

Section 5.0 – Specialized Investigations	Page 1 of 8
Sub Section 5.1 – Missing Person Investigations	Effective: September 1, 2016
Subject 5.1.3 – Response and Investigation	Revised: November 27, 2019

Definitions

“BC Police Missing Persons Centre (BCPMPC)” – 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.

“Family liaison” – a police officer responsible for communication with the family or other relevant persons during a missing person investigation.

“Missing person” – 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.

“Missing person coordinator” – the police officer designated as responsible for oversight and support functions for the police force’s missing person investigations, including those functions listed in Standard (1) of 5.1.4 *File Review and Monitoring* of these *British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards*.

“National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR)” – a federal program within the National Police Services which provides specialized investigative services to law enforcement, medical examiners and chief coroners to support missing persons and unidentified remains investigations on a national level.

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

Standards

The chief constable, chief officer or commissioner must ensure that:

Investigative steps

- (1) All investigative steps are 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.

- (2) A checklist of initial investigative steps to be taken in a missing person investigation is made available to all police officers, which includes, at minimum:
- (a) Interview relevant persons, which may include the reportee, witnesses, friends and family members of the missing person and the person who last saw or had contact with the missing person;
 - (b) Determine:
 - (i) Where and when the missing person was last seen or last known to be;
 - (ii) Whether it is out of character for the person to go missing;
 - (iii) Possible reason(s) why the person may have gone missing; and
 - (iv) Possible destination or location(s) where the missing person may be found.
 - (c) Ensure that the initial risk assessment and the *Provincial Missing Person Intake Form* are completed.
 - (d) Conduct a search of relevant locations, which may include the missing person's residence, point last seen and/or point last known, possible destination(s) or other locations the police officer considers relevant, obtaining consent or authority to conduct the search as required;
 - (e) Obtain a detailed description and photograph of the missing person (see also Standard (6) of 5.1.5 *Family Members and Reportees*);
 - (f) Conduct checks for the missing person on CPIC, PRIME or other police information systems;
 - (g) If the missing person is Aboriginal, notify an Aboriginal Liaison Officer or the missing person coordinator;
 - (h) Provide the family and/or reportee of the missing person with information about:
 - (i) Support services available;
 - (ii) The investigative process;
 - (iii) Actions they may take or information they may seek or provide to assist the investigation;
 - (iv) Information to assist them in dealing with the media;
 - (v) The file number for the investigation; and
 - (vi) The name and contact information of the family liaison.
 - (i) A requirement to consider:
 - (i) Issuing a BOLO and/or Assistance to Locate bulletin;
 - (ii) Whether the criteria for issuing an AMBER Alert are met;
 - (iii) Conducting neighbourhood enquiries and/or a video canvass;
 - (iv) Securing physical evidence (e.g., surveillance footage, computers, electronic devices and their passwords, bank records, phone records, etc.), biological evidence (e.g., personal items of the missing person that may contain a biological sample, familial biological samples), or medical or dental records, obtaining consent or authority to secure the evidence as required;

- (v) Requesting assistance from other police forces;
- (vi) Requesting assistance from other agencies (e.g., child protection authorities, taxi companies, public transit authorities, airport authorities, Canada Border Services Agency, Department of Homeland Security, towing companies, etc.)
- (vii) Whether the case should be profiled on the police force's website, social media platform(s) and/or the NCMPUR's Canada's Missing website;
- (viii) Involving the media;
- (j) Any other step that may assist in the investigation.

Information about submitting a missing person case to the Canada's Missing website (<http://www.canadasmising.ca/index-eng.htm>) is available from the NCMPUR.

The NCMPUR Best Practices Guide Appendix C provides an 'Information Checklist – Missing Persons'. Contact the NCMPUR for more information.

Responsibility for ongoing investigation

- (3) All open investigations have an active lead investigator who is responsible for the investigation.
- (4) When all initial investigative steps have been exhausted, a supervisor or the missing person coordinator determines:
 - (a) Responsibility for ongoing investigation;
 - (b) The level of resources needed and the need for special resources; and
 - (c) Diary dates.

Evidence

- (5) The items listed below in (i) – (v) below are requested:
 - (a) As soon as possible if the missing person is presumed dead or foul play is suspected; or
 - (b) Within 30 days of the initial report.
 - (i) A personal item used by the missing person that may provide a biological sample (e.g., a toothbrush or hairbrush);
 - (ii) Familial biological sample(s);
 - (iii) Medical records;
 - (iv) Dental records; and
 - (v) Fingerprints.
- (6) Further to Standard (5), if foul play is suspected or cannot be ruled out, an additional personal item and familial biological sample referred to in Standard (5) are obtained.

Provincial Dental Data Bank

- (6.1) If a person remains missing for more than 90 days from the initial report, or if foul play is suspected, any dental records obtained must be submitted to the NCO i/c Unidentified Human Remains Unit, RCMP “E” Division for entry into the Provincial Dental Databank.

Information about forms, timelines and procedures for obtaining biological samples and the Provincial Dental Databank is available through the BCPMPC. Any items obtained under Standards (5) and (6) are entered into CPIC.

BC Coroners Service

- (7) The BC Coroners Service *Missing Persons Query* (MPQ) form is completed as soon as possible for any investigation where the missing person is presumed dead, and forwarded to the BCPMPC Unidentified Human Remains Unit.

Information systems

- (8) The police force of jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring 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 is concluded (see also *5.1.6 Concluding a Missing Person Investigation*).
- (9) The police force of jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring that the missing person is entered on PRIME, and that the entry is updated as appropriate until the police investigation is concluded (see also *5.1.6 Concluding a Missing Person Investigation*).
- (10) If a missing person investigation is at any time determined to be a high risk missing person investigation, the file is scored as a high risk missing person investigation in PRIME.

The PRIME scoring code for missing person high risk is 8190-33.

- (11) If foul play is suspected, a ViCLAS booklet is completed and submitted within 30 days, and updated in accordance with ViCLAS standards.
- (12) Where the investigator considers appropriate and consistent with National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR) criteria, a profile of the missing person is forwarded to the NCMPUR for inclusion on the Canada’s Missing website.

Information about submitting a missing person case to the Canada's Missing website (<http://www.canadasmising.ca/index-eng.htm>) is available from the NCMPUR.

Policies and procedures

(13) Policies and procedures regarding missing persons are consistent with these *BC Provincial Policing Standards*.

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Subject 5.1.3 – Response and Investigation	Revised: n/a

Appendix “A” for BCPPS 5.1.3 – Response and Investigation

Sample Checklists of Initial Investigative Steps

Note: The following two sample checklists are included as optional means for police forces to comply with Standard (2) of BCPPS 5.1.3 Response and Investigation. Police forces may customize or choose to develop their own checklist.

INSERT POLICE FORCE LOGO	INSERT POLICE FORCE NAME CHECKLIST OF INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE STEPS
INSTRUCTIONS	
<p>This checklist is intended to assist police officers providing the initial response to reports of missing persons in British Columbia by listing the minimum investigative tasks that should be completed and/or considered. Additional investigative steps may be appropriate in the circumstances and/or required by the police force's local policies and procedures.</p>	
TASK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ INTERVIEW relevant persons, which may include the reportee, witnesses, friends and family members of the missing person and the person who last saw or had contact with the missing person 	
DETERMINE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where and when the missing person was last seen or last known to be ✓ Whether it is out of character for the person to go missing ✓ Possible reason(s) why the person may have gone missing and ✓ Possible destination or location(s) where the missing person may be found 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ COMPLETE the initial risk assessment and <i>Provincial Missing Person Intake Form</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SEARCH relevant locations, which may include the missing person's residence, point last seen and/or point last known, possible destination(s) or other locations the police officer considers relevant, obtaining consent or authority as required 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ OBTAIN a detailed description and photograph of the missing person 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CHECK for the missing person on CPIC, PRIME or other police information systems 	
PROVIDE the family and/or reportee of the missing person with information about	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support services available ✓ The investigative process ✓ Actions they may take or information they may seek or provide to assist the investigation and ✓ The name and contact information of the officer designated as family liaison 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The file number for the investigation ✓ Information to assist them in dealing with the media 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If the missing person is Aboriginal, NOTIFY Aboriginal Liaison Officer or missing person coordinator 	
CONSIDER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Issuing a BOLO and/or Assistance to Locate bulletin ✓ Whether the criteria for issuing an AMBER Alert are met ✓ Conducting neighbourhood enquiries and/or a video canvass ✓ Obtaining physical evidence (e.g., surveillance footage, computers, electronic devices and passwords, bank records, phone records, etc.), biological evidence (e.g., personal items of the missing person that may contain a biological sample, familial biological samples), or medical or dental records, obtaining consent or authority as required ✓ Requesting assistance from other police forces ✓ Requesting assistance from other agencies (e.g., child protection authorities, taxi companies, public transit authorities, airport authorities, Canada Border Services Agency, Department of Homeland Security, towing companies, etc.) ✓ Whether the case should be profiled on the police force's website, social media platform(s), and/or the NCMPUR's Canada's Missing website ✓ Involving the media ✓ Any other step that may assist in the investigation 	
IF FOUL PLAY IS SUSPECTED	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ REFER investigation to section or investigator responsible for major or serious crime investigations ✓ ViCLAS must be completed 	

Insert police force name
CHECKLIST OF INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE STEPS

INSTRUCTIONS

Use the 'Notes' portion to document why a task was not completed and/or make additional notes about a task.

TASK	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/> INTERVIEW relevant persons, which may include the reportee, witnesses, friends and family members of the missing person and the person who last saw or had contact with the missing person	Click here to enter text.
DETERMINE <input type="checkbox"/> Where and when the missing person was last seen or last known to be <input type="checkbox"/> Whether it is out of character for the person to go missing <input type="checkbox"/> Possible reason(s) why the person may have gone missing and <input type="checkbox"/> Possible destination or location(s) where the missing person may be found	Click here to enter text.
<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE the initial risk assessment and <i>Provincial Missing Person Intake Form</i>	Click here to enter text.
<input type="checkbox"/> SEARCH relevant locations, which may include the missing person's residence, point last seen and/or point last known, possible destination(s), other locations the police officer considers relevant, obtaining consent or authority as required	
<input type="checkbox"/> OBTAIN a detailed description and photograph of the missing person	Click here to enter text.
<input type="checkbox"/> CHECK for the missing person on CPIC, PRIME or other police information systems	Click here to enter text.
PROVIDE the family and/or reportee of the missing person with information about <input type="checkbox"/> Support services available <input type="checkbox"/> The investigative process <input type="checkbox"/> Actions they may take or information they may seek or provide to assist the investigation and <input type="checkbox"/> The name and contact information of the officer designated as family liaison <input type="checkbox"/> The file number for the investigation <input type="checkbox"/> Information to assist them in dealing with the media	Click here to enter text.
<input type="checkbox"/> If the missing person is Aboriginal, NOTIFY Aboriginal Liaison Officer or missing person coordinator	Click here to enter text.
CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/> Issuing a BOLO and/or Assistance to Locate bulletin <input type="checkbox"/> Whether the criteria for issuing an AMBER Alert are met <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting neighbourhood enquiries and/or a video canvass <input type="checkbox"/> Obtaining physical evidence (e.g., surveillance footage, computers, electronic devices/passwords, bank records, phone records, etc.), biological evidence (e.g., personal items of the missing person that may contain a biological sample, familial biological samples), or medical or dental records , obtaining consent or authority as required <input type="checkbox"/> Requesting assistance from other police forces <input type="checkbox"/> Requesting assistance from other agencies (e.g., child protection authorities, taxi companies, public transit authorities, airport authorities, Canada Border Services Agency, Department of Homeland Security, towing companies, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Whether the case should be profiled on the police force's website, social media platform(s) and/or the NCMPUR's Canada's Missing website <input type="checkbox"/> Involving the media <input type="checkbox"/> Any other step that may assist in the investigation	Click here to enter text.
IF FOUL PLAY IS SUSPECTED <input type="checkbox"/> REFER investigation to section or investigator responsible for major or serious crime investigations <input type="checkbox"/> ViCLAS must be completed	Click here to enter text.
COMPLETED BY	
Rank Click here to enter text.	Surname Click here to enter text.
Given Name Click here to enter text.	Number Click here to enter text.
Signature	Date Click here to enter text.