

## SECTION 4



# WORKING WITH POLICE

# Working with the police

## IMPORTANT:

**There is no 24-hour waiting period to report a person missing!**

## The first 24-hours

What will police ask?

You have rights

Consent for nation-wide search

Missing persons' crisis line

Small things can be significant to police

Rewards

Missing persons' cases

General info reporting on reporting a missing person

Missing children

Missing adults



# Working with the Police

**IMPORTANT: There is no 24-hour waiting period to report a person missing!**

You are tense and worried. This is normal. It is an extremely stressful situation when a loved one has gone missing

**NOTE:** The police should understand this and should be able to have sympathy for what your family is going through. *That may not always happen.*

Always try to deal clearly and respectfully with the police. A positive relationship with the police helps everyone to find the missing person.

If you have a concern about police behavior, you are better able to address it, when you can show that you built a positive relationship with the police.

## Expect the police to

Ask you to complete your own search of family, friends, hangouts and hospitals before they take a missing persons' report.

Be prepared to answer many questions.

If you do not know why they are asking a question, just ask them why they want that information.

Your Communication Log will help you keep track of information.

**NOTE: As a family member of a missing person, you have rights.**

- Always ask the police any questions you may have. That is your right.
- Ask for your police contacts name. That is your right.
- Always ask for the case file number. RECORD IT. That is your right.
- Ask what follow ups the police will be doing. That is your right.
- Ask if there are similar cases reported. That is your right.



- You can give consent to check if your loved ones identification has been used nation-wide
  - Driver's license
  - Credit cards
  - Bank cards etc.
- You can call missing persons through BC RCMP <https://bc-cb.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeld=27&languageId=1&contentId=-1>  
Give them your case number and ask for updates or for clarity on information given to you.
- You can request police to do
  - Media updates
  - Crime Stoppers video (if foul play is suspected)
  - Other awareness campaigns
- **IMPORTANT:** think of small details around the time your loved one went missing
  - Small things can be very significant for police
  - Tell them everything.
- If your family is offering a reward
  - Make police aware of the details
  - Rewards increase the number of tips
  - Note that police are not responsible for offering rewards, nor will they communicate the details of the reward.

## Information on Missing Persons for POLICE

The majority of missing persons are located within 24 hours and three days of being reported missing. PLEASE SEE **REPORTING A MISSING PERSON Section 3**

### Missing Persons' cases include:

- Runaway youths
- Voluntarily missing adults
- Wandered/Alzheimer patients
- Parental abductions where there is immediate danger to the child



- Non-family abductions
- Unknown circumstances
- Unusual/suspicious circumstances

## **Detailed information about how police do their work**

There is no delay in police starting on a case. As soon as you report it, the file is opened.

Keep in daily contact with police: team work is critical. Police rely on families for information.

Keep a daily log so you can share info with police. Set up an operational center for the family where all info can be collected and shared.

Work closely with police on the poster.

The police determine how serious the case is. A missing person's file is never closed. If you have concerns you can always contact the officer's supervisor.

Amber Alert is another tool that can help the search for children and youth in non-family abductions.

Police has a specific system they follow. They will use whatever numbers you provide to call you.

Police shares your goal to find your loved one. Call them frequently to establish two-way communication. Do not wait for police to call you. Call police even when you have no information.

The more information you can give police, the better; sources of money and where they get it

Remember police may want to revisit your loved one's home and belongings, electronic devices and vehicle several time as they progress through the investigation. They may ask for articles of clothing, toothbrush, dental, for DNA including mother and father's DNA. Do not throw anything out.



Missing persons' files are never closed. There is no length of time for a missing person investigation.

## **RCMP want you to know that ....**

- Investigations begin at the point of first notification (anyone can report a missing person at any time);
  - The police want to find the person reported missing and will rely on family and friends to assist in efforts;
  - Police's priority is confirm the person is missing and complete a **risk assessment** (we should treat all matters the same and as legitimate, serious and urgent);
  - Police will generate a **file for the missing person** and all steps taken to locate the person will be stored in our **records management system**;
  - Police will assume the worst in order to **avoid miscalculations or missed investigative avenues** at the start;
  - The **risk assessment will be re-visited** as new information comes to light and time passes;
  - Police need to gather information and may **ask wide array of questions** (reasons for some questions may not be understood by the family/witness);
  - Police will want to issue a **press release** and work with the family to do this (keeping in mind the risk to the investigation, risk to the individual, privacy, familial and long term impact the release may have – once information is released it cannot be taken back);
  - Police will **see/search the site-last-seen or home of a missing person** for information and may want to control those scenes and collect evidence, DNA or fingerprints;
  - Police will want **statements from the complainant and the person who last saw the individual**. This will be repeated as new witnesses are identified;
  - We will want to create a **timeline of the individual's activities** prior to going missing, the individual's history
- Policed we will want a **complete and accurate description/photo; it should realistically portray what the person looks like if they were to be found**;
- Police will want **medical and dental office** information and the banking institutions used as well as any **sources of income/money** the individual has;
  - Police will also want **social media platforms and user names**;
  - Police have powers under the **missing persons act to acquire information from third parties** to assist the missing person investigation;
  - Police may want **familial DNA** from up to two people who are closely related to the missing person;



- Police will **continually verify accuracy of the information they receive** and are trained not to assume anything and will pursue direct sources of relayed information;
- Police will add the individual to their **National Database** as a missing person;
- Police will want a **family liaison** identified and we ask the **communication be two-way** (liaison connects with RCMP when needed and vice versa);
- Often **family or friends have excellent suggestions for investigative avenues** as they know the person missing, bring these ideas forward (can use the family liaison also);
- Police **may not be able to release all the details** of what they know (if it might jeopardize the investigation or if the missing person is found and does not want it shared);
- Police will keep the **file open until the individual is located**.

## Worksheet # 3: Draft Missing Poster

### MISSING PERSON!

NAME OF LOVED ONE

INSERT PERSONAL INFO HERE

Please bring our loved one home safely!

**PHOTO – a photo that the family chooses and that shows what they would look like, if they were found today**

NAME OF LOVED ONE has been missing since DATE.

SHE/HE/ THEY was last seen PLACE/LOCATION in CITY/TOWN on DATE at approximately TIME.

SHE/HE/ THEY is RACE/GENDER, about HEIGHT tall and approximately WEIGHT.

SHE/HE/ THEY has LENGTH/COLOR hair.

SHE/HE/ THEY has COLOUR eyes and has SCAR/PIERCING/DISTINGUISHING MARK. SHE/HE/ THEY was wearing this when last seen: DESCRIPTION OF CLOTHES/SHOES/JEWELRY.



If you have any information or have seen (NAME OF PERSON) please contact  
(INSERT LOCAL POLICE INFO)

**WORKSHEET # 4: PRESS RELEASE** – see fillable PDF (one page)

