



# WEST VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Operational Policy

### OG3700: Missing Persons

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# Missing Persons

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for Members conducting Missing Person investigations to better enable all efforts and resources to resolve the investigation and to:
- a) incorporate the Provincial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entitled “Missing Persons in British Columbia” as approved by the BC Association of Chiefs of Police; and
  - b) assist in assessing and prioritizing the appropriate response in relation to persons who are missing and comply with the BCPPS relating to Missing Person investigations.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

“Amber Alert” means a tool used in certain child abduction situations to assist in searching for and locating the child/person and suspect through partnership among the province’s law enforcement community, government agencies, media broadcasting agencies, and the public.

“Approved Verifier” means a person involved in providing care or services to a found Missing Person, who is familiar with their current circumstances, and as defined/listed in the BCPPS.

“BCPMPC” means the BC Police Missing Persons Center, a provincial force unit that provides guidance and support to all police in the province for Missing Person investigations, and coordinates and supports unidentified human remains investigations.

“BCPPS” means the binding British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards as authorized by the Director of Police Services in accordance with amendments to S. 40 of the Act (passed in June 2010 and brought into effect by Order in Council), which transfer the content of previous regulations into the form and content of the BCPPS.

“Case Review” means an examination of the administrative management and operational aspects of an investigation including the nature and quality of the investigation and the evidence.

“CTL” means Compassion to Locate – a request for a police service to locate a competent, adult individual on compassionate grounds, without any suspicion of foul play, or indication that the person is missing per the definition in this policy.

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“CPIC” means the Canadian Police Information Center.

“Delegated Aboriginal Agency” means an Aboriginal agency that has established a delegation agreement with the Provincial Director of Child Welfare to undertake administration of all or parts of the Child, Family and Community Service Act.

“Department” means the West Vancouver Police Department.

“Duty Officer” means the on-call Executive Officer (Inspector rank or above and includes Acting Inspector), outside normal business hours.

“Family Liaison” means the Member responsible for communication with the family or other relevant persons during a Missing Person investigation.

“High Risk Missing Person” means a Missing Person investigation in which the Missing Person’s health or well-being may be in immediate danger due to:

- a) their own vulnerability (e.g., the very young and very old, persons with physical illness, disability, addictions or mental health concerns, persons who may be suicidal and persons involved in activities that may place them at increased risk of harm);
- b) being part of an identifiable group that is at an increased risk of harm;
- c) the weather or physical conditions where the Missing Person is believed to be; or
- d) Reasonable Grounds to believe they may be the victim of a crime.

“IFNU” means the North Vancouver RCMP and West Vancouver Police Integrated First Nation Policing Unit.

“Member” means a sworn peace officer employed at the Department.

“Minor” means a person under 19 years of age.

“Missing Child” means a young person under the age of twelve who has been reported missing to the police whose whereabouts are unknown and where there are concerns for the safety or welfare of that child.

“Missing Person” means anyone reported to police or by police as someone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of their disappearance, and who are considered missing until located.

“MIT” means the Major Investigations Team of the Department

“MPC” means the Missing Person Coordinator of the Department, designated as responsible for oversight of, and support functions for Missing Person investigations.

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“Missing Person Risk Assessment Template” means a template in PRIME for assessing the level of risk related to a Missing Person report.

“NCMPUR” means the National Center for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains, a federal program within the National Police Services providing specialized investigative services to law enforcement, medical examiners and chief coroners to support Missing Persons and unidentified remains investigations on a national level.

“OIC Investigations and Intelligence” means the Inspector in charge of the Investigations and Intelligence Division of the Department and includes an acting Inspector.

“Patrol Duty NCO” means the Patrol Duty Sergeant or Acting Sergeant.

“PRIME” means the Police Records Information Management Environment.

“Provincial Missing Person Intake Form” means the PRIME Missing Person Details Page and all available and relevant CPIC fields.

“Safe and Well Check” means a personal face-to-face communication by a Member or an Approved Verifier with a found Missing Person to confirm their identity and assess their well-being.

“Supervisor” means a Member promoted to, or acting in, the rank of Corporal or above or a civilian manager or supervisor.

“ViCLAS” means the automated RCMP case linkage system designed to capture, collate and compare crimes of violence through the analysis of victimology, offender/suspect description, modus operandi, forensic and behavioral data.

“Vulnerable Person” means any person who is at increased risk due to a reduced capacity to care for them self. This includes, but may not be limited to children, the elderly, persons with a disability, persons suffering from a debilitating medical condition, and those included in cultural or social groups, or whose lifestyle and the circumstances of the incident may result in increased risk of violence.

### **3.0 POLICY**

- 3.1 The Department will comply with all aspects of the BCPPS relating to Missing Person investigations and conduct a thorough investigation of all Missing Person complaints. All persons reported missing will be considered “High Risk” until information to the contrary is obtained and confirmed by investigators.

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- 3.2 The investigation of all Missing Persons will be conducted using applicable general criteria required for all investigations, including major case management principles and established criteria for this particular type of incident.
- 3.3 A Missing Child and/or other Vulnerable Person will be considered a priority and investigations concerning them will utilize every available resource.

### 4.0 PROCEDURES

#### General

- 4.1 The BCPPS establishes an overall approach to be taken in Missing Person investigations based on several underlying core principles. Members conducting Missing Person investigations must be aware of the following:
- a) there should be no barriers to reporting a Missing Person and investigations should begin without delay. All Missing Person reports made to the Department will be accepted;
  - b) investigations into persons reported missing should initially be approached as High Risk until a risk assessment is completed. A Member will conduct a risk assessment without delay and, in consultation with a Supervisor, determine the resources to be applied, the urgency with which to apply them, and possible lines of enquiry;
  - c) Aboriginal women and girls are at an increased risk of harm;
  - d) if foul play is suspected the case must be assigned to MIT;
  - e) the safety and well-being of the Missing Person is the primary concern driving investigative tasks and decisions. Finding the Missing Person safe and well is the paramount objective;
  - f) Members will use discretion to address the unique needs of each case, with accountability for decisions through supervisory review;
  - g) cooperation between police agencies is crucial to Missing Person investigations. The Department is committed to supporting open communication and cooperation on cases crossing jurisdictional boundaries;
  - h) families and persons reporting will be kept appropriately informed of the progress of an investigation;
  - i) a proactive approach will be taken towards Missing Person investigations. A problem-solving approach can help to resolve underlying issues and

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ultimately reduce the volume of avoidable reports and/or ensure that the reporting process and ensuing investigations run more smoothly; and

- j) going missing is not in and of itself a crime; a right to privacy must be balanced with police responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of a Missing Person.

### Intake

#### Acceptance of Reports of Missing Persons

- 4.2 All reports of Missing Persons are accepted at the time they are made and given full consideration and attention regardless of:
- a) the Missing Person's gender, age, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, belief, social standing or lifestyle;
  - b) the reportee's relationship to the Missing Person;
  - c) the length of time the person has been missing; and
  - d) whether the report meets the criteria for jurisdiction set out in Sec 4.4.
- 4.3 Under no circumstances will a reportee be advised that they must wait a specific period of time before a report can be made.

#### Jurisdiction

- 4.4 The Department has jurisdiction in relation to a Missing Person report if:
- a) the Missing Person was last seen in West Vancouver; or
  - b) the location where the Missing Person was last seen is not known or their presence there was transient in nature, but West Vancouver is where the Missing Person resides or last stayed.
- 4.5 If jurisdiction is unclear and cannot be resolved between police forces, the OIC of the BCPMPC or designate will be contacted as soon as practicable, and make the decision regarding jurisdiction.
- 4.6 The risk assessment and the onset of an investigation will not be delayed pending the resolution of questions concerning jurisdiction.

#### Missing Person Reports Within Department Jurisdiction

- 4.7 If the assessment of the circumstances determines that the Missing Person report falls within the jurisdiction of the Department:

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- a) the report is assigned to a Member;
- b) an initial risk assessment is completed without delay by the assigned Member;
- c) the Provincial Missing Person Intake Form is completed; and
- d) the Department assumes and retains operational control of the investigation until it is concluded.

### Missing Person Reports Outside the Department's Jurisdiction

4.8 If the assessment of the circumstances determines that a Missing Person report does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Department:

- a) the Department assumes responsibility for the investigation, including prompt initial entry of the Missing Person on PRIME, CPIC, and any other relevant police databases, until it has transferred the investigation to the police agency of jurisdiction. The transfer of the investigation is not complete until the police agency of jurisdiction has confirmed its receipt of the report, responsibility for the investigation, and has generated a file number;
- b) all information received or generated by the Department in relation to the Missing Person report is forwarded to the police agency of jurisdiction immediately or, at the latest, within 24 hours;
- c) the Department advises the reportee of the transfer and provides the file number generated by the police agency of jurisdiction;
- d) the receipt of the Missing Person report, the date and time of the file's transfer to the police agency of jurisdiction, the contact information of the person at the receiving agency, the notification to the reportee, and any other actions taken are documented; and
- e) the Department's CPIC Missing Person entry is only removed upon confirmation that a CPIC Missing Person entry is in place at the receiving agency.

### Compassion to Locate

4.9 A request made to the Department to locate a person on compassionate grounds (CTL) requires an initial Missing Person assessment per Sec 4.11. If the person is assessed "missing", procedures in this policy apply. If, however, the person is not assessed "missing", a designation of "assistance to locate on compassionate grounds" may apply.

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- 4.10 CTLs are not Missing Persons and are therefore not subject to Missing Person investigative procedure noted in this policy. A CTL is not entered into CPIC as a Missing Person, but rather under the code SIP (“Special Interest to Police”) Type: AS (“Assistance or Police Service Notification”).

### **Risk Assessment Process**

#### Initial Risk Assessment

- 4.11 An initial risk assessment will be completed by a Member without delay for all Missing Person reports within the Department’s jurisdiction. In cases where the determination of jurisdiction and/or transfer of the investigation to the police agency of jurisdiction is pending, consideration will then be given to completing an initial risk assessment.
- 4.12 The initial risk assessment includes:
- a) completion of the Missing Person Risk Assessment Template in PRIME; and
  - b) determination of risk in consultation with the Member’s Supervisor.
- 4.13 If the response to **all** questions on the Missing Person Risk Assessment Template is “no”, the Member must then consult with a Supervisor to confirm the screening result.
- 4.14 If the response to any question on the Missing Person Risk Assessment Template is “yes”, the matter requires immediate review and consultation with a Supervisor to assess the appropriate response and resources.
- 4.15 The consultation under Sec 4.13 includes consideration of the following factors:
- a) any reason to suspect the Missing Person may have been abducted;
  - b) any suspicious, dangerous or unknown circumstances surrounding the Missing Person’s disappearance, which suggest the Missing Person may be the victim of a crime;
  - c) the mental or emotional state of the Missing Person (e.g., emotionally distraught, suicidal or likely to cause harm to self or others);
  - d) whether the Missing Person has been involved in a violent or threatening incident prior to going missing (e.g., domestic or relationship violence, bullying or elder abuse);



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- e) whether the Missing Person is part of an identifiable group that is statistically at an increased risk of harm (e.g., Aboriginal women);
- f) characteristics of the Missing Person which may make them vulnerable, such as their age, addiction to drugs/alcohol, infirmity, inability to communicate or other factors;
- g) the weather and physical conditions (e.g., terrain) in the location where the Missing Person may be and their preparedness to deal with those conditions (e.g., clothing, equipment, and/or experience), if known;
- h) whether the Missing Person requires any essential medications;
- i) whether the Missing Person has any physical illness, disability or mental health problems;
- j) the circumstances of any previous incidents of going missing (e.g., suffered harm while missing, previous designation as a High Risk Missing Person by the Department or another police agency);
- k) whether the behaviour is out of character for the Missing Person;
- l) whether the Missing Person was scheduled to testify in court either as a witness or victim;
- m) whether the Missing Person was involved in activities that may put them at increased risk of harm (e.g., sex trade, hitchhiking, gambling and/or transient lifestyle);
- n) whether the Missing Person is associated to gangs or organized crime;
- o) whether the Missing Person may have been involved in an accident or mishap;
- p) the length of time the person has been missing;
- q) any other circumstance or factor that leads the Member conducting the risk assessment to determine that the Missing Person may be at an increased risk of harm; and
- r) whether or not the Missing Person is an elopee from a mental health facility or hospital, and whether a Director's Warrant has been issued for their apprehension.

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- 4.16 The completed Missing Person Risk Assessment Template and decision regarding risk must be approved by a Supervisor and documented in the case file.

### High Risk Missing Person Investigations

- 4.17 In circumstances where the initial or ongoing risk assessment determines that a person reported missing is deemed to be a High Risk Missing Person:
- a) appropriate resources are to be immediately assigned;
  - b) the OIC Investigations and Intelligence/Duty Officer and MIT is immediately notified and the MPC is advised via a PRIME 'notify';
  - c) the file is continuously and actively investigated;
  - d) the file is scored and documented as a High Risk Missing Person investigation in PRIME; and
  - e) the family/reportee is notified of the action to be taken, unless to do so would jeopardize the Missing Person or the investigation.
- 4.18 If the initial or ongoing risk assessment determines that an immediate search of the local area is required (such as in the case of a Missing Child), the Patrol Duty NCO will consider and be responsible for:
- a) setting up a command post;
  - b) organizing and supervising a search by Members so assigned;
  - c) organizing volunteers to assist in a search if required; and
  - d) considering a request for assistance from community organizations as appropriate.

- 4.19 If the Missing Person meets the criteria for activating an Amber Alert, additional procedures in policy **OG3750: Amber Alert** will be followed.

### Non-High Risk Missing Person Investigations

- 4.20 In circumstances where the initial or ongoing risk assessment determines that a person reported missing is not deemed to be a High Risk Missing Person:
- a) appropriate resources are immediately assigned;
  - b) the MPC is advised via a PRIME 'notify'; and

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- c) the family/reportee is notified of the action to be taken.

### Ongoing Risk Assessment

- 4.21 The level of risk is re-evaluated as an ongoing process throughout the investigation by the Member assigned to the investigation, for both High Risk and non-High Risk Missing Person investigations, including at minimum:
- a) when new information pertaining to the Missing Person or their disappearance is obtained or received; and
  - b) with the exception of investigations where the Missing Person is reasonably believed to have committed suicide, within 7 days of the start of the investigation.
- 4.22 The ongoing risk assessment is based on the factors listed in Sec 4.15. Any decision to vary or change the level of risk must be reviewed by the Member's Supervisor and documented in the case file, including updating PRIME scoring.

### **Response and Investigation**

#### Investigative Steps

- 4.23 All investigative steps are to be documented in the case file, including steps that:
- a) were taken but failed to advance the investigation; and
  - b) were considered but determined not to be appropriate or relevant given the circumstances of the case.
- 4.24 A checklist of investigative steps to be taken in a Missing Person investigation is to be completed and attached to the investigative file.

#### Responsibility for Ongoing Investigation

- 4.25 All open investigations have an active primary investigator who is responsible for the investigation. When all initial investigative steps have been exhausted, the investigating Member's Supervisor will determine:
- a) responsibility for ongoing investigation;
  - b) the level of resources needed and the need for special resources; and
  - c) diary dates for the investigation.

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## Evidence

4.26 The following items of evidence are to be collected in Missing Person investigations:

- a) a personal item used by the Missing Person that may provide a biological sample (e.g., a toothbrush or hairbrush);
- b) familial biological sample(s);
- c) medical records;
- d) dental records; and
- e) fingerprints.

These items of evidence are to be collected as soon as possible if the Missing Person is presumed dead or foul play is suspected; or within 30 days of the initial report in other circumstances.

4.27 Further to the items of evidence listed in Sec 4.26, if foul play is suspected or cannot be ruled out, an additional personal item and familial biological sample referred to are to be obtained. All items obtained as evidence as listed in Sec. 4.26 are to be entered into CPIC and on PRIME.

## BC Coroners Service

4.28 The BC Coroners Service Missing Persons Query (MPQ) form is to be completed as soon as possible for any investigation where the Missing Person is presumed dead, and forwarded, as directed on the form, to the BCPMPC Unidentified Human Remains Unit.

## Information Systems

4.29 The Department is responsible to ensure that:

- a) the Missing Person is entered on CPIC as a Missing Person;
- b) the entry includes completion of all relevant fields currently available on CPIC, including biological and cultural affinity, if known;
- c) the CPIC entry is updated as appropriate; and
- d) the designation is not removed from CPIC until the police investigation:
  - i. is concluded; or

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- ii. has been transferred to the responsible agency and confirmation has been received that the responsible agency has entered the relevant information on CPIC.
- 4.30 The Department is responsible to ensure that the Missing Person is entered on PRIME, and that the entry is updated as appropriate until the police investigation is concluded. All High Risk Missing Person investigations must be scored as such in PRIME.
- 4.31 If foul play is suspected, a ViCLAS booklet is to be completed and submitted within 30 days, and updated in accordance with ViCLAS standards.
- 4.32 Where the investigator considers appropriate and consistent with NCMPUR criteria, a profile of the Missing Person is forwarded to the NCMPUR for inclusion on the Canada's Missing website (<http://www.canadasmissing.ca>).

### Missing Person Workflow Overview

- 4.33 In most circumstances, Missing Persons reported to the Department will be initially investigated by the Patrol Section. Initial investigation includes the completion, and the supervisory consult of, the risk assessment noted in Sec. 4.12. Taking the risk assessment and any other relevant factors into consideration, the Patrol Duty NCO may:
- a) retain investigative responsibility for the file in Patrol for additional Patrol shifts; or
  - b) transfer investigative responsibility for the file to MIT.

The investigation, at all times, must have a primary investigator assigned.

- 4.34 Transfers of investigative responsibility for a Missing Persons file will generally be made via a PRIME "notify" entry from the Patrol Duty NCO to the Sgt i/c MIT. All Missing Person investigations are conducted subject to the requirements noted in this policy, regardless of the Section responsible for the investigation. Long-term unresolved Missing Person files ultimately remain as open files with, and supervised by, MIT.
- 4.35 In the event that a risk assessment indicates that immediate action is required by MIT, the OIC Investigations and Intelligence, or in their absence the Duty Officer will be notified immediately.
- 4.36 The investigating Member will notify the MPC if they identify Missing Person files involving similar characteristics or indicating any suspicious trends.

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## File Review and Monitoring

### Missing Person Coordinator

4.37 The MPC is responsible for:

- a) knowing the status of all open Missing Person investigations within the Department's jurisdiction;
- b) ensuring that there is always an active primary investigator for all Missing Person investigations within the Department's jurisdiction;
- c) maintaining and making available to Members, a list of local resources and suggested checks to assist in Missing Person investigations;
- d) liaising with the BCPMPC as needed;
- e) identifying Missing Person files involving similar characteristics or indicating any suspicious trends and notify the BCPMPC of such; and
- f) advising the OIC Investigations and Intelligence of any concerns related to suspicious Missing Person files for the purpose of considering further investigation as necessary.

### Supervision of Open Investigations

4.38 All open investigations of Missing Persons are subject to regular and documented supervision. This supervision occurs, at minimum:

- a) daily for the first 48 hours of the investigation;
- b) weekly for the first 30 days of the investigation;
- c) three months from the start of the investigation; and
- d) every 12 months thereafter.

4.39 Supervision includes, at minimum, consideration of:

- a) whether the risk assessment and the level and type of resources applied to the investigation (including primary investigator) are appropriate;
- b) whether investigative leads and tasks and database checks are being conducted/followed up by the investigator;
- c) whether the investigation is being properly documented;

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- d) whether the family/reportee of the Missing Person are being kept informed of the progress of the investigation;
- e) whether a BC Coroners Service Missing Persons Query form should be completed;
- f) whether all relevant fields currently available on CPIC have been completed;
- g) appropriate diary dates; and
- h) tasks to be assigned to the investigator.

### Case Review – Foul Play Suspected

4.40 In addition to regular supervision required under Sec. 4.38, open investigations where foul play is suspected are subject to a formal Case Review, overseen by the OIC Operations, at minimum:

- a) within 5-7 days of the start of the investigation;
- b) between 6-8 weeks of the start of the investigation; and
- c) in conjunction with the timing of the annual supervision under Sec. 4.38(d).

### **Family Members and Reportees**

4.41 A Missing Person event is stressful for family members/reportees. All Department employees will treat family members/reportees with respect, compassion and empathy.

### Communication

4.42 During the initial stages of the investigation, the family and/or reportee of the Missing Person is to be provided with information about:

- a) support services available;
- b) the investigative process;
- c) actions they may take or information they may seek or provide to assist the investigation;
- d) information to assist them in dealing with the media;

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- e) the file number for the investigation; and
  - f) the name and contact information of the family liaison.
- 4.43 A family liaison will be appointed to each investigation and provide updates and timely information regarding the status of the Missing Person to the family/reportee throughout the investigation, unless to do so would jeopardize the Missing Person or the investigation.
- 4.44 The family/reportee will be advised of any changes to the family liaison and/or the primary investigator and communication between the Department and the family/reportee will be documented in the case file.
- 4.45 The family/reportee will be advised in advance when details pertaining to the investigation will be released to the media and/or the public, unless to do so would jeopardize the Missing Person or the investigation.
- 4.46 The family/reportee is to be provided an opportunity to review and consent to any photo(s) and/or description(s) of the Missing Person that will be released to the media and/or the public, unless to do so would jeopardize the Missing Person or the investigation.
- 4.47 New information will be conveyed to the family in a manner appropriate to the type of information being provided. Death notifications are provided in person, in a private setting whenever possible, subject to any special provisions requested in the communication plan.
- 4.48 A communication plan is established in consultation with the family/reportee of the Missing Person as soon as appropriate given the circumstances of the investigation, or at the latest, within two weeks of the start of the investigation. The communication plan will be documented in the file and at minimum, will establish:
- a) the name and contact information of the family liaison;
  - b) the names and contact information of designated family member or members, the reportee and any other person(s) who are to be updated on the progress of the investigation;
  - c) the frequency and type of information that is to be provided to the persons identified in the communication plan (e.g., the family's wishes and schedule for contact, updates on the progress of the investigation, significant developments in the investigation);



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- d) the type of information that is to be provided to the family liaison by the persons identified in the communication plan; and
- e) the means by which information is to be provided.

### **Concluding a Missing Person Investigation**

#### Closing a Missing Person Investigation

4.49 A Missing Person report or investigation is not closed until:

- a) the Missing Person has been located and a Member or an Approved Verifier has completed a Safe and Well check; or
- b) the BC Coroners Service has confirmed the identity of a deceased person or found human remains as that of the Missing Person; or
- c) if the investigation is being transferred to another police agency, the other police agency has confirmed its receipt of the report, responsibility for the investigation and entry on CPIC.

\* Note – In extenuating circumstances a Supervisor may approve the closure of a Missing Person investigation without a Safe and Well check. The reasons supporting the decision must be documented in the case file.

4.50 Closure of a Missing Person report or investigation must be reviewed and approved by the investigator's Supervisor with such approval being documented in the case file.

4.51 Information systems (e.g., CPIC and PRIME entries) are to be updated as soon as possible when a Missing Person is located.

#### Disclosure

4.52 The location or whereabouts of a found Missing Person who is a competent adult will not be disclosed to the family/reportee without the Missing Person's consent. The following are considered before disclosing the location or whereabouts of a found missing person under the age of 19:

- a) the Minor's age and competency;
- b) whether the Minor consents to the disclosure; and
- c) the Minor's relationship to the family/reportee.

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## Prevention and Intervention

### Missing Persons Under the Age of 19

- 4.53 For found Missing Persons under the age of 19, the Safe and Well Check required under Sec. 4.49 (a), also includes conducting an interview in an effort to determine:
- a) whether the Minor was exploited or harmed leading up to or during their absence;
  - b) any requirements for follow up investigation; and
  - c) any resources or assistance that could be offered to help promote the Minor's safety or prevent them from going missing again.
- 4.54 A Minor has the right to refuse to cooperate or answer questions and will not be pressured to provide information.

### Child/Youth in Care

- 4.55 In circumstances where a Child/Youth in care (foster home or contracted agency) is reported missing, Members will initiate an investigation in accordance with this policy and the BCPPS, including providing the caregiver and social worker with the file number.
- 4.56 Members will maintain contact with the reporting party or the Child/Youth's social worker. Information about the Child or Youth being in care will not be included in any information made public in efforts to locate the Child or Youth.
- 4.57 In circumstances where a missing Child/Youth in care has been located Members will:
- a) report the located Child/Youth to the Child/Youth's social worker (or MCFD Centralized Screening after hours) and provide transport to a person/place designated by the social worker;
  - b) contact MCFD Centralized Screening to obtain local MCFD staff information on who can be contacted if a Child/Youth is located in an outside jurisdiction;
  - c) advise the social worker or MCFD Centralized Screening of the Child/Youth's location if the Child/Youth is unwilling to be transported;
  - d) where possible and appropriate in the circumstances, attempt to debrief the Child/Youth; and

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- e) return all personal items collected for the purposes of DNA after the Child/Youth is found.

4.58 Where a Member locates a missing Child/Youth and there is reason to believe that the Child/Youth's health or safety is in immediate danger Members will take charge of the Child/Youth as permitted in the CFCSA and report the circumstances to the Child/Youth's social worker or MCFD Centralized Screening.

### Child Protection Authorities

4.59 Members will utilize assistance from the Ministry of Children and Family Development authorities and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (where relevant), to facilitate Missing Person investigations involving youth in local group homes and foster care.

4.60 Members will refer found Missing Persons under the age of 19 to child protection authorities for assessment of their needs, where appropriate.

### Aboriginal Liaison

4.61 Members will utilize at least one of the following means to obtain advice or assistance during Missing Person investigations where the Missing Person is Aboriginal:

- a) an Aboriginal liaison officer or IFNU Member; or
- b) an officer from a federal First Nations Policing Program Community Tripartite Agreement or Quadripartite Agreement; or
- c) local Aboriginal leaders or organizations, through written protocol or agreement.

### Other Agencies

4.62 Members will utilize assistance from local mental health facilities, hospitals and nursing homes to facilitate Missing Person investigations involving patients or residents.

### Frequent Reports Involving the Same Individual

4.63 If frequent reports involving the same individual are identified, the Department will identify mitigating strategies, in conjunction with relevant local agencies or resources. Members will participate in any meetings called by the social worker

## Missing Persons

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of a Child/Youth to help develop a plan of action for police involvement in cases of habitually missing youth.

### Suspicious Links Between Cases

4.64 If links between cases are suspected at any time during an investigation, or as a result of aggregate analysis, the Department will:

- a) notify the BCPMPC; and
- b) identify any additional action to be taken or procedures to be followed when a Missing Person report involving similar characteristics is received.

Date Approved - WVPD Executive: 2012-09-10 Policy & Procedure Committee: 2012-09-13 Police Board: 2012/09/20	Date Published: 2012-09-20
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# Missing Persons

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## APPENDIX

### MCFD's MISSING CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY: CRITERIA FOR CAREGIVERS AND DELEGATED WORKERS IN DETERMINING IF A MISSING CHILD OR YOUTH IS ALSO UNSAFE

Report a missing Child/Youth when a Child/Youth's whereabouts are unknown and you have reason to believe the Child/Youth is unsafe.

The following factors are considered when determining if the missing child or youth is unsafe:

- ▶ vulnerability (e.g., due to: age or level of development, physical or cognitive disability, addictions or mental health concerns or involvement in high risk activities);
- ▶ the mental or emotional state of the missing child/youth (e.g., emotionally distraught, suicidal or likely to cause harm to self or others);
- ▶ extreme weather (no coat, boots, etc.) or other physical conditions (e.g., terrain);
- ▶ any suspicious or dangerous circumstances surrounding the child/youth's disappearance, which suggest the child/youth may be the victim of a crime;
- ▶ it is out of character for the child/youth to be missing;
- ▶ there is reason to believe that the child/youth may have been involved in an accident or mishap;
- ▶ the whereabouts of the child/youth have been unknown to the caregiver/care provider overnight.