I. AUTHORITY

Ohio Revised Code 5120.01 authorizes the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, as the executive head of the department, to direct the total operations and management of the department by establishing procedures as set forth in this policy.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria and guidelines for the apprehension of offenders who have absconded supervision or who have escaped or have been erroneously released from detention.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to employees of the Adult Parole Authority (APA) and Office of Prisons (OOP), especially those employees who are assigned to fugitive apprehension duties.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Certified in Firearms - The meeting of all statutory requirements to carry a firearm in addition to the satisfactory completion of the OPOTC 40-Hour Basic Firearms School, an acceptable score on the defensive tactics and subject control (DT/SC) initial proficiency test along with subsequent annual proficiency demonstrations with acceptable scores in firearms and DT/SC for purposes of recertification.

Erroneously Released Offender - An offender released from custody due to a calculation error, mistaken identity, or inadvertent release by County Sheriffs.

Escaped Prisoner/Offender - An individual who flees from lawful custody/supervision without authorized release.

Field Officer Tablet (FOT) - Computerized data maintained by the Parole Officer assigned to the case that contains the chronological details involving contact with the offender, social services agencies, law enforcement, etc. The tablets also contain all demographic information pertaining to the offender and documentation of staffing decisions.
Immediately - As soon as possible, but no later than the next business day.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - A formal written agreement between the Adult Parole Authority and any statewide or federal government entity approved by the Regional Administrator, Field Services Superintendent and Chief of the APA or designee. Informal – Sharing of appropriate information with law enforcement agencies and other person(s) or government entities pursuant to Department policy 07-ORD-02, Public Records.

National Crime Information Center (NCIC) - A nationwide computerized information system operated by the US Department of Justice and FBI as a service to all criminal justice agencies. The center provides and maintains a readily available computerized filing system of accurate and timely documented criminal justice information.

Offender - Any individual under the supervision of the Adult Parole Authority. For purposes of this policy, offender also includes inmates/prisoners who have been erroneously released or who have escaped from a DRC institution.

Violator at Large (VAL) - An offender, as defined by the ORC 2967.15, who absconds the supervision of the Adult Parole Authority.

V. POLICY

It is the policy of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC), to protect the public, by making every effort to locate and apprehend all Violators at Large (VAL) and Escapees that are under its jurisdiction.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Field Operations

1. Regional administrators are responsible for the allocation of resources for the apprehension of VALs.

2. It is the responsibility of the unit supervisor/designee to assign and monitor all VAL cases. High profile cases shall be a priority and receive immediate attention.

3. Fugitive Section Referrals

   a. When a fugitive case analyst obtains information concerning the possible whereabouts of a VAL offender, he/she shall notify the unit supervisor/designee and document in NOTEC. The unit supervisor/designee shall assign the VAL case to a parole officer and conduct an investigation within thirty (30) calendar days. The parole officer shall staff the results of the investigation with the unit supervisor/designee and notify the fugitive case analyst. The unit supervisor/designee shall document efforts to locate the VAL offender in NOTEC.
B. Referral and Staffing of Prison Cases for Escapees or Erroneous Releases

1. Records shall be established and maintained by the Fugitive Section on all DRC prison escapees. A file folder shall be developed containing pertinent information concerning the offender, including all available identification material.

2. When an offender escapes from a DRC prison, the managing officer/designee shall issue a warrant to the local Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) post and, as soon as practical, but no longer than twenty-four (24) hours following a confirmed escape, notify the Fugitive Section.

3. The managing officer/designee shall, as soon as practical, but no longer than twenty-four (24) hours following the confirmation of an Erroneous Release, contact the Fugitive section and relay the pertinent information on the Erroneous Release. If the managing officer/designee determines it necessary, the local OSHP post shall be notified immediately.

4. Upon receiving confirmation that an offender has escaped or was Erroneously Released, the Fugitive section shall immediately enter the Offender’s warrant into the LEADS/NCIC data system and notify the managing officer/designee.

5. When appropriate, the Fugitive section shall refer the Offender to the appropriate APA office.

C. Investigations of Violators at Large

1. The APA shall investigate the whereabouts of VAL cases utilizing all available resources to include the following:
   a. Last known address of violator;
   b. Family/friends of violator;
   c. Past employers and coworkers;
   d. Significant others;
   e. Known hang-outs/areas of violator;
   f. Shelters;
   g. Local community agencies.

2. Unit supervisors/designee are responsible for establishing and maintaining positive working relationships and, when possible, MOUs with local community agencies including, but not limited to:
   a. Law enforcement agencies;
   b. Court system;
   c. Prosecutor’s office;
   d. Bureau of Motor Vehicles;
   e. State or local Board of Health;
   f. State or local Children Services/Child Support;
3. All attempts to locate a VAL Offender shall be documented in a timely manner in the parole officers’ FOT.

4. All confidential and/or LEADS material must be shredded in compliance with DRC Policy 05-OIT-02, LEADS Access and Control.

5. The Fugitive section shall be notified when the APA is aware of the arrest of a VAL Offender. The Fugitive section shall notify the original declaring unit and have the warrant removed from LEADS/NCIC.

D. Security Issues

1. While conducting surveillance activities, all parole officers shall comply with local/state laws and use caution to not infringe on the rights or privacy of the general public.

2. To better ensure the parole officer's safety, a minimum of two (2) parole officers shall be used when conducting visits to residences or any potential high-risk locations, as deemed appropriate by the unit supervisor/designee.

3. Local police backup and assistance shall be requested prior to any planned arrest.

4. All arrest activities conducted by APA staff shall be in compliance with DRC Policies 102-FUG-02, Violator at Large and 100-APA-05, APA Search and Arrest Procedures.

5. Any use of force shall be reported and documented in accordance with DRC Policies 104-TAW-02, APA Use of Force and 01-COM-08, Incident Reporting and Notification.