents involving our city's most vulnerable population, individuals often exploited because of their age, disability, or circumstance.

The unit includes seven detectives and a sergeant, who were all previously assigned to various units within the Investigations Bureau. Collectively, the unit has considerable expertise in handling investigations involving missing persons, violent crimes against children, internet crimes against children, human trafficking, sexual offender verification violations, juvenile/career criminal offenders, and animal cruelty. These specialized investigations often overlap and merging them into one unit will allow for more collaboration on cases.

Detectives assigned to the unit will investigate missing persons cases involving missing adults and juveniles, habitual runaways, and endangered missing persons. In their investigations, they will continue to utilize the SafetyNet Tracking System, which is designed to assist in the quick recovery of enrolled users. Thus far, the SafetyNet program has a 100 percent recovery success rate for enrolled users.

Two detectives in the unit are task force officers specifically assigned to investigate internet crimes against children. Their responsibilities include thoroughly screening hundreds of cyber tips annually as well as handling reports of sextortion and other types of online exploitation.

Additional areas of focus include verifying registered sex offenders and career offenders residing within our jurisdiction and ensuring compliance with the terms of their registry. Furthermore, one detective in the unit specializes in following up on animal cruelty investigations.

The responsibilities of the sergeant of the unit include supervising the detectives and investigating cases of human trafficking and labor trafficking. The sergeant, who is also a task force officer, investigates trafficking cases on both a local and federal level.

The Endangered Persons Unit will further exemplify the mission of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department in providing a safe and orderly environment for the community we serve. To report a crime or information about a crime in the City of Fort Lauderdale, contact us at 954-764-HELP (4357). To report information related to the Endangered Persons Unit, contact Sergeant Margaret Dietrich at 954-828-6628.

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