

Agency Response Guide
to
Missing Person Situations in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons

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Introduction

In December 2005, the Government of Saskatchewan established the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP). Organizations with knowledge, experience and expertise in the area of missing persons were invited to join this collaborative committee in order to examine the issue and try to improve responses to missing persons cases. The PPCMP, chaired by the Ministry of Justice, has representation from over a dozen organizations across the province including police, First Nations, Métis, community organizations, search and rescue, and government.

Based on feedback from families of missing persons and an examination of the issues, the PPCMP prepared a list of recommendations to improve responses to missing persons cases. In the years since, the PPCMP has worked towards implementing many of these recommendations as well as to identify other possible initiatives that may assist missing persons and their families.

The PPCMP's accomplishments comprise a number of related documents including a media toolkit for families; assisted the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police (SACP) in producing a Missing Persons Policy which has since been implemented; and organizes an annual Missing Persons Week to increase public awareness about missing persons cases and provide families with the opportunity to memorialize a missing person. The following guide represents the PPCMP's ongoing efforts to improve the response system by offering agencies guidance through identified best practices in missing person situations.

The purpose of this Agency Response Guide is to provide information that will support agencies in assisting and supporting the families and friends of missing persons in understanding how:

- To file a report with the police service when someone goes missing;
- To understand and cope during the investigative process; and/or
- To access additional supports in missing person situations.

The importance of agencies in missing person investigations

Throughout an investigation, police may work with other agencies to gather information in an effort to help locate the missing person; to provide support to families during the investigation; and/or to support the missing person upon their return. Even agencies not specifically designated to provide counselling or support services to the families of missing persons may become involved because of a client base that directly includes people at risk of going missing.

For the purposes of this document, the contemplated agencies are those who serve a client base with a higher than average risk of going missing. Examples include agencies that serve:

- Youth-at-risk;
- Those who are at risk of going missing due to an accident;
- Those with mental health problems;
- Those who have been in domestic violence situations;
- Those who have been abused and neglected;
- Those at risk of suicide; and
- Those who engage in high risk activities, such as illicit drugs, alcohol, or the sex trade

Missing Persons in Saskatchewan

Definition of a Missing Person

The Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police defines a missing person as 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 home, group home or other place of residence for an indefinite period of time.

Long-term missing persons and unidentified human remains

The Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police (<http://www.sacp.ca>) website profiles long-term missing persons and unidentified human remains cases in Saskatchewan. Long-term cases are defined as any person missing for more than six months (though an exception may be made in cases involving children). This site provides information on known missing person cases and the opportunity for the public to relay any information they may have to police.

A review of the long-term missing persons cases posted on the SACP website suggests that:

- People have gone missing from all across the province;
- There are almost three times more long term missing males than females;
- Persons of Aboriginal descent, and in particular Aboriginal women, are over-represented in missing persons cases; and
- Reasons persons are believed to be missing range from accidents, to mental or physical conditions, to foul play, to runaways or voluntary disappearances, to possible child abduction.

Youth Runaways

In 2005, the most recent year with province-wide statistics, the 4496 reports of missing persons filed represented only 2956 unique individuals; the difference is in part due to repeat filings on an individual, most often a youth runaway. Canadian Police Information Centre's (CPIC) 2012 Missing Persons Statistical Report reveals that there were 3,557 reports of missing persons filed with police in Saskatchewan. While these numbers include some duplication (e.g. cases re-assigned to different jurisdictions), at 2213 or 62%, youth runaways form the majority of cases filed.

A 2010 report prepared for the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (2010) highlighted the challenge of dealing with chronic youth runaways. A 2008 study by Saskatoon Police Service found that 25% of its missing person reports dealt with a youth who had run away at least three (3) times over a one year period.

More recently, a 2013 study by the Regina Police Service (2013) revealed a high incidence of missing persons aged 12-19. Of 860 distinct individuals who went missing, 200 were repeat missing persons and

87% of these were aged 18 or younger. Ninety-six (96) individuals went missing at least 3 times, including one individual reported missing and located 21 times within the reporting period (2012). Persons aged 16 or younger represented two thirds of Regina's missing in 2012, 46% of all missing persons being aged 12-16. Male and female youth were almost equally as likely to be reported missing.

Section 1: Responding to a missing person situation

When a person goes missing, no matter the circumstance, it is an exhausting and profoundly emotional experience for the people left behind. These people are family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances. They may face a barrage of questions from friends, neighbours and police, and in some cases the media and the general public. These experiences can lead to a sense of desperation, confusion and even isolation for those left behind. There is no universal way to respond to the disappearance of a person. Instead, what makes sense depends on individual needs, experiences and circumstances.

As an agency, it is important to emphasize the importance of timely reporting if a person is suspected of going missing. Some people may be hesitant to report their missing relatives or friends to the police. Reasons for not reporting may range from fear that to involve the police escalates the situation to shame or reticence in situations where there may be estrangement or other relationship complications (e.g. recent hostilities) with the missing person. **If the family is uncomfortable filing the report, the agency may take the responsibility of notifying the police.**

Myths About Missing Persons

Agencies should be aware of myths which may result in delayed reporting of a missing person. Some of the most common misconceptions are addressed below.

Myth: You have to wait 24 hours to report someone missing

Fact: REPORT A MISSING PERSON IMMEDIATELY. Remember: "A day delayed is another day missing" as the evidence trail goes colder.

Myth: You have to be family to report someone missing

Fact: ANYONE CAN REPORT SOMEONE MISSING, A CO-WORKER, A FRIEND, A NEIGHBOUR!

Myth: You have to report to the police jurisdiction wherever that person went missing from.

Fact: REPORT TO THE NEAREST POLICE STATION.

Myth: You cannot report someone missing if they have been found once before.

Fact: Not every event surrounding a missing person is the same. REPORT SOMEONE MISSING NO MATTER WHAT HAS OCCURRED IN THE PAST.

Myth: Persons with high risk lifestyles won't be investigated.

Fact: ALL missing person reports will be investigated and ALL unsolved missing person investigations remain active until there is an outcome.

The first 48 hours

In the initial stage of the investigation, it is most useful for families and friends of the missing person to provide information about the missing person and answer questions from police investigators.

Reporting a Missing Person

✓ Review the Missing Persons Checklist (see [Appendix A](#))

When a missing person report is filed, the police will ask questions on a range of topics (see Appendix A for a more detailed list of questions.) Information requested may include:

- *basic contact information about the missing person*
- *a physical description of the missing person*
- *Information about the last time the person was seen such as*
 - *Where they were last seen,*
 - *What they were wearing,*
 - *What they were doing or planning to do.*

In addition to reviewing the Missing Persons Checklist, agencies may ask families to consider the following:

- **Money** – does the missing person have access to money or credit cards? Parents/ guardians should find out if the child/young person has accessed bank accounts through ATM withdrawals or if money is missing from parents or siblings.
- **Transportation** – does the missing person have access to a vehicle (directly or through a friend)? If so, is that vehicle still present? Is the missing person familiar with public transportation?
- **Clothing/ toiletries** – does the evidence suggest that the missing person has intentionally gone missing? Missing clothes, toiletries, make-up, medications or other items of personal significance often indicate pre-departure preparations.
- **Social Media** – does the missing person use social media? Have they made recent use of social media (e.g. updating Facebook status)?
- **Inconsistent with normal behaviour patterns** – an out-of-character departure may signal acute distress or the possibility of accident or foul play.

✓ When the police are contacted, advise them that you are filing a missing person report.

While it is helpful if all of the information from the checklist is available, reporting a person missing should not be delayed to search for the answers to questions on the checklist.

The Primary Contact: To simplify the communication with the searching family, the police may request basic contact information – e.g. name, phone number and or email addresses – for a Primary Contact. The Primary Contact should be a member of the family or a friend of the missing person willing to act as a liaison between the family and the police. His/her duties may include sharing information with police on behalf of the family. **If members of the family or friends are unable or unwilling to take on this role, an agency representative may agree to serve as a contact instead.**

- ✓ **After the missing person report has been filed**, the following information can be requested from the police in relation to the missing person's report:
 - *Missing person case file number*
 - *Investigator in charge name, rank, badge number and contact information*

Immediate actions that Family / Friends can undertake

- ✓ **Secure the personal belongings and living space of the missing person until the police provide further direction.** Below is a list of items that may be important:
 - Items such as a hairbrush, a toothbrush, or undergarments. Investigators may need to undertake DNA analysis.
 - Any electronic equipment such as a cell phone or computer. Note the make of the cell phone and the service provider.
 - If possible, a list of all online aliases or nicknames used in online chat rooms and social media websites such as Skype and Facebook.
 - Any personal documents such as banking and credit card statements as well as bank card information.
 - Any written material such as a journal.
- ✓ **Contact friends and family** that may have some idea of where the missing person may be.
 - Start with those closest to the missing person. Create a record (log book) of each person contacted and when contacted.
 - If you find out any additional information from the telephone inquiries, write it down in the log book and **pass it on to the police**.
 - Put up flyers with a photograph of the missing person around your community. An organization such as Child Find Saskatchewan (<http://www.childfind.sk.ca/>) can help with printing and distributing flyers and posters. Other online resources can be found in [Appendix B](#).
 - As and when appropriate, inform relevant persons about the disappearance of the missing person. These may include the missing person's employer, their bank and their family physician. If a child is missing, contact their school and update them on the situation.

Section 2: Supporting the search for the missing person

Understanding why the person has gone missing will help direct the search efforts to areas where the person is most likely to be found.

Why do people go missing? Key risk factors

Assessing and identifying the risk factors involved for each of the different categories within the missing persons population helps in understanding why people go missing and how to appropriately respond to a missing person incident. A *risk factor* is anything that increases the probability of a person being more prone to specific types of harmful behaviour or become a victim of a crime.

The reasons people go missing vary widely and may change each time a person goes missing or even while they are missing. For instance, someone with Alzheimer's disease may accidentally go missing by wandering off but remain missing due to an accident. Likewise, a runaway who goes intentionally missing may remain missing because he/she has become a victim of crime. People may go missing:

- Intentionally because of a relationship breakdown, trying to escape personal problems and/or violence or as a result of living a transient lifestyle and losing contact with family and long-term friends; or
- Unintentionally because of Alzheimer's disease, other mental health problems, accident or misadventure or by force (as a victim of crime).

The greatest challenge police face in assessing missing person cases is determining whether the disappearance is voluntary or not. Agencies can help families to understand questions the police will ask by reviewing the Missing Persons Checklist (see [Appendix A](#)). Routine questions that the family and other relevant persons including (school) friends, teachers or work colleagues of **any** missing person may be asked as part of a missing person investigation include:

- What was the person doing prior to going missing?
- What are the person's hobbies or interests?
- What are the person's fears or phobias?
- Has there been any stressful event in the person's life? How would the person normally deal with this stress?
- Does the person have any drug or alcohol issues, including any medical conditions?
- If the missing person is female and post-pubescent, are there any pregnancy issues?
- Has the missing person gone missing before?
 - If so, did he/she state any intention to repeat this behaviour again?
 - Was a note left from previous occasions?
 - Where did the missing person go during the previous disappearing episode and for how long?
- Is there a history suicide attempts or self-inflicted injuries?

The police service will decide whether a disappearance is voluntary or not and whether a case should be closed or not. Agencies should always encourage families to file a police report of a suspected missing person in a timely manner.

Supporting the investigation

In addition to asking questions, the police may lead an extensive physical search. **It is important to allow the police to direct the search effort, which ensures that the search is coordinated and properly performed, evidence found within the search site is protected and preserved and that searchers are emotionally protected.** Agencies may assist families in other ways during the investigation. Some of the activities agencies may become involved with during an investigation are described below.

AMBER Alerts:

The AMBER Alert system is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, media outlets, and the public, that establishes a protocol to activate an urgent public appeal for information in child abduction cases. The program gives the public up-to-date information about a child abduction by using widespread media broadcasts and soliciting the public's help in having the child returned home safely (<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/mb/prog-serv/alerte-amber-alert-eng.htm>). **Agencies may register for free AMBER Alerts and assist with dissemination of information during public appeal through their social media networks.**

Agencies can also help families with understanding the special circumstances which may lead to an AMBER Alert in Canada. An AMBER Alert is only activated by law enforcement when all of the following four criteria have been met:

- Police have confirmed that an abduction has taken place
- The victim is a child, or of proven physical or mental disability
- There is reason to believe the victim is in danger of serious physical injury
- There is information available that, if broadcasted to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the victim (i.e. description of a vehicle or person suspected of having done the abduction).

Distributing Flyers and Posters

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the disappearance, the distribution of flyers and posters can be very beneficial to the search and rescue of persons who have involuntarily gone missing. The following points are important tips about flyer and poster distribution that agencies can use for the short- and long-term process:

- **Always discuss and coordinate poster distribution plans with police.**
- Distribute only recent pictures that resemble the missing person. Remember that flyers and posters will show only the head, neck, and top of the shoulders. If possible, try to include pictures with multiple angles to portray an accurate description of the person.
- Videos and home movies can be used for airing on television.
- Make multiple copies of the selected pictures and videos. Have pictures scanned for electronic distribution and make electronic copies of videos.
- Assist the family in the preparation of a press kit for the media by using the Media Relations Toolkit on the Saskatchewan Justice Missing Persons website:
<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons>

Links to additional online resources about media communications are available in [Appendix B](#).

Information or tips from the public

In situations where a member of the public contacts the agency with information, forward this information to the investigating officer. In addition, encourage the person to contact the police directly. The police will want to ask the person further details. If the person wants to remain anonymous, have them submit the information to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

<http://www.saskcrimestoppers.com/contact-us>

Maintain communication with police over the course of the investigation

If there are any questions about the status of the investigation, it is the responsibility of the Primary Contact to request this update from the lead investigator. In the unfortunate event that the person remains missing for several months and the case transitions into a long-term investigation, the Primary Contact should arrange a regular time frame to check in with police and determine how to ensure that family, friends and other relevant parties are kept informed of the status of the investigation.

Police-based Victims Services

Missing Persons Liaisons available through local police-based Victims Services may provide additional support in maintaining contact with police over the course of the investigation. Please visit the website below for the contact information of the Victim Services program in your community:

<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Victim-Services-in-Police-Agencies>

Section 3: Supports for the families and friends of missing persons

Support can be defined in different ways. Some families and friends need search assistance, information and advice, while others require support at home so that they can concentrate their efforts on searching. Some feel that their emotional needs could be met by support from family and friends, while others prefer professional assistance. No matter the source or level of support, it is important to note is that those left behind often require practical support initially, in addition to ongoing emotional support.

The following suggestions may be useful for an agency assisting a family in crisis; however it is important to note that every situation is different and some suggestions may not be suitable for every incident. Always respect the family's wishes with respect to privacy; do not share information with the media, extended family or friends without prior approval.

- Agencies may support families in preparing to meet with a police investigator by going through the [Missing Persons Checklist](#) with them prior to the meeting.
- The agency can also offer to take notes on their behalf during the meeting; this allows families to concentrate on the interview or other exchanges of information with the police. Agencies should accept that not all families will accept this offer and that acceptance in one circumstance may not apply to another.
- Help families focus on positive coping capacities by encouraging a sense of achievement in having survived each day and drawing strength from what needs to be done the next day.
- Concentrate on the fact that the person is 'missing' as the trauma – not on what may or may not have happened to the missing person.

Ambiguous Loss

It may help to understand how to support families and friends by recognizing that there are various types of loss. The unresolved grief that family and friends can experience when someone goes missing is known as ambiguous loss. In its simplest terms, ambiguous loss may be defined as 'here, but not here'. This concept was developed by Pauline Boss who notes that, "with ambiguous loss, there is no closure; the challenge is to learn how to live with the ambiguity". When someone is missing, there is no event to bring a sense of closure. The sense of not knowing and the continuing hope that the person will be found does not allow the family/friends to move on as they could after a death.

Support Services in Saskatchewan

Police-based Victim Services

Police-based Victim Services programs are available in most Saskatchewan communities to support families of persons who are missing. Services include emotional support, information, and referrals to other agencies and community resources. In Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon, specialized Missing Persons Liaisons are available in the Police-based Victim Services programs to provide direct services and supports to families of missing persons. These Missing Persons Liaisons work closely with police investigators to provide a coordinated response for families, and with the Aboriginal Resource Officers

in Victim Services to provide culturally appropriate responses for Aboriginal families. They also work closely with communities to promote and facilitate interagency coordination.

Missing person cases are referred to Victim Services by police if they:

- Are suspicious or unusual in nature;
- Involve Major Crime Unit investigation;
- Require search and rescue;
- Have distraught family / involved persons that require support; or
- Have a family / involved person who requests help from Victim Services.

Please visit this website for the contact information of the Victim Services program in your community:

<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Victim-Services-in-Police-Agencies>

Child Find Saskatchewan

Child Find Saskatchewan's "Connecting Families" program is designed to assist families with a missing loved one by offering resources, empowerment and emotional support from others who have experienced a like situation. For more information visit, www.childfind.sk.ca

Other agencies that can assist when a person goes missing

A list of provincial and national agencies that can provide support for the missing person and the families of missing persons can be found at: <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons>

Managing financial donations

Individuals or organizations wishing to support the search efforts for the missing person may choose to do so through monetary donations. For some, the donations may be tied to a specific purpose whereas other donations can be applied to outstanding expenses. Either way, it is important to accurately record all incoming and outgoing transactions to ensure the effective use of funds and that donors requests are fulfilled. Some suggestions on ways in which financial donations may be used are listed below:

- Fuel for transportation;
- Billboard signs and posters to increase public awareness;
- Supplies for volunteers such as food and refreshments, nametags, cameras, radio equipment, First Aid kits, water bottles, blankets, flashlights, etc;
- Supporting family members unable to work during the crisis by making minimum payments on expenses, paying bills, purchasing groceries and supporting the needs of other children in the family; and/or
- Creating financial rewards for information pertaining to the case.

Advise families that they are under no obligation to fund raise, especially if they do not feel that the method of fundraising properly honours the missing. Not knowing how the future will go, discourage families from accepting conditional donations which they may regret, such as promising the first interview or to tell their story at a later date.

Setting up a bank account to manage donations

A community/not-for-profit bank account may be useful for managing monetary donations depending on bank policy. This method could provide individuals with a safe and secure location for donations while increasing the options available for accepting funds, such as cheques or electronic money transfers. Online banking also increases the transparency and accountability of funds by tracking and recording incoming and outgoing transactions through online web access or monthly statements.

All of the major banks in Canada offer a Community or Not-For-Profit account. However, each bank will vary by the level of service offered and the monthly service fee charged. Some banks may offer a large variety of services for a small monthly service fee, whereas other banks may offer accounts with a limited number of monthly transactions for free. It is important to compare the different bank accounts with the family to determine an appropriate level of banking services and monthly service fees.

Non –Profit Agencies

Agencies with a charitable tax number must follow the reporting requirements set out by the Canada Revenue Agency for registered charities are able to issue tax receipts. Some agencies may be willing to work with the families and friends of a missing person to receive the donations on their behalf and issue tax receipts to donors. However this decision is made at the agency's discretion and in accordance with its mandate.

When the missing return home

In Canada, more than 95 percent of missing person cases are 'resolved'. However, having a loved one go missing and then return can be complicated for all involved. Families may express or experience anxiety that the person will disappear again; observe that the experience of being away has changed the person who was missing; or feel that the social dynamics of family relationships or friendships have changed. For cases where the missing person is a victim of a crime, the psychological scars from his/her trauma also create a sense of continuing loss, and the person may return noticeably different from when he/she went missing.

Encouraging family gatherings which actively include the returned missing person may assist in resolving some of the interfamily ambiguity. The missing person should be given a positive welcome and the opportunity to talk to a person or persons of their choice about his/her experiences. The agency should advise participants in this conversation to engage the missing person with sensitivity and to try to take the returned missing person's concerns seriously. This conversation may be informal and spontaneous but in the event of a planned family gathering, it could take the form of a "return interview" where the returned missing person is allowed (**not pressured**) to tell their story and family members are encouraged to share the story of what happened to them while the missing person was away.

If requested/permitted by the family, a return interview can assist agencies in prioritizing what services or resources the family may require for coping in the future. A return interview may also allow for therapeutic intervention which addresses current issues while identifying emergent issues and generating strategies to minimize the risk of that individual going missing again.

If an agency becomes aware that the person was a victim of crime during the disappearance, the agency should either inform the police or encourage the person to inform the police. **An agency which deals with children/youth is required, under the *Child and Family Services Act*, to report suspected/alleged child abuse to child protection authorities.**

Support to a child or young person

An agency may assist in a return interview:

- To ensure that the young person's experience is documented and to understand the reasons for the disappearance;
- To listen and establish the views and wishes of the child or young person;
- To provide information and explanation of options to support the youth/child with decision making.
- If an interpreter is used during the interview, it is important that the interpreter use the exact words of the child or young person, and not a translation of what they think the child or young person meant to say. To avoid misinterpreting a child/youth's words, it is best practice to utilize an interpreter with no personal connection to the returned young person.

Section 4: Long-term missing persons

Historical/ Cold cases

Persons who have been missing in excess of six months are listed in Saskatchewan's registry of missing persons which is housed at the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police website (<http://www.sacp.ca/missing/index.php>). **Advise families that a long term missing person's case, commonly known as a cold case, is not a closed case.** Police will continue looking for missing persons until the case is solved or until all investigational avenues have been exhausted. All leads will be followed up, no matter how old. **Advise anyone with a tip about a missing person to contact the police or Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-8477.**

In the event that a new tip or lead reactivates an investigation, families can be forced to relive the crisis and experience a period of heightened hope. This can be especially traumatic if the lead is not fruitful. Agencies can support the family by offering counseling or referrals to other agencies which provide counseling (see [Appendix B](#)).

Computer age progression photos

If the person has been missing for a long time, families can distribute age progressed photos and updated case information to refresh people's memories and renew interest in the case. The National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (<http://www.canadasmising.ca>) provides computer age progression service for all Canadian law enforcement agencies across Canada. To utilize this service, the person must be missing for a minimum of two years.

Honouring the lives of the missing

If a person goes missing for an extended period, families and friends may wish to commemorate the positives of the person's life. These tributes may focus on the person (such as birthdays, anniversaries) rather than the fact the person is missing. Others may wish to use the anniversaries of the person going missing to remind the public of the case and appeal for new leads.

Agencies can help the families by organizing and/or participating in these events or encouraging families to contact other agencies which organize vigils to honour missing.

Managing financial and/or property matters

In the event that a missing person is absent for an extended period of time, he/she may leave behind practical, financial and legal matters that need to be addressed, particularly to support dependents. *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act, 2009* sets out the legislative procedures to declare someone as missing and provides for the appointment of a Property Guardian for the missing person's estate.

The Act defines a missing person as a person who:

- Has not been heard from for at least three months, despite reasonable efforts to locate the person; or

- Is declared by the court to be a missing person in the event that there is an urgent need for a property guardian to preserve the estate or the support of the dependants of that person.

Persons who may apply for declaration and appointment as a property guardian are as follows, in order of priority:

- The spouse of the missing person;
- A child of the missing person;
- A parent or legal guardian of the missing person;
- A brother or sister of the missing person;
- A grandchild, great-grandchild or grandparent of the missing person;
- A nephew, niece, uncle or aunt of the missing person;
- Any other person who, in the opinion of the court, has a sufficient interest in the estate of the missing person;
- The public guardian and trustee.

Once a property guardian has been appointed, they may:

- Do anything respecting the estate of the missing person that the missing person could do except:
 - Make a will; or
 - Change an election or designation made by the missing person
- Sign documents under the authority as the property guardian.
- Apply to the court to authorize the sale, lease or other disposition of the missing person's property if the court is satisfied that this act is required in the interests of the estates of the missing person.

The judge of the court may also order any person or any public body, including the Crown, to provide the public guardian, or any other person whom the judge considers appropriate with any of the following information with respect to the missing person:

- Financial information;
- Information respecting accounts and transactions;
- Telephone or electronic communication records;
- Health information;
- Identification information, including a photograph;
- Any other information that the judge considers appropriate.

The property guardian also has the authority to spend money from the estate of the missing person for the purposes of:

- Locating the missing person;
- Determining if the missing person is alive or dead;
- Maintaining or educating the missing person's dependents.

Presumption of Death

While families will continue to hope that their loved one will eventually return home, it sometimes becomes necessary in the medium term to preserve and administer the estates of missing persons by obtaining guardianship. In the long term, it may be necessary to presume the missing person dead. In Saskatchewan, *the Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act*

(<http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/M20-01.pdf>) allows family members or the Property Guardian (see Managing Financial and Property Matters above) to file a declaration presuming the missing person to be dead.

If an agency is contacted by a member of the family of the missing person who wishes to file for presumption of death (and thereby a death certificate), that individual should be advised to first consult legal counsel to file for the presumption of death.

Appendix A - Missing Persons Checklist

If you suspect a person is missing, the following are actions that you can take.

- ☐ Immediately contact your local law enforcement agency to report the person missing. In addition, you may contact the law enforcement agency in a different area if you believe the person went missing somewhere else. When you contact police, tell them that you need to file a missing persons' report.
- ☐ When you file a missing person's report the police will ask you a number of questions. It would be helpful if you had the following information. Do not worry; you need not delay contacting the police should your information be incomplete.

a) Basic information about the Missing Person

- ☐ Full name
- ☐ Date of birth
- ☐ Birthplace
- ☐ Nicknames, if any
- ☐ Current and previous addresses. Who else lived there?
- ☐ Current and former employers.

b) Physical description of the Missing Person

- ☐ Height
- ☐ Weight
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Build
- ☐ Hair Color/Length of Hair
- ☐ Eye color
- ☐ Any Distinguishing Marks – such as tattoos, birthmarks, scars, etc.
- ☐ Beard/Mustache/Sideburns
- ☐ Find the most recent photo of the missing person

c) Habits and Personality of Missing Person

- ☐ Does the individual smoke? If yes, what brand of cigarettes? Does the individual drink alcohol? If yes, what type?
- ☐ Does the individual use recreational drugs?
- ☐ Does the individual chew gum?
- ☐ What type of recreation or activities does the individual engage in including hobbies?
- ☐ Are there particular habits that the individual has? For instance, does he/she go to a particular spot for coffee each day?
- ☐ Does the individual have particular banking habits?
- ☐ What type of personality does the individual have? Is the individual outgoing or quiet? Is the individual friendly or depressed?
- ☐ What are the personal values and philosophy of the individual?

- ☐ Is the individual religious?
- ☐ Does the individual have any personal or emotional problems?
- ☐ What level of education or training does the individual have?
- ☐ Does the individual frequent any particular areas, bars, taverns or places of interest?

d) Clothing that the Missing Person was wearing the last time seen

- ☐ Style and color of shirt
- ☐ Style and color of pants
- ☐ Style and color of jacket or outerwear
- ☐ If applicable, type of headwear
- ☐ Type of glasses
- ☐ Type of gloves
- ☐ Type of footwear

e) Trip Plans of the Missing Person the day they went missing

- ☐ What were the missing person's plans and/or activities on the day they went missing?
- ☐ Where was he/she going?
- ☐ Why was he/she going there?
- ☐ If the individual was traveling by car, can you provide the make and model number, license plate number, as well as registration (if possible).
- ☐ Provide information about any other vehicles or mode of travel the missing person may have access too.

f) Information about the last time the Missing Person was seen

- ☐ The time and location of where he/she was last seen
- ☐ The name of the individual who last saw the missing person
- ☐ The name of the individual who last talked at length with the missing person
- ☐ The direction the missing person was traveling the last time seen.
- ☐ The attitude of the missing person the last time seen
- ☐ Was the missing person complaining of or concerned about anything before he/she went missing?

g) Overall health and condition of the missing person

- ☐ Physical condition.
- ☐ Any known medical problems.
- ☐ Is the person suffering from Alzheimer's disease/dementia/memory loss? If so, are they registered on Medic Alert® Safely Home? If they are registered on Medic Alert® Safely Home, what is their registration number and are they wearing a Medic Alert® Safely Home identification bracelet or carrying an identification card?
- ☐ Any handicaps or disabilities.
- ☐ Any psychological problems.
- ☐ Any medications that the individual is taking.
- ☐ Any addictions that the individual has.

- ☐ Provide the name of the missing person's family physician and their health card number, if possible
- ☐ Provide the name of the missing person's main dentist, if possible.

h) Potential People that the Individual would contact

- ☐ List all of the person's friends and acquaintances who the missing person may try to contact. Try to include addresses and telephone numbers.
- ☐ When you have finished filing the missing person's report, ask that the police get back to you with the missing person's file number and the contact information for the investigator in charge of the file.
- ☐ Secure the personal belongings and living space of the missing person until the police provide further direction. Below is a list of items of importance.
 - ☐ Items such as a hairbrush, a toothbrush, or undergarments in the event that investigators may need to undertake DNA analysis.
 - ☐ Any electronic equipment such as a cell phone or computer. What is the make of phone and the cell phone provider. As well, do you know if they were active on a chat line or other online social network such as Facebook?
 - ☐ Any personal documents such as banking statements and credit card statements as well as all bank card information.
 - ☐ Any written material such as a journal
- ☐ To make things more manageable, start a log or journal. Include all information about the missing person's case in the journal.
- ☐ The Police will likely request that someone from the family volunteer to be a liaison or spokesperson for the family to deal with Police investigators. This simplifies the relationship between Police officers and the family. Police officers will update one person with respect to the investigation and will know who to contact when information is needed from the family. Talk with your family and close friends about who will be your family's contact person with the police. If the members of your family are feeling overwhelmed you may decide that a close friend should be the contact person.
- ☐ If the missing person is a child, contact Child Find Saskatchewan. They offer a 24 hour, 7 day per week toll free phone line to handle emergency situations, provide general investigations, ground search assistance, and assist with the preparation and distribution of posters.

Actions your family can undertake

- ☐ Conduct a telephone search. Phone friends or acquaintances that may have information about where the missing person is. Write all of the information down in your journal.
- ☐ If you find out any additional information from telephone inquiries pass it on to police.
- ☐ Distribute a flyer with a photograph of the missing person around your community. If the missing person is a child talk to Child Find Saskatchewan about the services they provide for distributing pictures and posters.
- ☐ Tell all necessary people about the disappearance of the missing person. This may include the missing person's employer, their bank, and their doctor. If the missing person is a child you will need to contact the school they are attending.

- ☐ If it applies to your situation, arrange for the payment of the missing person's mortgage, rent or bills. You may require legal advice on how to proceed.

Actions to Undertake to Take Care of Yourself and your Family

- ☐ Ask yourself if you need to take an extended leave from work. If you do, talk to your employer about what options might be available.
- ☐ If you feel you need an extension on bill payments then ask about what options are available.
- ☐ Try to eat, sleep, and exercise on a regular basis. Although you may not feel that you have time it is important to take care of yourself.
- ☐ Try not to blame yourself for the disappearance of your loved one. Treat yourself with as much kindness as you can in these difficult times.
- ☐ Try to realize your limits. Be easy on yourself if you are unable to provide what is needed in all situations. You may, for instance, be unable to provide emotional support to all of the members of your family. Don't feel guilty about seeking professional counseling services to help yourself and your family deal with the wide range of emotions that are being experienced.
- ☐ Don't feel guilty if you have to return to work. This does not mean that you have given up on the search for your loved one.

The complete Missing Persons checklist is available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons>

Appendix B – Agency Checklist & Resources

Your agency's mandate may limit how many of the following steps will be relevant to you.

- ☐ **Advise client of the limitations of your agency's ability to help**
 - Advise and/or assist client to file a missing person report
 - Direct tips/information to **Crimestoppers** at **1-800-222-8477** or online at <http://www.saskcrimestoppers.com/contact-us>
 - **Child Find Saskatchewan** offers a 24/7 toll free number (**1-800-513-3463**) which families can call for assistance with missing children. The organization helps families of missing children throughout the process up to and including assistance with family reunification. For more information on services offered, visit <http://childfind.sk.ca/index.php/site/child-is-missing>
- ☐ **Prepare client to file report**
 - Review Missing Person Checklist of questions available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons> or <http://www.sacp.ca/missing/index.php>
 - What to ask – Case File name; Investigator full contact information
- ☐ **After the report is filed**
 - Advise client to contact their closest police-based Victim Services <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Police-based-Victim-Services>
 - Search and locate services
- ☐ **During the investigation**
 - **Poster template** – Available from Native Women's Association of Canada http://www.nwac.ca/sites/default/files/imce/NWAC_2C_Toolkit_e.pdf
 - **Posters & flyer distribution: missing children** – assistance may be available from Child Find Saskatchewan at <http://childfind.sk.ca/index.php/site/child-is-missing>
 - **Media toolkit** available at <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons>
 - A guide on raising **public awareness through the use of the media** http://responseplan.ca/app/en/raising_awareness-raising_public_awareness_through_use_of_the_media
 - **Social media** – Agencies should always encourage families to consult police before using any media plans, especially when using social media. Missingkids.ca offers some information on using the internet to raising public awareness http://responseplan.ca/app/en/raising_awareness-ways_to_build_awareness
- ☐ **Counselling**
 - **Connecting Families** is a peer program by Child Find Saskatchewan which pairs families of missing persons with others who have experienced similar situations.

Resource/ Contact Links		
Agency	Contact	Website
Saskatchewan		
Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan	2550 – 12th Ave., Ste. 301 Regina, SK, S4P 3X1 Tel: (306)949-4141 Toll Free: 1-800-263-3367 Fax: (306)949-3069 Email: info@alzheimer.sk.ca	www.alzheimer.ca/sk
Child Find Saskatchewan	202 – 3502 Taylor Street East Saskatoon, SK, S7H 5H9 Tel: (306) 955-0070 Fax: (306) 373-1311 Toll Free: 1-800-513-FIND (3463) Email: childfind@childfind.sk.ca	http://childfind.sk.ca/
Crimestoppers	Co-ordinator RCMP "F" Division Bag Service 2500 Regina, SK S4P 3K7 Tel: 306-780-5485 Fax: 306-780-8567	http://www.saskcrimestoppers.com/
Police Based Victims Services	Various – see website link	http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/Police-based-Victim-Services
Municipal Police Services	Various – see website link	http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/PCS-List
Saskatchewan RCMP 'F' Division:	Various – see website link	http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/sk/detachs/index-eng.htm
Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police (SACP) – Missing Persons		https://www.sacp.ca/missing/index.php
Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV) *Always coordinate search efforts with police	webmaster@sarsav.ca	www.sarsav.ca
Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons	BettyAnn.Pottruff@gov.sk.ca OR Various – see website link	http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons
Canada		
Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP) – Missing Kids	615 Academy Road Winnipeg, MB R3N 0E7 Tel: (204) 945-5735 Toll Free: (800) 532-9135	https://protectchildren.ca/app/en/ https://www.protectchildren.ca/app/en/overview/missingkids
Kids Help Phone	Toll Free: 1-800-668-6868	www.kidshelpphone.ca
National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR)		http://www.canadasmissing.ca/index-eng.htm