



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

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OM - ch. 37.3. Missing Persons

Directive Amended: 2018-06-14

For information regarding this policy, contact National Criminal Operations, Contract and Aboriginal Policing.

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1. Definitions

1. 1. **Missing person** means an individual reported to or by police as someone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of his/her disappearance, and who will be considered missing until he/she is located.

1. 2. **High-risk person**, for missing person investigations, means that the missing person's health or wellbeing may be in immediate danger due to:

1. 2. 1. their own vulnerability,

NOTE: Examples of persons considered high-risk include: children; the elderly; a person with a physical, mental, or sensory disability; a person with a medical condition, mental illness, or who is suicidal; sex trade workers; gang or drug-trade associates; court witnesses; victims of abduction; victims of domestic violence and elder abuse; victims of bullying; transient/homeless persons; runaways; and those involved in high-risk activities such as hitchhiking and drug or alcohol abuse.

1. 2. 2. the weather or physical conditions where the missing person is believed to be, or

1. 2. 3. reasonable grounds to believe they may be the victim of a crime.

1. 3. **High-risk lifestyle** means the engagement in or the association with others involved in dangerous activities and/or frequenting or residing in dangerous environments, either by personal choice or circumstance.

2. General

2. 1. Divisions are guided by provincial legislation regarding Missing Person Investigations.

2. 2. All reports of a missing person will be promptly and thoroughly investigated, regardless of the individual's gender, age, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, belief, social standing, or lifestyle. See [ch. 38.2](#).

2. 3. Under no circumstance will a complainant be advised that he/she must wait a specific period of time before a report of a missing person can be made.

2. 4. A missing person complaint will be accepted and acted on by any detachment, regardless of jurisdiction. This includes any information, tips, or leads regarding a missing person investigation.

2. 4. 1. If the initial complaint is received by a detachment that does not have jurisdiction, see [sec. 3.1.](#)

2. 5. When the jurisdiction is in question:

2. 5. 1. The detachment or agency where the person was last seen has jurisdiction over the investigation and is responsible for the missing person report and the follow-up investigation.

2. 5. 2. If the last known location where the person was reported as missing cannot be determined, the police service for the jurisdiction where the missing person resides or last stayed is responsible for the missing person report and the follow-up investigation.

2. 6. When issuing a media release with a photograph of the missing person, ensure the following:

2. 6. 1. the image clearly depicts the missing person;

2. 6. 2. if possible, the image represents the most recent likeness of the missing person;

2. 6. 2. 1. if the complainant/family member does not have a recent image, or the image provided does not represent the most recent likeness of the missing person, and there is a suitable image available from any RCMP Records Management System (RMS), this image may be used.

NOTE: After an initial media release with the RMS image, if a suitable image becomes available, this image will be used on any subsequent media releases.

2. 7. RCMP Ottawa [INTERPOL](#) National Central Bureau (NCB) (613-843-5034) will provide assistance for any missing person who is suspected of being transported to a foreign country, have been reported to have gone missing in a foreign country, or are foreign nationals. See [ch. 44.4.](#)

2. 7. 1. Interpol may issue a Yellow Notice. This notice is to help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.

2. 8. Locating the missing person is the primary investigational objective in a missing person complaint.

2. 9. A person is deemed to be missing until the police of jurisdiction receives credible information confirming the missing person's identity, safety, or well-being.

NOTE: Every attempt should be made to confirm the individual's safety and well-being in person. If circumstances exist that prevent an "in person" confirmation, consider enlisting the assistance of a partnering agency (e.g. other police agency, social services, school) to verify the missing person's safety and well-being.

2. 9. 1. In the event of death, the police of jurisdiction must receive positive confirmation of the missing person's identity.

2. 10. For investigations regarding lost/overdue persons, see [ch. 37.2.](#)

2. 11. For investigations regarding missing persons under the age of 18, see [ch. 37.10.](#) and for parental abduction, see [ch. 2.8.](#)

NOTE: If there is information that the abducting parent may intend to, or has left the country, National Missing Children Operations (NMCO) can be contacted by telephone at 1-877-318-3576. The NMCO is available 24 hours a day to provide advice and assistance to primary investigators in urgent situations.

2. 12. The [National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains \(NCMPUR\)](#) can provide specialized analytical services or assist with requests to publish missing person information to their web site. The NCMPUR may be contacted through e-mail at GroupWise address NCMPUR@rcmp-grc.gc.ca. See [ch. 2.8.](#) and [ch. 37.10.](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3. 1. Member

3. 1. 1. If you receive an initial complaint and your detachment does not have jurisdiction:

3. 1. 1. 1. immediately communicate the missing person information, and any investigational steps taken, to the detachment or agency of jurisdiction, verbally by telephone, followed by electronic written correspondence; and

3. 1. 1. 2. open a file and document the transfer of information.

3. 1. 2. Inform the complainant if the investigation has been transferred to another jurisdiction and provide the contact information of the receiving jurisdiction.

3. 1. 3. Promptly and thoroughly investigate all missing person complaints. Document all investigational steps taken, in detail, in your notebook and the Records Management System (RMS). See [ch. 25.2.](#)

3. 1. 4. Complete [Form 6473](#), Missing Person Intake and Risk Assessment, to assist in determining the appropriate response and resources.

NOTE: Complete [Form 6473](#) first, unless the incident requires immediate operational response (i.e. abduction in progress). The completion of [Form 6473](#) is critical, as it contains information that may guide you on different investigative avenues.

3. 1. 5. When the missing person is high-risk or maintains a high-risk lifestyle, see [sec. 1.2.](#) and [1.3.](#), notify your supervisor immediately.

3. 1. 5. 1. Consult your supervisor, as soon as practicable, regarding the appropriate response, and what other resources may be required (refer to [sec. 3.3.8.](#)), on all missing person investigations.

3. 1. 6. Determine the appropriate investigational response considering the circumstances, as well as any risk factors associated to the missing person, e.g. high-risk person. See [sec. 1.2.](#) and [1.3.](#)

3. 1. 7. Review divisional policy and [ch. 1.1.](#)

3. 1. 8. Consider other options available, depending on the circumstances, such as, issuing a BOLO or an Amber Alert, see [ch. 37.9.](#)

3. 1. 9. Develop a schedule in consultation with the family/reporting party/complainant to provide updates on the status of the investigation. Document each update on file.

NOTE: Members will use either the Contact Log on PROS; [Form 6519](#), Complainant/Family Communication Schedule; or the appropriate RMS to record the scheduled updates with the family.

3. 1. 10. Follow provincial directives for referral and access to available Victim Services, taking into consideration cultural needs, where possible. See [ch. 37.6.](#)

3. 1. 11. Notify the family/complainant if the missing person is located.

NOTES:

1. If exigent circumstances exist that could include, but not limited to, the continued safety of the person reported missing, consider withholding the actual location of the person, e.g. court witnesses, victims of domestic violence and elder abuse.

2. The location or whereabouts of a found missing person that is a competent adult must not be disclosed to the family/complainant without the missing person's consent.

3. 1. 12. To ensure comprehensive information gathering, see [App. 37-3-1.](#)

3. 1. 13. Where divisional Operational Communication Centers require, create a detailed missing person entry on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) as soon as practicable. Continually update the entry as more information becomes available. See [CPIC User Manual](#).

3. 1. 14. Contact Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) at 613-960-6001, if there is a possibility or suspicion that a missing/abducted child may be taken to the United States, or if a border alert is required for a missing adult.

3. 1. 15. Consult with Forensic Identification Services (FIS), where appropriate, and follow their direction regarding the preservation and recovery of physical evidence. See [ch. 35.1.](#), [LSM ch. 1., sec. 3.](#), and [LSM App. 1-3.](#)

3. 1. 16. During the investigation, if it is reported that the missing person has been seen in another jurisdiction, notify that jurisdiction, and request their investigational assistance.

3. 1. 17. Complete a ViCLAS booklet ([Form 3364](#)) if foul play is suspected. See [ch. 36.1.](#)

3. 1. 18. Document on RMS the initial risk assessment and throughout the investigation re-assess the risk level, and document the changes, if any.

3. 1. 19. If the missing person is not located, seek to establish or rule out foul play.

3. 2. When Missing Person is Located

3. 2. 1. Ensure CPIC entries are removed, and other agencies, alerts, notifications, or information systems used during the investigation are updated when a missing person has been located and the investigation is concluded.

- 3. 2. 2. Consider conducting an interview with the found person to determine the details pertaining to the disappearance, and any requirements for follow-up investigation.
- 3. 2. 2. 1. Document information obtained in the file for use in subsequent investigations.
- 3. 2. 3. Contact the appropriate child welfare agency to determine what action should be taken, if a person under the age of majority does not want to be returned to his/her residence.
- 3. 2. 4. Document the details of the investigation, including the complainant notification, and the disposition or outcome of the complaint, in the Operational Records Management System (ORMS).

3. 3. Supervisor

- 3. 3. 1. Review all missing persons files, review [Form 6473](#), and document direction and guidance provided to the member on RMS.

NOTE: Ensure [Form 6473](#) has been completed, and all investigative avenues have been considered.

- 3. 3. 2. Confirm that the appropriate investigative response is underway, and that all investigative actions have been, and are continuing to be, documented on the file.
- 3. 3. 3. Confirm the continuance of the investigation until the missing person is located; and
- 3. 3. 4. Confirm that the missing person has been added to CPIC.
- 3. 3. 5. Determine at the earliest possible time, whether to request the assistance of GIS, Major Crime Unit, divisional Missing Persons Unit, and/or integrated unit, e.g. if foul play is suspected or there are similar missing person occurrences.
- 3. 3. 6. Brief the Unit Commander, when appropriate.
- 3. 3. 7. Confirm coordination, co-operation, and information-sharing among all police agencies involved in the investigation and search for the missing person.
- 3. 3. 8. Request additional resources when appropriate, e.g. search and rescue services, police dog services, FIS, air services, NCMPUR, technical crime unit, coroner/medical examiner, National Sex Offender Registry, Behavioral Sciences, Aboriginal Policing Section, and media relations.
- 3. 3. 9. Determine if there is a need for a command post.

NOTE: If necessary, establish the command post ensuring that it is situated away from the missing person's residence. Do not use the home phone of the missing person for any personal or operational purposes.

- 3. 3. 10. Ensure that members are documenting the assessment of risk on the RMS, and that if the risk level changes during the investigation, the re-assessment of the risk level has been documented.
- 3. 3. 11. Monitor the investigative file on an ongoing basis to ensure that all investigative actions have been properly documented, that there are no gaps in the investigation, and that all missing person files are passed on to the oncoming watch.

3. 3. 12. If foul play is suspected, confirm that ViCLAS [Form 3364](#) has been completed.

3. 3. 13. Confirm that CPIC entries have been removed, and other agencies, alerts, notifications, or information systems used during the investigation, have been updated when a missing person has been located and the investigation is concluded.

3. 3. 14. Consider conducting a review of the occurrence, if the missing person has a previous history of being reported missing, to identify any enhancements which could be used to prevent or assist in future missing person investigations.

3. 4. Unit Commander

3. 4. 1. Confirm that all missing persons complaints are thoroughly investigated and properly supervised.

3. 4. 2. Consider the inclusion of a Unit Level Quality Assurance process for missing persons investigations.

3. 4. 3. Make certain that incidents involving missing persons with suspicious circumstances are reported to the appropriate divisional coordinator where possible, e.g. Aboriginal Policing Section is advised of Indigenous missing persons.

3. 4. 4. Ensure a proper pass on system/process is established for missing person investigations that are not resolved at the end of each shift.

References

- [AM, ch. III.2.](#)
- [IMM, ch. 3.1.](#)
- [OM, ch. 2.11.](#) and [ch. 7.1.](#)
- Solicitor General's Manual, "*Police Procedures for Ground Search and Rescue for Lost and Missing Persons*", 1994.

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To ensure comprehensive information gathering during missing persons investigations, take note of the following items, if applicable.

The Subject

- Date and location of clothing or personal items purchased.
- Other missing personal items, e.g. lunch box, purse.
- Personal items, e.g. hairbrush/comb, toothbrush, personal papers, computer, CDs, toys, from which latent prints may be obtained. Suitable fingerprints can be collected from non-porous surfaces in particular, e.g. mirror/glass/plastic/metal surfaces as well as varnished, enamelled, or glazed surfaces, foils, books, magazines, and newspapers.
- Items with footprints or tooth impressions.
- Sample of handwriting.

Possible DNA Sources

- Blood samples from the missing person, e.g. bandages, tissues.
- Fingernail clippings or body swabbings.
- Hooded clothing, hats, hat band, toque, helmet, or other headgear.
- Shirt collar or sport gear.
- Bed linens.

Medical and Behavioural

- Most recent and location of last hospital visit.
- Releases for medical/dental records, including previous X-rays and eyeglass prescriptions.
- Medical records, if it appears the file will turn into a prolonged investigation.
- Recent changes in behaviour or comportment.
- Behavioural changes that may indicate substance abuse or stress.
- Recent physical changes, e.g. weight loss/gain, hair style change.
- Reputation in school, family, community, and any groups or teams the missing person belongs to.

- Gambling, gaming, and other compulsive activities.
- Obsessions, compulsions, and tics.
- Goals and ambitions.
- High-risk lifestyle or vulnerable.
- Dynamics/relationship between persons missing together.
- Philosophy, religion, moral and personal values and attitude, truth, responsibility.
- Target of or holder of racial, cultural, and physical prejudices.
- Feelings expressed about his/her own appearance, situation, abilities, self-esteem, and guilt.
- Ability to deal with conflict, fear, loneliness, affection, and sexuality.
- Comportment or features that might attract attention.
- Organizations or groups particularly trusted or distrusted by the missing person.
- Other information that can help develop a victimology.
- Personal writings, diaries, or drawings.
- School reports, journals, and school work.
- Personal photographs (albums or mounted photos owned by the missing person) or art.

Activities and Communications

- Recently developed interests/habits.
- Recent participation/events by the missing person.
- Recent participation/events - identify/interview all participants.
- Immediately check location through any device that tracks location, e.g. cell phone.
- Local telephone records, including text messages, for all relevant telephones.
- Recent e-mail, both to the missing person's family and from the missing person's family, chat room conversations, blogs, computerized files, and/or computer data that is still present on the missing person's family's ISP server.

Situation

- Domestic difficulties.
- Family dynamics.
- Culture of the family and any bearing that may have on the incident.
- The status and stability of the relationship between the missing person and the person who reported them missing, other friends, and persons involved in the case.
- Prior incidents with family or at the missing person's home, e.g. child abuse/neglect calls, disturbances, prowlers, voyeurism.
- Custody status of missing person.
- Employment.
- Income and payment information from employment.
- Problems or issues with the missing person where they work.
- Missing person's schedule at work.
- Income sources besides employment.

- Financial difficulties.
- Debts and debtors.
- Current financial status of the family, including any large or recent debts and any life insurance policies involving the missing person.
- Banking activity to determine if accounts have been active, and if so, the time/date/place.
- Pending criminal/civil trials.
- Whether the missing person is bound by a Court Order.
- Passes issued to an absconder.
- Missing person's geographic familiarity with the area.
- Likely amount of money on the missing person at time of disappearance.
- Strength and endurance.
- Missing purse, wallet, credit cards, and money.
- Missing personal items such as toiletries and clothes.
- Missing cell phone.
- Missing keys and health card.
- Missing luggage and outer wear.
- Missing objects of sentimental value.

Timeline

- Circumstances surrounding the disappearance.
- Activities, movements, actions before going missing.
- Plans/intentions when last seen.
- Possible reason for the disappearance.
- Time frame between when the missing person was reliably last seen and when discovered missing.
- Any indication of possible physical danger to the subject.
- Previous disappearances (when, frequency, reported or not reported to police).

Friends and Family

- Contact information for a close friend or relative who can serve as a contact person if the complainant has no phone number.
- Contact information for close friends, family, and associates.
- Names, addresses, and DOB of family members and friends.
- Relationship, intimacy, and conflicts with the missing person.
- Recent new friends.
- Enemies, persons disliked or with whom there were conflicts, e.g. bullies.
- Names and particulars of all persons at the scene, including family members, friends, and neighbours.

Environment

- Video equipment for security purposes by area businesses, e.g. banks, ATMs, bars, liquor stores, convenience stores. Review video surveillance recordings.
- Aerial photographs of all relevant areas to ensure the depiction of current conditions.
- Dynamics of the neighbourhood, including recent criminal activity such as attempted abductions, prowling, suspicious persons/vehicles, and nuisance complaints, especially those sexual in nature.
- Media reports on the incident.
- What is being said/was said on social media about the missing person.

Location and Travel

- Addresses and locations known to be frequented by the missing person.
- Possible locations the missing person might visit.
- Transportation the missing person has access to/is familiar with.
- Modes of transportation used habitually.
- If not a Canadian Citizen, does the missing person have a status in Canada.
- Permanent Resident or Citizenship Card information, if applicable.
- Possible routes that the missing person may have taken from the point last seen.
- Former places of residence.
- Vacations or trips recently taken (where, with whom).

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| Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls | | |
| Location/Phase: <u>Part 2 Regina</u> | | |
| Witness: <u>Brenda Butterworth-Carr</u> | | |
| Submitted by: <u>Anne McConville</u> | | |
| Add'l info: <u>P02 P02 P0401</u> | | |
| Date: <u>JUN 28 2018</u> | | |
| Initials | I/D | Entered |
| <u>63</u> | | <u>103</u> |