



**Royal
Newfoundland
Constabulary**

Policy and Procedure Manual
General Order 368
Date Issued: June 13 ,2017

MISSING PERSONS

1.0 General

- 1.1 Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to outline the response and investigation of missing person complaints. For information on Search Orders, Record Access Orders, Emergency Demand for Records, etc., officers shall refer to the chapter entitled Missing Persons Act.
- 1.2 Scope: This policy applies to all police officers and their supervisors who deal with missing persons. This policy also applies to RNC Communications Center staff- civilians and officers.
- 1.3 This policy references provincial legislation including but limited to: *Missing Persons Act, Adult Protection Act, Children and Youth Care and Protection Act, Mentally Disabled Persons' Estate Act and the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act.*
- 1.4 Principle: All reported missing persons shall be investigated by the RNC in a prompt, effective and efficient manner. This is particularly important as it pertains to a child as defined by the *Children and Youth Care and Protection Act.*
- 1.5 The status of any reported missing person may change at any time. All complaints shall be thoroughly investigated even those dealing with habitual runaways or those that are considered minor and routine.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Missing Person-

- a. An individual whose whereabouts are unknown and who has not been in contact with persons who would likely be in contact with that individual; or
- b. An individual whose:



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- (1) whereabouts are unknown despite reasonable efforts to locate them; and
 - (2) safety and welfare are feared for, given the individual's physical or mental capabilities or the circumstances surrounding the individual's absence.
- 2.2 All reported missing persons shall be investigated by the RNC in a prompt, effective and efficient manner. This is particularly important as it pertains to:
- a. A Minor (person under 19 years); and
 - b. A vulnerable person who is defined as:
 - (1) An adult in need of protective intervention as defined in the *Adult Protection Act*, or
 - (2) A mentally disabled person as defined in the *Mentally Disabled Persons' Estates Act*.
- 3.0 Communications Centre Staff Responsibilities**
- 3.1 The Communications Centre staff shall:
- a. dispatch a police officer to obtain details;
 - b. notify all units of the missing person by radio dispatch;
 - c. notify RCMP and other agencies as required;
 - d. re-broadcast information as required or when new information becomes available;



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- f. ensure the platoon coming on shift is aware of any and all current missing persons;
- g. enter the missing person on CAD and ensure that the information is copied into ICAN in the FYI list and keep it updated;
- h. ensure that missing person(s) is entered on CPIC when advised of the particulars, verbally or in writing, by the first responding officer;
- i. check the FYI list at the beginning of their shift and note missing persons;
- j. in urgent situations, ensure that the Platoon Commander or NCO is advised;
- k. if the person is located after hours, ensure removal from CPIC; and
- l. broadcast information to all units when notified that the missing person has been located.

3.2 The following information shall be entered on FYI list:

- a. file number;
- b. name;
- c. complete address;
- d. date reported;
- e. investigator;
- f. summary of circumstances;
- g. location last seen;
- h. complete description including clothing;



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- i. possible destination if one is known;
- j. medical conditions; and
- k. any other information deemed relevant.

3.3 The Communications Centre personnel who take the information that the missing person has been located shall be responsible for removing the missing person from the FYI list.

3.4 The Communication Centre NCO or his/her designate shall be responsible for briefing the Communication Centre staff coming on duty of any outstanding missing person(s) to ensure rebroadcast and follow-up.

4.0 First Responding Officer

4.1 The first responding officer shall:

- a. obtain full particulars and complete the Missing Persons Report form;
- b. update the file on ICAN on a continuous basis throughout the shift (this also applies to CID officers so that each officer can view the actions of the other to avoid duplication) and at the conclusion of his or her shift, turn the file over to the supervisor in charge of the shift reporting for duty;
- c. advise Communications Centre of full particulars and ensure all other units are notified;
- d. forward completed missing person CPIC form (between the hours of 5 PM- 8 AM, a hard copy shall be forwarded to the Communications Center as transcription of electronic files is not available during this time and if this is not completed- the person will not be added to CPIC in a timely fashion. Officers shall document this in the file to avoid duplication);
- e. forward a Child Protection Report form to Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development when a young person has been reported



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missing and there is a concern for their well-being or the child is in need of protection;

- (1) if the investigator is of the opinion that Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development should be notified sooner, they shall call the on-call worker.

f. brief the NCO immediately when;

- (1) a degree of urgency exists, (e.g., young person, child, or persons suffering from mental disorders or other medical disabilities);
- (2) CID response may be necessary outside normal CID working hours; or
- (3) they are of the opinion that the services of Ground Search and Rescue or the media is required.

g. check all locations that are relayed to him/her by the complainant as to where the missing person may be;

h. check with friends and relatives who have been identified by the complainant;

i. check with hospitals, recovery centre, or city lock-up etc.; and

j. advise and update a supervisor on his/her shift of the missing persons file.

4.2 Factors to be considered by the responding officer when contemplating contacting their immediate supervisor:

- a. age (child or elderly person);
- b. mental disorder (as defined under Section 2(k) of the Mental Health Care & Treatment Act);



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- c. physical condition (diabetic or asthmatic etc.);
- d. weather conditions;
- e. location subject last seen;
- f. length of absence;
- g. history of the missing person;
- h. possible criminal activity (i.e. abduction);
- i. potential hazards (darkness or near ponds etc.); and
- j. any other unusual circumstances.

4.3 All reports of missing persons that are received after 5:00 p.m. daily shall be retained by the responding officer for the duration of his/her shift and then be passed along to the on-coming shift (unless circumstances warrant the immediate notification of the CID) and all efforts shall be made to locate the missing person. At 9:00 a.m, the file will be assigned through the File Management Unit to the Major Crime Section, however a working copy of the file will remain at the Patrol Division to be passed along from shift-to-shift until the missing person is located.

4.4 Where the reported missing person is in the care Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development, the Zone Manager shall be notified. After hours notification shall be via the on-call social worker.

5.0 Missing Persons from a Group Home

5.1 After taking the report of a missing person from a group home, the investigator shall maintain immediate and constant consultation with the social worker regarding:

- a. courses of action to locate the youth;



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- b. who is responsible to carry out those actions;
- c. actions that have already been taken;
- d. the date, time and persons who took those actions; and
- e. possible locations where the youth may be located.

5.2 If there is no identified concern that the youth may harm themselves, officers shall provide the youth's location to the social worker so they may attend. It is not necessary for an officer to conduct a "visual checks" on a youth unless there is an identified concern for the youth's well-being. In the case of an identified concern for the youth's well-being, the officer will assist by attending the location with the social worker

5.3 If the youth appears to be in a dangerous situation that may impact the safety of themselves or others officers shall notify their supervisors, and in consultation with the social worker, will determine the appropriate course of action as police have a common law duty to protect life.

5.4 If there is a known concern that the youth might harm themselves or others, officers shall attend any possible locations. If the threat is to harm themselves- officers shall refer to the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act. Officers shall also notify the guardian to attend the facility as well. If the threat is to harm others, officers shall investigate and lay any appropriate criminal charges.

6.0 Supervisor's Responsibilities

6.1 Supervisors shall:

- a. be aware of all current and outstanding missing persons during their tour of duty;



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- b. ensure that missing persons files are passed along to an NCO reporting for duty for the next shift; and
 - c. review missing person files as passed on from the previous shift and assign the file to be investigated by an officer on his/her shift.
- 6.2 When notified of a missing person, the NCO shall consider the factors outlined in section 4.2 of this policy in deciding the course of action needed.
- 6.3 There shall be a copy of the missing person file retained by the Patrol and Operational Services Division even after the file has been assigned to the CID. The NCO on each Platoon shall ensure that this copy of the missing person is assigned to an officer on his/her shift for continuation of the investigation until the missing person has been located.
- 6.4 The supervisor receiving the missing person file from the officer who had it from the previous shift shall assign the file to an officer on his/her shift detailed to the appropriate area to ensure continuation and follow-up on the file.
- 6.5 Every time a missing person file is turned over to another officer or shift, the NCO assigning the file will update the follow up assignment electronically in ICAN, and add a continuation report outlining any direction given to the officer. The receiving officer will also update the file electronically on ICAN.
- 6.6 Supervisors shall ensure that the officer assigned the working copy of the file keep it updated in ICAN so that it can be viewed by the CID investigator assigned the file.
- 7.0 CID - Major Crime Section Responsibilities**
- 7.1 All missing person cases requiring referral to the CID will be assigned to the Major Crime Unit.
- 7.2 An investigator in the Major Crime Unit will be designated as coordinator for missing person's investigations in the headquarters jurisdiction.



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7.3 Major Crime Unit staff shall:

- a. carry out prompt and thorough investigation of missing persons reported in the headquarters jurisdiction;
- b. ensure that RNC Missing Persons Report form is completed and all information is documented in the file;
- c. update the file on ICAN on a continuous basis throughout the shift (this also applies to patrol officers so that each officer can view the actions of the other to avoid duplication);
- d. ensure that missing persons are entered and removed from CPIC and necessary forms are completed i.e., CPIC Removal Forms;
- e. maintain liaison with Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development a social worker can be a valuable resource person in locating children and youth;
- f. complete Child Protection Report when necessary;
- g. maintain a Missing Persons Ledger to record data pertaining to reported missing persons;
- h. ensure that the FYI list in ICAN at the Communications Centre is current and up to date at all times;
- i. notify Communications Centre when a missing person has been located so that they can remove the person from FYI;
- j. notify the investigator from Patrol and Operational Services Division when a missing person is located; and
- k. where the reported missing person is in the care of Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development , notify the Zone Manager (after hours notification shall be via the on-call social worker).



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- 7.4 If during the course of the investigation it is determined that the complaint may be of a criminal nature (i.e., abduction, kidnapping, etc.), the NCO i/c Major Crime shall be notified. It may be necessary to issue an Amber Alert if the situation meets the criteria outlined in the Amber Alert chapter.
- 7.5 If death occurs to a reported missing person, the NCO i/c Major Crime will assign an investigator.
- 8.0 Non-Residents Missing in Jurisdiction Policed by the RNC**
- 8.1 In instances where a non-resident is reported missing, an officer will be dispatched, or information taken by telephone if the call is from outside the RNC jurisdiction.
- 8.2 When sufficient information is obtained, the RNC will proceed as per the policy outlined in this chapter.
- 9.0 Persons Missing Outside RNC Jurisdiction**
- 9.1 Where a person is suspected to be missing from a location outside RNC jurisdiction, the person calling should be instructed to contact the police agency having jurisdiction.
- 9.2 Should the person reporting, for some reason, be unable to contact that police agency, the officer receiving the call shall take sufficient information and forward it to that policing agency.
- 10.0 Ground Search and Rescue**
- 10.1 Investigators shall consult with their immediate supervisor, when circumstances may require the call out of the Ground Search and Rescue Team. This shall be in accordance with the Ground Search and Rescue chapter.
- 10.2 The Ground Search and Rescue Team Coordinator must be consulted in the preliminary stages of the investigation if there is evidence to support the need for



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this type of assistance. Early notification of the ground search and rescue team is essential to avoid delays in initiating a rescue operation.

11.0 Police Dog Services Unit

11.1 On occasion circumstances may require the call out of the Police Dog Services Unit for the purposes of a missing persons search. This shall be in accordance with the Police Dog Services Unit chapter.

12.0 Acquisition of Aircraft

12.1 Acquisition of aircraft for missing person searches shall be in accordance with the policy in the Ground Search and Rescue chapter.

12.2 All such requests shall only be made in consultation with the Divisional Commanders or Duty Officer.

13.0 Follow Up File

13.1 When an officer is dispatched to a follow up file regarding an already reported missing person and the missing person is located, the officer will clear the follow up file on a page number with comments. The officer will also add a "Supplemental Add" to the original missing persons file outlining the details of locating the missing person.

14.0 Return of Missing Persons

14.1 When a missing person has been located:

- a. By police in person and there are no extenuating circumstances (criminal activity, mental health concerns or a danger to themselves or others) police officers shall make all efforts to return the person to the place that they were reported missing from; however if the person refuses, the officer cannot force the individual to return.



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- b. If police receive a telephone call that the person has returned, the investigator must speak to the caller, or return their call, and:
 - (1) verify the identity of the caller as the complainant or a responsible adult associated to the complainant of the missing person report and ensure it is not the missing person themselves (this may be achieved by referencing the assigned police file #); and
 - (2) determine if there are any safety concerns for anyone involved, and if there are, police shall attend the scene and assess these concerns in person.
 - c. When a missing person has been located, the patrol officer shall notify the Missing Persons Coordinator (or their designate) and vice versa. The identity of both officers shall be captured in the follow up section of the investigative file on ICAN.
 - d. After regular business hours, the officer who locates the missing person in addition to submitting the CPIC removal form, will notify the Communications Center that the person was located and the communications technician will remove the missing person from CPIC and from the FYI list in ICAN. This shall be noted in the file to avoid duplication.
 - e. In ICAN, the officer locating the youth will also include the date, time and location where the youth was on the details page of the missing person report.
- 14.2 From time to time children reported missing from their home will be located in another province or outside their home communities. In these situations the question of who is responsible for returning the children may arise. The following assistance is available in cases of missing children or youths.



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- a. While it is the responsibility of the parents or guardian to make the necessary arrangements and assume the cost of returning the child home when located by a police agency, the agency will offer appropriate advice and assistance in these situations.
- b. If a child or youth in the care of the Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development is located within this province, the Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development will return the child/youth as Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development is the parent /guardian of the child.
- c. If a Child/Youth in the care of the Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development is located out of the province, Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development will facilitate the return of the child in cooperation with the holding province.
- d. If a child is located in another province and the parents or guardians are unable to cover the cost of returning the child, the officer should contact the child protection agency in that jurisdiction as the holding province may assume responsibility for the return of the child.
- e. Officers will be expected to cooperate and assist the parents or guardian in making the necessary arrangements, with the primary objective being the safe return of the child to his home.

14.3 Young Persons Charged With Criminal Offences:

These provisions will not apply to young persons charged with criminal offences.

15.0 People with Alzheimer Disease

- 15.1 The Alzheimer's Society of Canada has a program known as "Safely Home". Information pertaining to a person with Alzheimer Disease, who has been registered with the Safely Home - Wandering Persons Registry, is available on CPIC. It contains descriptive and background information on the person, including name, address, vital statistics, frequency of wandering, places likely to



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wander, medical information and contact names. All Alzheimer patients recorded in the Safely Home - Wandering Persons Registry have been given a Medic Alert bracelet which has instructions to query the database with the ID number.

15.2 Communications personnel will:

- a. query CPIC, when the person reporting has indicated the missing person is on the Wandering Persons Registry; or for other reasons is likely registered (i.e., has memory loss); and
- b. convey the information available on the database to the responding officer.

15.3 Responding officer shall:

- a. begin the search at places where the person is likely to wander, when this information is available from CPIC or the caller prior to attending the callers location to complete the Missing Persons Form;
- b. follow normal procedure if the person cannot be located after a preliminary search based on the information available; and
- c. notify a supervisor and request assistance of other officers and services such as Ground Search and Rescue and Media in trying to locate the missing person.

16.0 Corner Brook and Labrador West Regions

- 16.1 This policy is applicable to the Corner Brook and Labrador West Regions. References to the Major Crime Section are not applicable; however, there are officers responsible for these types of investigations in these Regions.