

OB INCIDENT RESPONSE

OB 70 MISSING PERSONS

POLICY:

The investigation and resolution of missing person cases are an important responsibility of police services in Saskatchewan. The difficult problems surrounding missing person cases demand a prompt, informed and uniform response. It is imperative that missing and unidentified person investigations be given the appropriate priority.

There is no waiting period required before a person can be reported as missing.

A police service will accept a missing person report regardless of the known or suspected location from which a person has gone missing. Missing person reports will be forwarded to the police service of jurisdiction for investigation.

Police services will support and assist with missing person investigations originating outside their jurisdiction.

Follow-up investigations should be timely and comprehensive and a victim's family should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation. Family referrals to appropriate support services, including Victim Services, should be made as required.

DEFINITIONS:

Missing Person

A person whose location is unknown and who might be:

- in need of assistance to be reunited with his/her family;
- the victim of an offence;
- in critical need of medical attention;
- mentally impaired and unable to care for himself/herself or who might pose a danger to his/her safety or to that of others, or;
- a child or young person who leaves their home, group home or other place of residence for an indefinite period of time.

Missing Person Investigation

An investigation which is activated by reporting a person as missing to a police service.

At Risk Missing Person

A missing person where there is reason to suspect that their health or safety is in jeopardy or the person(s) is vulnerable due to various factors such as age, physical or intellectual disabilities, inclement weather, criminal activity or other circumstances.

STANDARDS:

- 1.0 The Chief of Police will ensure that local policies and procedures relating to missing persons are developed, implemented and utilized in a consistent manner and that all police service staff are made aware of the policy and its requirements.
- 1.1 All calls reporting a missing person will be directed to a designated contact person or position within the police service to ensure a detailed initial report is completed at the time of the call, utilizing the standard template approved by the Saskatchewan Police Commission.
- 1.2 A member shall accept all reports of a lost or missing person, regardless of jurisdiction or the length of time a person has been missing. Missing person reports shall be forwarded to the appropriate police service for investigation.
- 1.3 A Risk Factor Assessment, as approved by the Saskatchewan Police Commission, will be completed immediately following the receiving of a missing person report to assist with prioritizing the level of investigative response to be undertaken based on the circumstances identified in the initial report.
- 1.4 All persons reported as missing shall be immediately entered on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system.
- 1.5 AMBER ALERTS SHALL BE DEALT WITH IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES.
- 1.6 Communication with the missing person's family and/or the family spokesperson will be established and maintained by a designated member at regular intervals as established in consultation with the missing person's family.
- 1.7 Where the missing person is from a First Nation or Métis community, the designated member will, with the written consent of the missing person's family, take reasonable steps to ensure that their First Nation/Aboriginal community leaders or elected officials are consulted for local advice and briefed at regular intervals. Certain sensitive cases or bona fide investigative strategies may preclude this consultation.
- 1.8 Each police service will have a communication strategy for missing person investigations and will designate a media contact person within the service. Local procedures will be developed to ensure information is released and/or disseminated in a manner that maintains the continuity and integrity of the missing person investigation while considering a family's privacy concerns.

- 1.9 In the event a missing person is assessed as being at risk, information will be shared in a timely manner with other police agencies, including the RCMP, Canadian Border Services, where there is reason to suspect that they may be leaving Canada, and any collateral agencies (i.e., Saskatchewan Health, Social Services; the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan, Child Find Saskatchewan, etc.) that may be of assistance in bringing the investigation to a successful conclusion.
- 1.10 Information on investigations regarding missing children and suspected or confirmed parental/familial abductions will be forwarded to the RCMP Missing Child Registry.
- 1.11 Each police agency will compile and keep a current list of agencies that may provide support and assistance to the family of a missing person.
- 1.12 A referral to Victim Services should be considered in cases that meet the criteria established in the missing persons protocol between the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Saskatchewan Association of Police Affiliated Victim Services, Inc.
- 1.13 All persons/members taking calls in respect of missing persons will have training and orientation in completing the Initial Intake Report, the Risk Assessment and in the corresponding investigative responses, including searches for missing persons.
- 1.14 If a person who is an adult is found they shall be provided with the contact information of the person who reported their absence with a request that they contact the reporting party.
- 1.15 If a missing adult is found or located, is mentally competent and does not wish to have their location or whereabouts known, their location shall not be disclosed without consent. The person who reported the absence will be advised the missing person has been found, without disclosing their location.
- 1.16 If a missing person under the age of majority is found and does not want to be returned to his/her residence, and there is reason to suspect there may be some concern for the child's wellbeing at the residence, the child should be taken to the appropriate child welfare agency to determine what action is required.
- 1.17 Upon finding a missing person, all entries on CPIC, NCIC, alerts, media, Social Services, National Missing Children Services, and all other such areas will be removed.
- 1.18 All police services will maintain statistical data on missing persons that includes at least the following information:
 - Number of reports
 - Number of missing persons
 - Gender, age and race of missing persons

- Number of CPIC entries
- Number of cleared cases

AUTHORITY:

- *The Police Act, 1990*
- *The Health Information Protection Act: Sec. 27(4)(a)*
- *The Health Information Protection Regulations: Sec. 5.1(1)(a)*
- *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: Sec. 29(2)(g), (m) and (o)*
- *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act*

"APPENDIX 1" - STANDARD DETAILED INITIAL REPORT

In accordance with section 1.1 of this policy, municipal police services are required to utilize an initial intake reporting form that includes the collection of the following details.

1. Basic information about the Missing Person:

- Full name
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Nicknames, if any
- Marital status or common-law relationship
- Current address
- Current telephone number(s)
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Previous addresses
- Current employer(s), and contact information
- Name of school, if applicable
- Relationship of complainant to Missing Person, and his/her contact information

2. Physical description of the Missing Person:

- Height
- Weight
- Build
- Hair colour/Length of hair
- Eye colour
- Race/Skin type
- Any distinguishing marks (i.e. deformities, tattoos, birthmarks, scars, etc.) and bodily locations
- Any facial hair
- Any observable disabilities (i.e. limp, lazy eye, amputations)
- Include most recent photograph of the missing person (if possible)

3. Known circumstances of disappearance:

Location last seen

- Time and location
- Reason for being at this location
- Name of the individual(s) who last saw the missing person
- Direction travelling, if applicable
- Time and location of expected arrival, if applicable

- Description of vehicle, if applicable

Last seen appearance

- Style and colour of shirt
- Style and colour of pants
- Style and colour of jacket and/or other outerwear, if applicable
- Type of glasses, if applicable
- Type of gloves, if applicable
- Style, colour and type of footwear
- Jewelry, if applicable
- Physical condition
- Emotional condition

4. Health and medical information:

- Prescribed medications
- Physical disabilities
- Mental disabilities
- Substance addictions
- Diseases or conditions
- History of suicidal thoughts or attempts

5. Other circumstances

- Probable cause
- Weather conditions
- Lifestyle risk (high risk lifestyle)
- Any extenuating circumstances
- Any unusual circumstances
- Location risk (high risk location)
- List all areas searched and action taken

6. Potential leads

- Possible locations the individual may visit (ex. particular friend's house)
- Types of locations the individual may visit (ex. taverns)
- Events the individual may attend
- Possible friends, acquaintances, or relatives the individual may contact

"APPENDIX 2" – RISK ASSESSMENT CLASSIFICATION GUIDE

HIGH RISK

The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability; or may have been the victim of a serious crime; or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.

If one or more indicator is present, it shall be treated as **HIGH RISK**:

- Indication of foul play
- History of domestic violence
- History of suicide attempts or tendencies
- A serious physical or mental illness or any serious condition requiring frequent medication or treatment
- Vulnerable due to age, infirmity, or any other similar factor
- High risk lifestyle
- Potentially harmful weather conditions
- Suspected to be subject of a significant crime in progress
- Missing from a high risk location
- Other unusual circumstances that warrant high risk status

This category requires the immediate deployment of police resources.

MEDIUM RISK

The risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.

This category requires an active and measured response by police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting.

LOW RISK

There is no apparent threat of danger to either the subject or the public.

Children and young people under 18 years of age should not be included in this classification.

The police will advise the person reporting the disappearance that once all active enquiries have been exhausted, the case will be deferred to a regular review pending any further information coming to notice.

Complete the following assessment chart:

Is there money missing?	
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Investigative Consideration	Details and Circumstances
Is there any information to indicate that the person may be the victim of foul play?	
Does the person have a history of being the victim of domestic violence or some other form of abuse?	
Is there a history of the person being a victim of custodial interference and/or a custody dispute?	
Has the person undergone recent emotional trauma, such as the death of a loved one, an arrest, marital or financial difficulties?	
Has the individual recently experienced difficulties at work or school?	
Has the individual recently experienced difficulties with a particular person?	
Does the individual have access to and familiarity with weapons? Are there any weapons missing?	
Does the person have a history of disappearance?	
Does the person have a history of suicide attempts or tendencies?	
Does the person have a serious physical or mental illness or any serious condition requiring frequent medication or treatment?	
Is the person missing under circumstances inconsistent with their normal behavior?	
Did the person leave a note or make any form of communication indicating their intentions or whereabouts?	

Does the person have a criminal history?	
Is the person on probation, parole, or possibly incarcerated?	
Is the person hospitalized?	
Does anyone have a financial gain, such as insurance policy benefits?	
Are any of the missing person's personal belongings missing?	
Are there any indications that preparations have been made for absence?	
Is there a reason for the person to go missing?	
Is the person suspected to be subject of a significant crime in progress?	
Is the person vulnerable due to age, infirmity, or any other similar factor?	
Are the circumstances of going missing different from normal behaviour patterns?	
Does the person lack the ability to interact safely with others in an unknown environment?	
Does the person lack the ability to interact with others due to language, multicultural, or other reasons in an unknown environment?	

Does the missing person need essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?	
Was the missing person involved in a violent and/or racist incident immediately prior to disappearance?	
Is the missing person a victim or perpetrator of ongoing bullying or harassment?	
Does the missing person have a drug or alcohol addiction?	
Is the person missing from a high risk location?	
Are there any other unlisted factors which the officer or supervisor considers should influence risk assessment?	

In consideration of the above factors, their likelihood and seriousness, what level of risk do you consider to be adequate?

LOW RISK

MEDIUM RISK

HIGH RISK

Give reasons to substantiate this level of risk:

Completed by:

Name: _____
(print)

Badge #: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

SUPERVISING OFFICER

What level of risk is considered appropriate by the supervising officer?

LOW RISK

MEDIUM RISK

HIGH RISK

Give reasons to substantiate this level of risk:

Completed by:

Name: _____
(print)

Badge #: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____