

Missing Persons Standard Operating Procedures



NSW Police Force

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Document Title: New South Wales Police Force Missing Persons Standard Operating Procedures

Subject: Police Response to Missing Persons

Responsible Command: Operational Information Agency

Available to: Unrestricted

Authorisation: Awaiting authorisation

Publication Date: 2013

Review Date: 2014

Publication Number/ISBN:

Copyright of this document is vested in the NSW Commissioner of Police © 2013

Modification History

| Version approval date | Summary of changes |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Version 3 June 2014 | Review and update. June 2016 |
| | |
| | |
| | |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| 1. Purpose and Context | 1 |
| 1.1 Scope | 1 |
| 2. Missing Persons Policy | 2 |
| 3. Key roles in managing missing persons matters | 3 |
| 3.2 Supervisor | 3 |
| 3.3 Duty Officer | 3 |
| 3.4 Crime Coordinator | 3 |
| 3.5 Investigations Manager | 4 |
| 3.6 Crime Manager | 4 |
| 3.7 Local Area Commander | 4 |
| 3.8 The Missing Persons Unit | 4 |
| 4. Process overview | 5 |
| 5. Initial Report | 7 |
| 5.1 Take initial details | 7 |
| 5.2 Conduct Risk Assessment | 8 |
| 5.3 Land Search Guidelines | 9 |
| 6. Investigation | 12 |
| 6.1 Gather further details and investigate the disappearance of the missing person | 12 |
| 6.2 Placing matters before the Coroner | 16 |
| 7. Finalisation | 18 |
| 8. Unidentified Bodies and Remains | 18 |
| 8.1 Identifying deceased bodies and skeletal remains | 20 |
| 8.1a Suspected Aboriginal Remains | 19 |
| 8.2 Visual identification | 19 |
| 9. Special Missing Person Types | .21 |
| 9.1 Mental Health Patients | .231 |
| 9.2 Children | 21 |
| 9.2a Report of a Missing Child | 21 |
| 9.2b Reporting of Missing Young Persons to Family and Community Services | 22 |
| 9.2c Repeat 'Runaway' Children and Young People (Recidivists) | 22 |
| 9.2d Parental Abductions | 23 |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| | |
|---|----|
| 9.2e Locating a Missing Child or Young Person | 24 |
| 9.3 Unidentified Persons Suffering Memory Loss | 24 |
| 9.4 Interstate or Overseas Missing Persons | 24 |
| 9.4a Interstate | 24 |
| 9.4b Overseas | 25 |
| 9.5 Family reunions | 28 |
| 10. Tools to support MP investigations | 27 |
| 10.1 Missing Persons Database | 29 |
| 10.2 Safely Home Database | 29 |
| 10.3 DNA Collection Program | 30 |
| 11. Contact List | 29 |
| Annexure 1: Authority for Publicity | 33 |
| Annexure 2: Missing Person - Risk Assessment | 34 |
| Annexure 3: Initial Response Checklist | 39 |
| Annexure 4: LAC MP Checklist | 40 |
| Annexure 5: Forensic Procedures Information Sheet – Volunteer | 41 |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Purpose and Context

Each year, there are over 11000 missing person (MP) reports in NSW. That equates to over 200 MP reports each week, with this figure having gradually increased over recent years. All different kinds of people go missing: some choose to disappear to escape aspects of their lives, others are victims of misadventure, or illness, and some are victims of crime. Most people are located almost immediately, however there are serious concerns for people who are still missing after three months. While some 99% of persons reported missing in NSW are located, it is important to remember while investigating a missing person's incident, that **it may result in a homicide and/or Coroner's investigation.**

It is likely that every operational police officer will at some time be required to respond to a MP incident. As a result it is important to remember that going missing is not an offence and that once located, the person's whereabouts should not be disclosed against their will.

These SOPs have been designed to maximise the chance that the MP is found safe and well. They provide clear direction to New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) officers at each stage of a MP Case; a Risk Assessment Process with suggested responses to each Risk Level; responses that align with nationally agreed protocols; and information on what type of assistance is available and where to get it.

Ultimately, how police respond could make the difference between life and death.

Given that MP cases are often highly emotional and potentially serious incidents, it is vital that police have the knowledge and skills to deal with the matter in an appropriate and professional manner. For the friends and family of a MP, it is understandable that the disappearance of their loved one is extremely distressing.

Police must ensure that reports are taken seriously, risks are assessed, investigations commenced and continued, families kept informed, and relevant information is cross referenced to resolve MP matters professionally, efficiently and sensitively.

These SOPs reflect the responsibilities of NSWPF officers when dealing with MPs, as well as explaining the assistance which can be provided by the NSWPF Missing Persons Unit.

1.1 Scope

These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) establish the minimum standards for NSWPF officers in their day-to-day management of MP matters. They support an agreed National and International approach which provides a consistent approach and framework across police jurisdictions.

If individual Commands believe there is a need to strengthen or enhance the procedures contained in these SOPs, additional local procedures may be issued by that Command. Any local SOPs relating to MPs must be endorsed by an officer of the rank of Superintendent or above and be consistent with the MP SOPs.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

2 Missing Persons Policy

NSWPF accepts responsibility for ensuring community safety by appropriately responding to and investigating all MP matters reported to us. It is the expectation of NSWPF that when a person is reported missing and they meet the definition of a missing person, our officers will investigate, and continue suitable enquiries as far as practicable until there is a resolution.

Definition of a “Missing Person”

"A missing person is anyone who is reported missing to police, whose whereabouts are unknown, and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person. This includes anyone missing from any institution, excluding escapees."

Objective:

The objective is to find the MP. In responding to a MP report, NSWPF will:

- Take reports immediately and submit them without delay, as the person may have met with foul play, misadventure or is in potential danger.
- Accept reports at any police station.
- Ensure reports are taken in person by sworn officers only (reports must not be taken over the phone).
- Conduct a risk assessment to inform the appropriate level of investigative response.
- Show sensitivity and understanding to the involved family and/or friends, maintaining regular contact **throughout** the investigation, even if there is no new information.
- Continue with the enquiries, maintaining regular investigative activity to pursue resolution of the MP matter.
- Make use of all possible identification methods necessary, including DNA if required, to confirm the identity of a MP.
- Ensure that the timeframes relating to MP reports and related actions, as agreed to between NSWPF and the NSW Coroner, are adhered to.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

3 Key roles in managing missing person matters

MP investigations are the responsibility of Local Area Commands (LACs). Reports can be taken at any [Police Station](#) however the LAC responsible for investigations is the one where the MP was last seen or went missing from. A Case should be attached to the MP report via the Case Management System and if required, transferred electronically to the investigating LAC. Until accepted by the appropriate LAC, the LAC that takes the report has full carriage and responsibility for the matter.

It is good practice for LACs to have a MP Liaison Officer, preferably the Crime Coordinator. They are to be kept informed of the status of all MP cases in the LAC and can act as a conduit for policy and information relating to MPs.

Investigative actions should be informed by the initial and ongoing risk assessments, as well as by the considerations and procedures related to any relevant Special Missing Person Types (see Section 9).

3.1 State Crime Command Homicide Squad

If foul play is suspected the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command is to be **immediately** notified. Consistent with the NSWPF Policy that during the first 72 hours of an investigation into a homicide or suspicious death the Homicide Squad should be the leading investigator unless and until the Homicide Squad decides otherwise, the on-call Homicide Squad Inspector will conduct an assessment and determine an appropriate response from the Homicide Squad .

3.2 Investigating Officer

The officer taking the MP report is deemed the Investigating Officer (or Officer in Charge - OIC) and is responsible for exhausting all avenues of inquiry until the MP is located or the investigating role is transferred to, and accepted by, another LAC or specialist unit by way of Case Management.

3.3 Supervisor

The Supervisor ensures that the Investigating Officer takes all the relevant information and pursues the investigation appropriately. They should ensure the police response is commensurate with the risk assessment outcome and support the Investigating Officer, particularly if they are a probationary constable.

3.4 Duty Officer

The Duty Officer is responsible for ensuring and being accountable for the assessment of, and initial response to, all MP incidents. This extends to preserving and managing crime scenes if they exist in the case.

3.5 Crime Coordinator

The Crime Coordinator should consider assuming the role of the MPs Liaison Officer for the LAC, keeping up to date on developments and the status of all MP cases in the LAC, supporting the investigation as appropriate by referring to policy and other relevant information, and liaising between the LAC and other external resources.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

3.6 Investigations Manager

The Investigations Manager will oversee MP matters for the LAC, monitoring them to ensure that their investigations maintain momentum.

3.7 Crime Manager

The Crime Manager has an overview role in suspicious MP cases, ensuring local investigators are available to support MP investigations, facilitating specialist resources, and guiding investigation strategy in high risk or long term MP matters.

3.8 Local Area Commander

The Local Area Commander has overall responsibility of ensuring compliance with these SOPs.

3.9 The Missing Persons Unit

The main function of the Missing Persons Unit (MPU) is co-ordination, quality assurance, education, information management and investigative support. The MPU monitors all MP reports and assists investigations. They do not have a direct investigative capacity, but they can offer specialised advice and information.

The MPU receives, records, researches and collates all information relating to persons missing from or in NSW. This information is used to provide state-wide analysis of long term cases and statistics. They are also responsible for cross referencing MP matters against the Unidentified Bodies and Remains data base.

The MPU:

- Maintains NSWPF policy and procedures on MPs;
- Provides a high level of service and information concerning MPs to police and the community;
- Monitors MP events on [Web COPS](#) to offer support to the field, encouraging use of [LAC MP checklist](#) Annexure 4;
- Offers information on counselling and support services available;
- May contact the next-of-kin and / or person reporting to offer support and follow-up;
- Coordinates the DNA Collection Program for MPs for mitochondrial DNA;
- Liaises with relevant external agencies to ensure accurate and timely receipt of information concerning individual MP cases;
- Coordinates inquiries for interstate and international MP cases and refers them to LACs where appropriate;
- Meets regularly with Homicide Squad regarding suspicious cases;
- Cross references information related to MPs with other relevant databases;
- Follows up with the LAC and OIC of the case at the three, six and twelve month intervals to review progress and collect important items and information;

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- Liaises with the OIC after 12 months, to assist in the submission of the MP brief or report to the Coroner, if all avenues of investigation have been exhausted and there are no signs of life;
- Develops and delivers education, training packages and other resources. Including lectures at police training days, LAC training days, and specialist training programs;
- Coordinates various community awareness initiatives, including National Missing Persons Week, internal and external media publications and programs;
- Participates in inter-agency MP forums and advisory groups at a national and state level.
- Produce and provides missing persons posters via missing persons database.

4 Process overview

Although MP cases can vary enormously there are three major stages that apply to each:

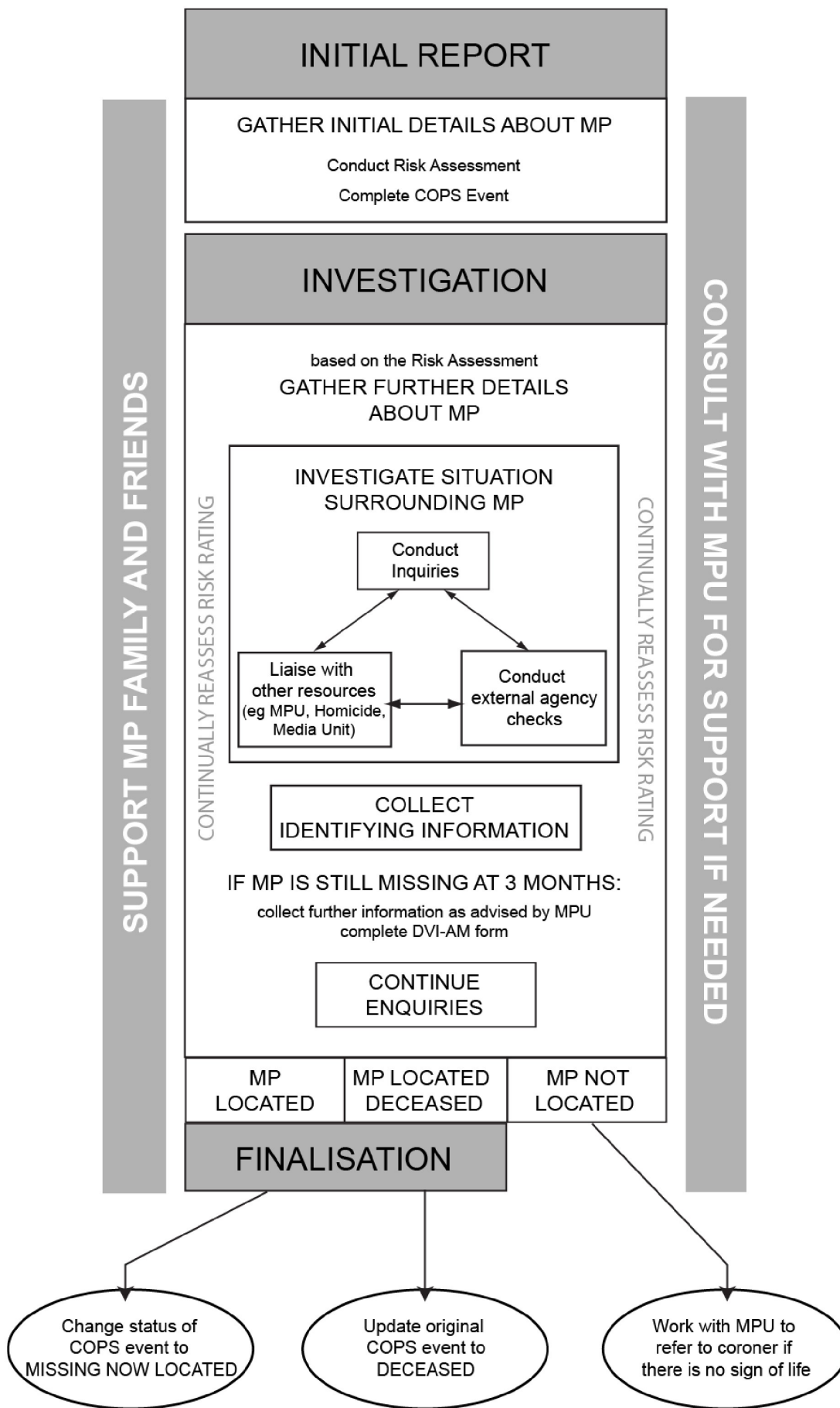
- Initial Reporting
- Investigation
- Finalisation

Within these stages there are a number of general processes, some of which overlap. Every process will not be necessary in every MP matter, depending on several variables, such as how long the person is missing, their history, and the likely risks.

This diagram on the following page outlines the key processes:

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

5 Initial Report

5.1 Take initial details

(NB. 5.1 and 5.2 should be read in conjunction with each other)

There is no minimum time to wait before a report can be accepted. If a family member or loved one comes to report a MP, they should not be turned away; if the definition for a missing person is met, then the report must be taken.

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---|
| Investigating Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the bona fides of the person reporting. • Do not accept reports for the mere purpose of reuniting family or friends, debt collection, or for any other reason except that which is allowed by the definition. If in doubt, please contact the MPU for advice. • Aim to find out WHY the person may have gone missing. • Create a 'Missing Person' Web COPS event. Input all available information, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a narrative describing the circumstances surrounding the disappearance, ○ a full physical description of the MP, including distinguishing features such as tattoos and scars, and ○ details of the last person known to see and / or talk to the MP. • Obtain further information from the person reporting such as, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the MP's friend's names and addresses; ○ the MP's Facebook name (if applicable); ○ places frequented; ○ vehicle description; ○ employment and banking details; ○ Doctor and Dentist name and contact details; and ○ information regarding any medical conditions, as well as mental state. • Extend every courtesy to the person reporting / next-of-kin. Advise them that all appropriate inquiries will be made and that they will be kept regularly updated on the investigation's progress. • Advise families of the free counselling services available (see Contact List, p30), eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit, provide a confidential counselling service, emotional support, phone counselling, liaison & referral, information on legal issues and family reunion work; Mission Australia also |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|---------------------|---|
| | <p>provides a telephone support and counselling service to the families and friends of MP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a suicide note exists, upload a copy to the VIEW Imagery Management System (IMS). • Conduct a Risk Assessment and record result in Web COPS. (see page 9 of these SOPS) • Consult the Initial Response Checklist (see Annexure 3) as a guide for other appropriate actions. As you progress with taking the initial report, recording actions on the Missing Persons LAC Checklist (see Annexure 4) is also recommended. • Notify your Supervisor and the Duty Officer that you have submitted a MP Report. |
| SUPERVISOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the report is taken by a sworn officer and is verified prior to the conclusion of the investigating officer's shift. Probationary Constables should be adequately supervised when taking MP reports. • Ensure Risk Assessment completed, recorded, and police actions relate to level. • Ensure the Web COPS event contains all required information. If not, resubmit the event for the Investigating Officer to complete. This must be done before the completion of the shift. Events are not to be left incomplete or still in resubmit at the end of shift. |
| DUTY OFFICER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure and be accountable for the assessment of, and initial response to, all MP incidents. • If the MP disappeared from a location outside of your LAC, liaise with the Crime Coordinator to have the case transferred to the appropriate LAC. Immediately advise the receiving LAC by telephone so that immediate and appropriate attention may be given to the case. The initial response rests with the initiating LAC until the investigating LAC takes full transfer of the matter. • Evaluate if a potential 'crime scene' exists and be responsible for notifying investigators, specialist police and the Local Area Commander. • Ensure the management and co-ordination of crime scene preservation pending the arrival of investigators and specialist police. |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain accountable for the management and co-ordination of the crime scene and other specialist police in attendance. • Adhere to the procedures outlined in the Code of Practice for Crime (CRIME) and, if appropriate, notify State Crime Command, Homicide Squad. • Evaluate if physical search activity is necessary. • Ensure appropriate 'Hand Over' to the oncoming Duty Officer. |
| CRIME COORDINATOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately create a case on the Case Management System, allocating it to the Investigating Officer. • If the person was last seen at a location outside of the LAC where the initial report was made, transfer the case to the relevant LAC and immediately notify the Duty Officer. • If suspicious circumstances exist, allocate the case to local criminal investigators for immediate action and notify the Investigations Manager. |
| INVESTIGATION MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Crime Coordinator and obtain all information relating to suspicious MP cases. • Ensure all suspicious MP cases are appropriately investigated. • If foul play is strongly suspected you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command. |
| CRIME MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available to offer advice and guidance should a MPs case prove suspicious. • If foul play is strongly suspected you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command. |
| LOCAL AREA COMMANDER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has overall responsibility to ensure these guidelines are adhered to. |

5.2 Conduct Risk Assessment

(NB. 5.2 and 5.1 should be read in conjunction with each other)

People who are missing may be at risk of physical harm because they are vulnerable, for example, unable to cope with weather conditions, or depend on medication. They may be victims of abduction, or at risk of long term moral danger.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Risk Assessment is a critical process for all MP matters and it should directly inform the level of response from NSWPF. Remembering that going missing itself is not a crime, the NSWPF response should match the level of identified risk for the person who is missing; the higher the risk to the person, the greater the response.

A risk assessment must be conducted on receiving a MP report. The Missing Person - Risk Assessment (see Annexure 2) is provided as a model to use when determining the level of risk. While it is not mandatory to use this particular proforma, it does comply with the *AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Australian / New Zealand Standard, Risk management – Principles and guidelines* to which NSWPF [adhere to](#).

The Risk Rating should be continually reviewed and re-evaluated throughout the course of the investigation, as long as the person remains missing. If the assessment changes, so too should the level of police response.

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---|
| Investigating Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the Risk Assessment on receiving a missing persons report in consultation with their supervisor. • Record the information that determines the level of risk in the Web COPS Event. • Implement the Risk Mitigation Actions, in line with the Risk Rating. • Continue to re-evaluate the Risk Rating throughout the investigation. |
| SUPERVISOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise the Investigating Officer to ensure the Risk Assessment is completed and that the resulting police actions are commensurate with the Risk Rating. • If foul play is suspected, immediately brief the Duty Officer and Detectives who will make a mandatory referral to the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command. • Continue to re-evaluate the Risk Rating through out the investigation. |

5.3 Land Search Guidelines

"If and when a decision is made to conduct a land search operation, the Duty Operations Inspector, VKG Sydney and Police Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit (Alexandria) is to be notified immediately of the situation.

A qualified Land Search Coordinator must be nominated to undertake the actual search operation planning and coordination function.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

In the first instance, a Land Search Coordinator should be utilised from within the Region. Should such a person not be available in the Region, the Police Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit can provide expert advice and/or a qualified Land Search Coordinator.

All requests for Search Coordinator deployment should be directed through the Region Operations Manager within the area of operations.” (DCoP Field Memorandum “Land Searches”, 15 January 2013)

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

6 Investigation

6.1 Gather further details and investigate the disappearance of the MP

After taking the initial report and establishing the Risk Rating, further details must be gathered. MP matters vary significantly so there is no “one size fits all” approach. Be mindful of relevant procedures if your subject falls into one of the [Special Missing Person](#) categories (see Section 9). Refer also to the Initial Response Checklist (see Annexure 3) for other strategies that may be appropriate to support your ongoing investigation.

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---|
| Investigating Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange to obtain a photo of the MP, if not initially supplied. Ideally the photo should be recent and a good likeness of the MP. It is preferable that the photo is a clear portrait shot showing most of the face, including teeth; however this should not preclude a photo being obtained. • Upload the photo to VIEW Imagery Management System (IMS). Return the photo to the person who supplied it. • Request permission for authority to publicise the matter from the person reporting or next-of-kin, whoever is appropriate. If permission is granted, have the person sign the Authority for Publicity form (see Annexure 1). Forward a copy of the form to the MPU. Note: Publicity will only occur if and when appropriate during the investigation. • Conduct enquiries and keep comprehensive records, including dates and times. Utilise Web COPS Case Management or e@gle.i. • Update the Web COPS event and case regularly. Including the result of Risk Assessment reviews. • Contact the MPU for assistance and advice. The MPU can advise on what kind of information requests may be helpful to make from other government departments and external organisations (eg. Centrelink, Immigration, Births Deaths & Marriages, financial institutions). Depending on the MP matter, enquiries to interstate and overseas organisations may even be appropriate. • If the person remains missing, liaise with the MPU to discuss the periodic repetition of inquiries with external organisations and further publicity. • Keep in contact with the person reporting even if you have nothing new to tell them. Your contact will help reassure the family that the investigation is continuing. |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise regular meetings with families of MPs and provide appropriate feedback as to the progress of inquiries. Remember that the MPU can assist in coordinating on-going support and counselling for families of long-term MPs through the Attorney General's Family and Friends of Missing Persons Unit. Contact the MPU to discuss available options. • If the person is still missing after three months (or within 72 hours if foul play or suicide is suspected) you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ gather fingerprints, dental records, charts, x-rays, etc ○ obtain a nuclear DNA sample of the MP, where possible, in the form of a hair brush, toothbrush, razor, etc. ○ obtain two buccal swabs from a biological relative, one to be used as a nuclear DNA sample, and the other for a mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) sample. NB. Contact the MPU for advice about the collection of a mtDNA sample as it must be taken from a maternal blood relative of the MP. ○ ensure appropriately trained officers are used for DNA collection and the Forensic Procedure Volunteer Consent form is signed and the Volunteer Information Sheet is read to the Volunteer and their response recorded (Annexure 5). See p.29 point 10.3 for further information. ○ complete as much detail as possible on the Interpol DVI – AM Form (also known as “the Yellow”). NOTE: Seek help from locally trained DVI-AM Officers or MPU. • Nuclear DNA samples and related items are to be sent directly to DAL, while the mtDNA, the Yellow, and all other items are to be forwarded to the MPU as an exhibit. See p.29 point 10.3 for further information. The personal items can be returned later if the MP is located • Complete and return all review notices received from the MPU. These are issued if the person remains missing after, three months, six months and twelve months. |
| SUPERVISOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all outstanding MP cases are handed over at the change of shift. • Where available, ensure a photo of the MP is distributed to staff on commencement of shift. Use the Missing Persons Database to produce posters of the MP where applicable. • If not previously done, the MP matter is to be re-allocated or co-allocated to an |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---|
| | Investigator if the person remains missing after three months. |
| DUTY OFFICER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the Investigating Officer, consult the Crime Manager to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to the inquiry and, if appropriate, consider transfer of the matter to Detectives for a Criminal Investigation approach. • Ensure quality customer service continues to be provided to the person reporting and/or next-of-kin. • Ensure that all information and material that may later identify the MP (such as photographs, hair samples, fingerprints, dental records, charts and x-rays) are collated and transferred to the MPU when requested. |
| CRIME COORDINATOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Investigations Manager and Crime Manager ensuring Web COPS and Case Management procedures are adhered to. • Periodically monitor and review Web COPS to ensure Case Management procedures are adhered to. • Liaise with the Investigations Manager to ensure appropriate cases are allocated to local criminal investigators. • If the person is still missing at three months, ensure the case has been re-allocated or co-allocated to an appropriate officer performing criminal investigative duties. |
| INVESTIGATION MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor all outstanding MP cases belonging to the LAC. • Liaise with the Crime Coordinator to ensure appropriate cases are allocated to local criminal investigators. • Regularly inform the Duty Officer, Crime Manager and Local Area Commander as to the status of inquiries. • Regularly monitor and review the status of police actions, ensuring Web COPS and Case Management procedures are adhered to and the investigation maintains momentum. • If the matter remains outstanding, meet with the Investigating Officer, Crime Coordinator, Crime Manager and Local Area Commander to assess appropriate resource allocation to the case and to consider what other avenues of inquiry could be pursued. |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodically monitor and review the status of police actions, ensuring Web COPS and Case Management procedures are adhered to. • Liaise with the Investigating Officer and the MPU to ensure that requested MP items are being obtained from a relative of the MP. |
| CRIME MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have experienced local criminal investigators easily accessible and available to immediately respond to any MP incident where suspicious circumstances exist. • Determine if State Crime Command support is required. • Manage suspicious MP cases and maintain liaison with the Homicide Squad. • Monitor all outstanding MP cases belonging to the LAC. • If the matter remains outstanding, meet with the Investigating Officer, Crime Coordinator, Crime Manager and Local Area Commander to assess appropriate resource allocation to the case and to consider what other avenues of inquiry could be pursued. |
| LOCAL AREA COMMANDER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that appropriate instruction and training is provided on a periodic basis to police within the Command. The MPU is available to provide instruction and training in the latest techniques and resources available to police. • Ensure local protocols exist whereby an officer is nominated to assume responsibility, management and coordination of investigations when the original officer may become unavailable due to transfer, long-term sick report, retirement etc. • If the matter remains outstanding, meet with the Investigating Officer, Investigations Manager, Crime Coordinator and Crime Manager to assess appropriate resource allocation to the case and that all avenues of inquiry have been exhausted. • Ensure timely response to the review notices received from the MPU when a MP matter remains outstanding. These are sent to the LAC at three months, six months and twelve months. • Has an overall responsibility to ensure these guidelines are adhered to. |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

6.2 Placing matters before the Coroner

If the person is still missing and there are no signs of life after 12 months, (or sooner in cases of misadventure, such as being washed off rocks, or lost on boats or planes that have disappeared), the matter should be placed before the Coroner.

If, however, after 12 months the MP has not being located but there is evidence to suggest the MP is in fact alive the OIC of the investigation must submit a report to the Coroner and Missing Person Unit via the chain of command detailing the enquiries conducted and the evidence gathered indicating the MP is believed to be alive.

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---|
| INVESTIGATING OFFICER | <p>If the matter is to be placed before the Coroner you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remind families of the free counselling services available. • complete a brief of evidence, including statements from all relevant persons and, if not already acquired, other supporting documentation and items. • request a Coronial Statement from the MPU for a Coronial brief in relation to the enquiries made. These enquiries must not be more than 12 months old. When requesting a statement from the MPU ensure a P79b has been submitted and a copy provided to the MPU. • forward a complete copy of the brief to the MPU. • advise the MPU of any pending Court dates and the subsequent result (i.e. the Coroner's name, Court, date of hearing, and the Coroner's decision) if a MP case is placed before the Coroner to determine presumption of death. <p>Note: Police are reminded of their responsibilities under the Coroners Act 2009, Chapter 4, Clause 35. <i>"Obligation to report death or suspected death."</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>(3) A police officer to whom a death or suspected death is reported under this section is required to report the death or suspected death to a coroner or assistant coroner as soon as possible after the report is made."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a determination of death is made by a Coroner and the body has not been located, the event must be updated to show the Coroner's finding and date. DO NOT change the status of the event to "Missing person now located." |
| SUPERVISOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Investigating Officer with completing the brief of evidence. |
| DUTY OFFICER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Investigating Officer with completing the brief of evidence. |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---|
| CRIME COORDINATOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a matter goes beyond 12 months with no sign of life and all enquiries exhausted, advise the Investigating Officer to refer the matter to the Coroner. • Provide support as required to the Investigating Officer. |
| INVESTIGATION MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with the Investigator, Duty Officer, Crime Manager and MPU, mark a case as 'Suspended' only when all avenues of inquiry to locate the missing person have been exhausted. • Assist with and oversee the compilation of all briefs of evidence to ensure all necessary information will be presented to the Coroner. • Mark the case as 'Investigation Complete' once an inquest (presumption of death) has been held and completed. Do not add an incident "Missing now located person" in Web COPS. |
| CRIME MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Investigating Officer and Investigations Manager as to whether a matter should be placed before the Coroner |
| LOCAL AREA COMMANDER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all MP matters that go beyond 12 months with no sign of life are presented to the Coroner once all enquiries are exhausted. |

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

7 Finalisation

A MP matter can only be finalised when the MP is actually located.

To be located, a missing person must have been sighted and their identity confirmed by police or other person in authority such as a Customs Officer, Family and Community Services Officer, DIAC Officer, DFAT (Foreign Affairs) official, Doctor, Mental Health Practitioner, or School Principal. In extraordinary circumstances, locating a MP without sighting them may be approved by the Manager of the MPU. Do not accept second hand reports or over the telephone reports. Similarly, if the MP is found deceased, the person will need to be formally identified (see Section 8 – Unidentified Bodies and Remains).

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|--|--|
| LOCATING OR INVESTIGATING OFFICER | <p>On locating a missing person alive,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the person is safe and well, and provide any assistance that may be necessary, for example, medical attention. • keep the whereabouts of the located MP confidential unless the located person consents to their whereabouts being disclosed. • if the person is under 16 years of age and does not wish to return home, place the child in the care of Family and Community Services and advise the person reporting and/or family of the MP to contact the respective Family and Community Services office. • create a 'Located Person' incident within the original MP Web COPS event. Enter all appropriate details. Ensure the status of the person is changed to 'Missing Now Located Person'. <p>If the person is located deceased,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make the necessary arrangements to confirm the person's identity. • create deceased incident in MP Event. • change the status to 'Missing Now Located Body'. Link the event to the unidentified body or deceased person event. <p>NB. In all cases where a MP is located, advise the person reporting and/or family of the MP that the MP has been located. Be sensitive in delivering this information, especially if the MP is deceased or does not want to make contact with them.</p> |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|--|
| SUPERVISOR | If a MP is located, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the Web COPS event is updated and the 'Located Person' incident is completed correctly and the person's status is changed to 'Missing Now Located Person' or 'Missing Now Located Body' as appropriate. |
| DUTY OFFICER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On locating a MP, ensure any outstanding issues are finalised and no further police action is required so that the event may be appropriately updated to 'No Further investigation'. |
| CRIME COORDINATOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the Crime Manager to ensure MP cases are being finalised appropriately. |
| INVESTIGATION MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Finalise' any cases previously referred to investigators only when the missing person has been located. |
| CRIME MANAGER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the Crime Coordinator to ensure MP cases are being finalised appropriately. |
| LOCAL AREA COMMANDER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has overall responsibility to ensure that these guidelines are adhered to. |

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

8 Unidentified Bodies and Remains

8.1 Identifying deceased bodies and skeletal remains

Where an unidentified deceased person, skeletal or other suspected human remains are located, ensure that the crime scene is immediately established and secured to preserve evidence. Where necessary a Crime Scene Warrant is to be obtained in line with LEPPRA. Arrange for an officer from FSG to attend and examine the scene. Police MUST ensure that all evidence that may assist in determining identity and cause of death is preserved and collected.

The OIC of a deceased matter is responsible for ensuring a deceased body is identified as soon as possible using the most appropriate method (also see 8.2 Visual Identification). Advice and assistance may be sought from the Sergeant Assisting the Coroner for matters which are reported to the State Coroners Court at Glebe, the local Coroner in other areas, or the local pathologist. The Investigative Support Team at the MPU currently holds records for all unidentified deceased in this state and is also available to give advice and to assist with identifying an unidentified body or remains.

In situations where bodies or skeletal remains cannot be immediately identified, police must enter details on Web COPS as a 'Deceased' incident event and contact the MPU. The morgue reference number must also be included.

Ensure the Web COPS event contains a complete description of the deceased, clothing worn and approximate time or date of death. Also include a full description of any jewellery or other property found on or near the body.

LAC police provide the initial response to the discovery of an unidentified body or remains which includes the following:

- Searching Web COPS and the Missing Persons Database for possible matches to reported MPs.
- Recording the particulars of the person on Web COPS by creating a 'Deceased' incident on Web COPS using the status as 'Unidentified body' of 'Unidentified Remains.'
- Liaising with the MPU for assistance.
- Photographing the unidentified person. This is normally done at the morgue with the help of FSG. Ensure photographs are taken before the post-mortem examination, with the face cleaned, eyes opened and hair tidied beforehand. The photographs should include
 - a full-length photo of the body.
 - close up photos of the head, from directly above (full face) and one of the side of the head (profile).
 - any distinctive features such as scars, tattoos and/or marks, as well as items such as spectacles, jewellery, clothing and other property. Details of any distinctive features, clothing and personal effects, etc should also be recorded.
- Arranging collection of fingerprints for comparison on National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS). Contact FSG for assistance.
- Requesting Forensic Odontological charting – this is an examination of the unidentified persons' teeth and jaw by a Forensic Dentist (Forensic Pathologist and/or FSG can assist to arrange this).

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- Collecting biological samples including bone for future DNA testing (these will be taken by the Pathologist conducting the Post Mortem Examination).
- Completing a P79a Form, attaching all photographs of the deceased, Post Mortem Report, other relevant reports, dental charts (if available) and forward this to the MPU.

8.1a Suspected Aboriginal Remains

If apparent ancient Aboriginal remains are uncovered:

- secure the site
- contact the regional office of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and advise the location, features of the site, your name and phone number
- arrange for an archaeological expert to examine the site
- advise the ACLO, attached to the LAC in which the remains were found.
- If the expert certifies the remains are of ancient Aboriginal origin (by issuing a certificate)
- enter details as a 'Deceased' incident (unidentified remains/body) on [Web COPS](#). Include details on station summary
- complete a P79A form
- attach the certificate
- send all documents to the Coroner, filing a copy at your station.
- Do not send the ancient remains to the Division of Forensic Medicine.
- If the remains are not of ancient origin, investigate in the usual way ([refer to 8.1](#)).

8.2 Visual identification

Visual identification is by far the most common and preferable method of identification of deceased persons.

Where a deceased body is visually identifiable, a suitable person should be found to formally identify the body. The identification must take place in the presence of a police officer and a P443 Identification Statement is to be completed. The Identification Statement is to be submitted to the Coroner with the P79A Report of Death to the Coroner.

Where a formal visual identification can not be carried out at the scene, arrangements should be made to meet the identifying person at the morgue where the body is being held. The morgue should be contacted prior to attending so the body can be prepared for the identification to take place.

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

It is at the discretion of the attending police or the OIC as to the suitability of a person to carry out a visual identification. The suitability of the identifying person should be judged by the relationship to the deceased and length of time they have known the deceased. The identifying person can be a family member, a friend, an employer, a health professional or caseworker, or other person as considered appropriate. There is no minimum timeframe the identifying person must have known the deceased to be able to carry out a formal identification.

The Coroner may not accept a visual identification where the identifying person is considered to be inappropriate. In this case, another person must be located to carry out another visual identification or a non-visual identification should be carried out.

Where the face of a deceased has been significantly altered by burning, decomposition, bloating from an extended period in water or significant injuries, **DO NOT** conduct a visual identification. Due to changes to the features of the face, visual identification may not be reliable and may cause distress to the identifying person.

The Coroner may reject a visual identification carried out due to the condition of the body. Where this occurs, a non-visual identification must be carried out.

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

9 Special Missing Person Types

9.1 Mental Health Patients

In the case of a person missing from a Mental Health Unit, the hospital should complete a Missing Patient report and fax it to their nearest Police Station. A Web COPS event is to be created and a risk assessment will be completed based on the patient's history and risk to themselves and / or the public.

The Investigating Officer

- attends or contacts the Mental Health Unit directly to determine the risk assessment; this can also be done in consultation with the patient's next of kin (NOK).
- obtains a photo of the MP from the hospital or from the MP's NOK.
- speaks to the NOK to establish locations the MP is likely to attend and any previous history of going missing.
- keeps in regular contact with the hospital and is to be notified immediately if the MP is located.

If the hospital discharges the patient, this is to be recorded as an action on the Web COPS event. The MP is to remain listed as missing until they are positively sighted and welfare checked.

Reference: Memorandum of Understanding - Mental Health Emergency Response.

9.2 Children

9.2a Report of a Missing Child:

If a child goes missing, whether from the family home, foster care or refuge:

- Take a report and capture all possible information about likely risk factors.
- Include a Child / Young Person at risk incident in the Web COPS event.
- Obtain a photo of the missing child and a written Authority for Publicity from the NOK or person reporting.
- Upload the photo to VIEW Imagery Management System (IMS).
- Send a State-wide message with the photo attached (if the Authority has been obtained).
- Notify the Supervisor / Duty Officer that you have submitted a MP report and conducted a risk assessment.
- When conducting the risk assessment, emphasis should be placed on the concern for welfare of the child, and efforts made to determine why the young person is missing.
- The Crime Manager, Investigations Manager or Crime Coordinator should make an evaluation of the information and submission and prepare a strategy to deal with the matter.
- Notify the Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) who may have further information / background to help to find the child.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- Obtain advice from the MPU.

9.2b Reporting of Missing Young Persons to Family and Community Services

The Director General of Family and Community Services – Community Services has parental responsibility for children and young people placed in the care of the state. Therefore police have to make a referral to Community Services for all children and young persons under the age of 18 who are reported missing and identified as being in state care.

Section 122 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (No. 157 / 1998), obligates:

“Mandatory reporting of child who lives away from home without parental permission.

A person who provides residential accommodation for another person who the person has reasonable grounds to suspect:

(a) is a child, and

(b) is living away from home without parental permission,

Must, as soon as practicable, inform the Director-General of the child’s whereabouts.”

The police must always notify the Director-General when a child is reported as missing to police. If the Director-General becomes aware that a child reported as missing is safe, the Director-General is required to advise police that the child is safe, but not of the whereabouts of the child. The purpose of this provision is to avoid wasting resources in having the police search for missing children whose whereabouts are known to the Director-General.

The parents should be informed that the child is safe, but nothing in this section requires any person to reveal the whereabouts of the child to a person other than the Director-General.

9.2c Repeat ‘Runaway’ Children and Young People (Recidivists)

When police are taking reports of frequent runaways they should visit the place of residence to determine whether there are any influencing factors causing the child to behave in this manner and to decide the appropriate police response to resolve any issues. Possible contributing factors are child abuse (emotional, physical and sexual), alcohol, or drug use in the home, peer pressure, inappropriate relationships, etc.

Where the child or young person is missing from a government contracted care facility, police should request to sight the Risk Assessment undertaken by the carer to ensure the MP fits the definition and that the carer responsibilities have been fully met. If no formal risk assessment process exists police should encourage and assist the organisation to establish one for future reference.

Under Section 27 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, police are required to inform the Director General, Family and Community Services, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of harm.

It is important to also involve the Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) when taking reports of children that regularly runaway.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- Police should attempt to locate a runaway child as soon as possible to reduce the risk of harm to the child and to minimise the concern for family, school staff and friends. Statistically speaking the majority of runaways rely on friends for survival; stay within a close radius to their home; and may commit crime whilst missing. The longer the young person is missing, and the more money they have, the further the child may travel.
- Recidivist runaways in the care of Community Services and living in out of home care such as refuges, foster homes, and share houses can create increased pressure on police resources. Should an LAC decide to vary their response to MP reports, as outlined in these SOPs, the Local Area Commander must:
 - Ensure the risk to the MP is not increased by the variations adopted at their LAC
 - Ensure the welfare of the MP remains the priority and a Risk Assessment with associated actions is still undertaken by police
 - Ensure the NSWPF MP SOPs are not diluted
 - Encourage care providers to adopt an appropriate Risk Assessment process and MP reporting protocol.

9.2d Parental Abductions

Children that are the subject of parental abductions fit the NSWPF definition of a missing person.

Police should take MP reports of these children in all circumstances, irrespective of whether Family Law proceedings have been instituted or a Recovery Order exists.

All police should be aware that under Section 121 of the *Family Law Act 1975* it is an offence for any person to publish details of any party involved in family law proceedings. There is provision for a Judicial Officer to lift the restriction for a particular case if they feel that it is necessary. Photographs of these missing children can be obtained from the family for police use only.

Investigating police should consider activating a PACE Alert for children missing as a result of parental abduction. Under Section 65Z of the *Family Law Act 1975*, if proceedings for the making of a Parenting Order are pending, a person who is a party to the proceedings, or who is acting on behalf of, or at the request of, a party, must not take or send the child concerned from Australia to a place outside Australia except as mentioned in subsection (2) of this Section.

If police locate a missing child and a Recovery Order is not in existence, then they should ensure that they meet their obligations under the *Children and Young Person (Care & Protection) Act 1998*. That does not necessarily require them to remove the child from the 'abductor' parent.

If police locate a missing child who is subject to a current Recovery Order, they are obligated to comply with the conditions of the order under Sections 67Q -67Y of the *Family Law Act 1975*.

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The International Social Service, a non government organisation funded by Family and Community Services, traces family members separated by adoption or other legal intervention, international child abduction, and voluntary or forced migration. (see Contacts, page 30).

9.2e Locating a Missing Child or Young Person:

The child or young person, like other MPs, must be sighted by police or a person in authority on their return. The Investigating Officer will update the [Web](#) COPS event by adding a new incident of 'Located Person' and ensure the 'location' details are correct as this may provide the best information or intelligence if the child goes missing again.

The YLO should make contact with the MP on their return to ensure the young person has not become a victim or perpetrator of crime. When appropriate, the YLO should also make referrals to the local Police and Community Youth Clubs (PCYC), Youth Line, Department of Education, Centrelink and other support services. The YLO should monitor the activities of the young person for a set period of time after the young person has been located.

9.3 Unidentified Persons Suffering Memory Loss

Where you are unable to establish the identity of an injured person or someone that is suffering memory loss, obtain a complete description, including clothing worn, and enter details on Web COPS as a 'Located Person' event. Then:

- Create a State-wide message (with a photo [of the](#) person) for all police to view.
- Conduct a Web COPS check on recent MPs reported in the surrounding areas.
- Contact the MPU for assistance to complete a check on the Missing Persons Database.
- Indicate in the Web COPS event which institution or hospital the person has been placed, and the time and date of admission.
- If the person is wearing a Safely Home Identification bracelet, access the Safely Home Database on the NSWPF Intranet – Missing Persons Homepage (see Section 10.2, Safely Home Database). Enter the Safely Home identification number and the details of the located person will be displayed. Alternatively, contact the MPU hotline number located on the bracelet, quote the identification number to obtain details of the person's identity.

9.4 Interstate or Overseas Missing Persons

9.4a Interstate

If the person has disappeared from an interstate location, take the report as usual and seek support from the NSWPF MPU. The MPU will liaise with the respective state in an attempt to locate the missing person.

If the person is reported missing at an interstate location, but was last seen in NSW, the MPU will receive the event from the reporting state and create an event. The event will then be forwarded to the station nearest to the location where the person was last seen for investigation.

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Australian Federal Police, National Missing Persons Coordination Centre, can be contacted for information pertaining to missing persons cases from other states.

9.4b Overseas

Persons missing from overseas locations must be at minimum residents of Australia or an Australian citizen for action to be taken.

1. If the MP qualifies, create a Web COPS event as normal. Clearly state in the Event that the missing person is believed to be missing from a location outside Australia. The Event will be accessed by the MPU but the officer taking the initial report **should** contact the MPU by telephone. MPU staff will conduct inquiries with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on behalf of the LAC submitting the report. If after hours, the officer taking the report should immediately contact DFAT Consular Emergency Centre on 1300-555-135 and supply details of the incident.
2. The **MP's** report will be forwarded by MPU to the lead agency, DFAT, attaching any photos, authority release documents and information on any initial checks that may have been carried out e.g. Immigration and/or bank account checks.
3. DFAT will acknowledge receipt of the MP report to the originating State/Territory Police, providing contact details of the DFAT case officer.
4. DFAT will conduct enquiries using DFAT Overseas Posts. On assessment of the information, DFAT will request the involvement of Interpol Canberra to initiate the investigation phase. Information already obtained by DFAT enquiries and any initial checks by State/Territory police will also be forwarded to Interpol Canberra.
5. Interpol Canberra will initiate enquiries with, and request the involvement of, the relevant overseas police authorities to conduct the investigation.
6. DFAT will provide regular updates from Interpol Canberra and DFAT overseas posts on findings from the investigation as received or on request.
7. DFAT to conduct liaison with both family and media, thereby coordinating communication lines and managing the output of information about the MP case. DFAT will be responsible for handling and responding to media enquiries on the MP case, however should not be relied upon to speak on behalf of the AFP or Interpol agencies.
8. AFP International will only be drawn into the response to MPs overseas when it is considered necessary to do so and on a case by case basis. Should DFAT require additional assistance outside of the normal operating scope of these procedures, then DFAT may formally request the assistance of the AFP International network.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

9. Local police still have the responsibility, if requested, by DFAT or Interpol to assist by making inquiries on their behalf.

If the MP is not an Australian citizen or resident, then the inquirer should be advised to contact the respective Consulate, Embassy, or authorities in the country concerned directly.

When there is proof that the person has gone overseas, but is unable to be sighted, the Manager of the MPU may declare the person located. The Investigating Officer must submit a report to the Manager, MPU explaining the full case details, along with a copy of the Web COPS event.

9.5 Family Reunions

In some cases people wish to track down a family member they have lost contact with. If there are no fears for the safety or concerns for the welfare of the MP then this is not a police matter (refer to page 2 for the definition of a Missing Person).

In this instance refer the person reporting to either, the Salvation Army Family Tracing Service, The Australian Red Cross or International Social Service. These agencies are able to conduct searches through various Government Departments for a small fee (see Contacts p30 for details).

The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service operates a worldwide search network for missing family members aged over 18 years and missing for more than six months. This service is for cases where there are no genuine fears for the missing person's safety and welfare. It is primarily for when contact has been lost between family members.

The Australian Red Cross conducts worldwide searches where contact has been lost due to war, conflict or natural disaster.

The International Social Service traces family members separated by adoption or other legal intervention, international child abduction and voluntary or forced migration.

Contact the MPU for any assistance in these matters.

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

10 Tools to support MP investigations

10.1 Missing Persons Database

The Missing Persons Database is an investigative and analytical tool developed to assist police in the investigation of MPs.

The database contains up to date information relating to MP cases dating back to 1959 and is updated daily. MPU staff manually download [from Web](#) COPS events for data entry, therefore it is important that the information contained in the [Web](#) COPS event is correct and current. Ensure the “incident additional category” is entered correctly when creating the “located person incident”.

The database has a DNA search function which allows trained staff to carry out a comparison on mitochondrial DNA samples obtained from the MPs next of kin and unidentified bodies.

The Missing Persons Database and a guide to using it can be found in the Missing Persons Intranet site.

There are three basic levels of access to the database: Field officer, MPU officer and MPU Super User.

Field officer access allows the officer to:

- Search descriptions of located or missing persons;
- Identify outstanding cases in the LAC and region;
- Produce missing persons posters for local displays;
- Produce statistical data for every LAC and region;
- Identify trends;
- Identify cases with Media publicity, DNA or dental records available.

MPU Officer access is only available to MPU staff to enter and update MP cases and DNA data.

MPU Super User access is for MPU Team Leaders. Only Super Users can conduct DNA searches. This access is also to maintain user access and [facilitates](#) maintenance of relevant database fields.

10.2 Safely Home Database

The Safely Home Program is a joint initiative between Alzheimer’s Australia (NSW) and the NSWPF. The program was launched in August 2003.

The Safely Home Program provides rapid and accurate identification of an unidentified/wandering person to allow them to be returned home. Members of the public can become involved by contacting Alzheimer’s Australia (NSW) on 1800 100 500. They will be sent an information package and registration form. The completed registration form is returned to Alzheimer’s Australia (NSW) who [forwards](#) a copy to the MPU so that the registered person’s details can be entered onto the NSWPF Safely Home Database.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Safely Home Program involves the use of a personalised stainless steel identification bracelet, designed to be worn by the person suffering dementia or other types of memory loss. The bracelet features the NSWPF MPU toll free telephone number and a personal identification number linked to the Database.

The Database is accessible by all police 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the Missing Persons site on the NSWPF Intranet. It includes a photo (if provided), a detailed description of the registered person, contact information for their next of kin or carer, previous residential addresses and locations they may visit. All details on the database are confidential.

10.3 DNA Collection Program

The MPU, in consultation with the FSG, coordinates the DNA Collection Program for MP in NSW. The MPU maintains the MPs DNA Database on the NSWPF Intranet. This database has the capability of searching a MPs DNA sample against samples obtained from unidentified bodies and remains.

The DNA used for the MP DNA Collection Program is mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), rather than nuclear DNA as used in most criminal investigations. MtDNA is inherited through the maternal family line only, so samples should be obtained from a MPs mother, brother or sister.

- MtDNA is obtained by taking a Buccal swab sample from the maternal relative of the MP.
- DNA should be taken within the first 72 hours if foul play is suspected or there is a high risk of suicide.
- The DNA is taken for the Limited Purposes Index as it is only used for identification purposes.
- Forms that are required when taking a Volunteer DNA sample are available from an accountable book ordered through FSG Stores and include the:
 - - Information sheet: Volunteer – Adult, (see Annexure 5), and
 - - Forensic Procedure Consent Form – Volunteer Adult, (see Annexure 5).
- The consent for the DNA must be recorded electronically by video.

Once the mtDNA has been collected it should be entered into the Exhibit book and sent via 'TNT Failsafe' to the MPU. A copy of the signed Volunteer Consent form must be attached to the sample on the outside of the bag. The MPU will organise to have the sample profiled.

Once the Nuclear DNA has been collected it should be delivered to DAL via "TNT Failsafe" or by hand in the Metro area.

NB: DNA samples must be taken from relatives by MPU staff, SOCOs (Scene of Crime Officers) or appropriately trained police.

Full DNA Collection Instructions are available at the Missing Persons site on the NSWPF Intranet.

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

11 Contact List

Missing Persons Unit (MPU)

Operational Information Agency

Level 10B, Police Headquarters

1 Charles Street, Parramatta NSW 2150

Normal operating hours are 6am –5pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 8835-7658 E/N: 27658

All hours Toll Free: 1800 025 091

Fax: 8835-7665 E/N: 27665

Email: missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au

After hours, calls to the above number are diverted to the Police Assistance Line (PAL) which can notify MPU staff if required.

Australian Federal Police

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre

PO Box 401 Canberra City ACT 2601

Ph: 1800 000 634

www.afp.gov.au/national/missing/nmpcc

Australian Red Cross International Tracing and Refugee Services

159 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000 Ph: 02 9229 4143

Families & Friends of MPU, NSW Attorney General's Department

Level 1, 160 Marsden Street, Parramatta NSW 2000

Ph: 02 8688 5423

Toll Free: 1800 227 772

Email: ffmpu@agd.nsw.gov.au

International Social Service

Suite 8 Level 1 13-15 Wentworth Ave East Sydney NSW 2010

Ph: 02 9267 0300

Email: admin@iss.ngo.org.au

Mission Australia

4– 10 Campbell Street Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 1800 227 772 (toll free)

Salvation Army Family Tracing Service

PO Box A435 Sydney South NSW 1232

Ph: 02 9211 0277

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Email: FamilyTracingServiceNSW@ae.salvationarmy.org 21

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Annexure 1: Authority for Publicity

I / We, the undersigned, request and give permission to the Commissioner of Police or his representative for the information in relation to the missing person

(name).....,

to be published under the following circumstances:

For the purpose of being published by the media, including internet,

For inclusion in official police publications which will be displayed for public viewing.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Witness: _____

Print Name: _____

Rank: _____

Address: _____

Station: _____

Date: _____

Phone No: _____

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Annexure 2: Missing Person - Risk Assessment

*** Using the information below, complete the questionnaire on the next page to **establish** at an appropriate Risk Rating and Mitigation Actions.

| Qualitative Measure of Likelihood | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Risk | Likelihood | Description |
| A | Almost certain | Is expected to occur in most circumstances |
| B | Likely | Will most likely occur in most circumstances |
| C | Possible | Could occur |
| D | Unlikely | Unlikely to occur or have occurred |
| E | Rare | Almost never occur |

| Qualitative Measure of Consequence | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Risk | Consequence | Description |
| 1 | Negligible | Very little harm if any to missing person. Likely to return home in short time. |
| 2 | Minor | Possible minor injury, experience confusion/distress. |
| 3 | Moderate | Physical or psychological injury requiring medical attention. |
| 4 | Major | Serious injury requiring hospitalisation. |
| 5 | Severe | Death – either accidental or intentional. |

| Estimated Level of Risk | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Risk | Consequence | | | | |
| Likelihood | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A | Medium | High | High | Very High | Very High |
| B | Medium | Medium | High | High | Very High |
| C | Low | Medium | High | High | High |
| D | Low | Low | Medium | Medium | High |
| E | Low | Low | Medium | Medium | High |

| Risk Mitigation Actions | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Low | Refer MP SOPs. Monitor and reassess weekly. |
| Medium | Refer MP SOPs. Monitor and reassess daily. Follow up actions on the event daily. Consider informing Investigator. |
| High | Refer MP SOPs. Monitor and reassess each shift. Follow up actions on the event daily. Inform Investigator. Contact MPU. Consider Police Radio & Media assistance. |
| Very High | Refer MP SOPs. Monitor and reassess each shift. Follow up actions on the event |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| | |
|--|--|
| | daily. Inform Investigator. Contact MPU. Engage Police Radio & Media Assistance. |
|--|--|

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

***** Only complete Factors relating to Missing Person Report *****

L = Likelihood

C = Consequence

Risk = Estimated Level of Risk

| Factor | L | C | Risk |
|--|---|---|------|
| 1. Is there any information that the missing person has, or is likely to, commit self-harm? | | | |
| 2. Is the missing person subject of a crime? eg. Kidnapping, child abuse | | | |
| 3. Is the missing person suffering from any serious mental or physical disability? | | | |
| 4. Is the missing person an absconder from a mental health ward, psychiatric ward or aged care facility? | | | |
| 5. Is the missing person under 14 or, if aged between 14 and 18, vulnerable due to other factors? | | | |
| 6. Are there inclement weather conditions that would seriously increase the risk to health, especially where the missing person is a child or elderly person? | | | |
| 7. Does the missing person need essential medication or treatment not readily available? eg. Insulin, anti-depressant/psychotic drugs , cardiac | | | |
| 8. Is the missing person elderly or infirm, and it is believed that they may not have the physical ability to interact safely in an unknown environment? eg. Visually or hearing impaired, intellectual disability . | | | |
| 9. Has the missing person previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm? | | | |
| 10. Is the missing person a full-time, overseas student who has disappeared without any notice? | | | |
| 11. Has the missing person been involved in a violent, sexual or racist incident or confrontation immediately prior to their disappearance? | | | |
| 12. Is the missing person a repeat domestic violence victim? | | | |
| 13. Does the missing person have a serious drug or alcohol dependency? | | | |
| 14. Is the missing person a police or DPP witness who has not given evidence at court? | | | |
| 15. Is there evidence of a crime/foul play at the place where the missing person was last seen? | | | |
| 16. Has the missing person recently been subject of civil court action and/or bankruptcy? (including family law court action/custody) | | | |
| 17. Has the missing person recently suffered marriage or relationship break-up? | | | |
| 18. Has the missing person recently had financial, employment or school/college problems? | | | |
| 19. Are there any other unlisted factors which the officer, family or person wish to note? eg. Health issues | | | |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only*MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES*

NB. The highest Risk Rating recorded on this table should determine the appropriate Risk Mitigation Actions applied by the Investigating Officer.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Risk Rating Result

* After considering all factors, what do you evaluate the Risk Rating to be?

Very High High Medium Low

Officer completing

Signed: _____

Rank: _____ Reg: _____

Surname: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Web COPS event: _____

Comments:

*After considering all factors, what does the Supervisor evaluate the Risk Rating to be?

Very High High Medium Low

Supervisor completing

Signed: _____

Rank: _____ Reg: _____

Surname: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Web COPS event: _____

Comments:

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Annexure 3: Initial Response Checklist

This checklist provides NSWPF with a generic guide for investigating MP cases. This checklist is not intended to be followed step-by-step during each MP investigation. It is meant to offer a framework of actions, considerations and activities that can support competent, productive and successful missing person investigations.

Obtain facts, details, full description and photograph of missing person (with Authority for Publicity – see Annexure 1) and ensure that information about the MP is entered onto [Web COPS](#).

- Complete Risk Assessment, record outcome, and respond accordingly ([Annexure 2](#))
- Dispatch officer to scene to conduct a preliminary investigation, ensuring that everyone at the scene is identified and interviewed separately. Note the name, address, home, business and mobile telephone numbers of each person. Determine each person's relationship to the missing person and where each person last saw the person. Ask each one, "What do you think happened to the missing person?"
- Request supervisory assistance if necessary. Brief and bring up to date, all additional responding personnel including supervisors and investigative staff.
- Search incident records for previous reports relating to the MP, and prior police activity in the area, including prowlers, indecent exposure, attempted abductions, etc. Inform responding officer of any information identified through this.
- Broadcast known details on all police communication channels to LACs, and continue to keep Communications apprised of all appropriate developing information for broadcast updates.
- Obtain the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the MP's friends and associates, and other relatives and friends of the family. Interview these people and determine when each last saw the MP and what they think happened.
- Obtain and note permission to search where the incident took place and conduct a search to include all surrounding areas including vehicles.
- Seal and protect the scene and area of MP's home (including personal articles such as hairbrush, diary, photographs, and items with the MP's fingerprints, teeth impressions). This is to ensure that evidence is not destroyed during or after the initial search, and to ensure that items that could help in the search for or to identify the person are preserved. Determine if any of the MP's belongings are missing. If possible, photograph or videotape these areas.
- Evaluate contents and appearance of MP's room or residence.
- Obtain photographs or videotapes of the MP or abductor.
- Secure the MP's latest medical and dental records.
- Consider using the media to seek information from the public and advise the MPU.
- Consider activating a PACE Alert if the missing person's case relates to parental abduction or has links to overseas countries.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- Advise families of the free counselling service: Families & Friends of MPU, NSW Attorney General's Department, Toll Free: 1800 227 772; Email: ffmpu@agd.nsw.gov.au.

Annexure 4: LAC MP Checklist



MISSING PERSONS LAC Checklist



| Missing Person: | | Event No: |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------|
| TASK / INQUIRY | DETAILS | DATE COMPLETED |
| WEB COPS UPDATED | Physical Description (including scars and tattoos) | |
| | Clothing | |
| | NOK Details | |
| | Photo | |
| | Authority for publicity | |
| | Bank Details | |
| | Doctor Details | |
| | Dentist Details | |
| | Mobile Phone Number | |
| | List of Friends / Family | |
| | Places Frequented | |
| | Employer | |
| | Occupation / School | |
| | Vehicle / Registration | |
| | Contact MPU | |
| Case Number | | |

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| | Family and Community Services Notification / Child Young Person at Risk incident added | |
| | Any other relevant information | |
| RISK ANALYSIS | Risk Assessment Completed | |
| | Homicide Notified | |

FORM CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

Annexure 5: Forensic Procedures Information Sheet - Volunteer

Adult

For the purposes of the forensic procedures legislation you are informed of the following:

The reading out of this information sheet and your consent (if given) is being recorded electronically. You do not have the right to refuse the recording of these processes. Subject to your consent, the carrying out of the forensic procedure itself will also be recorded. You and/or your legal representative will have the opportunity to view and/or listen to any recording that is made.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Cross out if not applicable

As it is believed on reasonable grounds that you are an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander:

- You have the right to have an interview friend present whilst the forensic procedure is being carried out. This is in addition to your right to have a legal representative present.

The forensic procedure is needed for _____

(State the reason why the sample is being taken)

The offence the procedure relates to is: _____

The procedure will be carried out by an appropriately qualified police officer or person in the following manner: _____

(Buccal (Mouth) Swab, Hair Sample, Blood Sample, Photograph, Impression etc.)

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Cross out if not applicable

- For an intimate forensic procedure (except the taking of saliva) and for the taking of a non-intimate impression or cast of a wound, you have the right to have a medical practitioner or dentist of your choice present while the procedure is being carried out.

You are under no obligation to undergo the forensic procedure and you may, at any time, withdraw your consent to the procedure being performed or to the retention of either the forensic material or the information obtained from an analysis of that material.

The forensic procedure may produce evidence that might be used in a court of law.

You may consult a legal practitioner of your choice before deciding whether or not to consent.

The reading out of this Information Sheet and the completion of the consent process is being witnessed by _____, who is an independent person appointed in accordance with the legislation.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Note for Police

Are you obtaining a DNA sample from the volunteer?

You have the right to have an interview friend present whilst the forensic procedure is being carried out. This is in addition to your right to have a legal representative present.

▶▶ NO You only need to ask the volunteer:

Do you understand the information that has just been read to you?

Yes / No

▶▶ YES You need to decide on which index of the database the profile obtained from the volunteer is to be placed. If the profile is to be:

Placed on the Limited Purposes Index read out Sheet No 1

Placed on the Unlimited Purposes Index read out Sheet No 2

After you have read out the appropriate Sheet, you can then complete the Forensic Procedure Consent Form.

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only*MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES***FORM CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW****SHEET NO. 1****DNA****LIMITED PURPOSED INDEX**

The Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act allows for information obtained from an analysis of forensic material taken from a volunteer, together with details that identify the donor of that material, to be placed on the DNA database system.

The DNA database system includes two indexes relevant to volunteers, namely, a Volunteers (Limited Purposes) Index and a Volunteers (Unlimited Purposes) Index. You may give consent subject to the condition that information obtained from the analysis of forensic material taken in accordance with your consent will only be placed on a specified index.

Following your agreement:

The profile obtained from an analysis of your DNA sample will be placed on the Volunteer (Limited Purposes) Index of the DNA database system and will only be compared with the crime scene material relevant to the investigation of _____.

The profile will not be used for any other purpose.

Your profile, your DNA material and information which identifies you as the source of that material, will be retained by N.S.W. Police until N.S.W. Police receive a request in writing from you seeking its destruction.

- **Do you understand the information that has just been read to you? Yes / No**

For Official Use Only

For Official Use Only

MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FORM CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

SHEET NO. 2

DNA

(UNLIMITED PURPOSES INDEX)

The Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act allows for information obtained from an analysis of forensic material taken from a volunteer, together with details that identify the donor of that material, to be placed on the DNA database system.

The DNA database system includes two indexes relevant to volunteers, namely, a Volunteers (Limited Purposes) Index and a Volunteers (Unlimited Purposes) Index. You may give consent subject to the condition that information obtained from the analysis of forensic material taken in accordance with your consent will only be placed on a specified index.

If the profile obtained from an analysis of your DNA was placed on the Volunteer (Limited Purposes) Index of the DNA database system, it could only be compared with the crime scene material relevant to the investigation of

The profile could not be used for any other purpose.

If the profile obtained from an analysis of your DNA was placed on the Volunteer (Unlimited Purposes) Index of the DNA database system, it could be compared with crime scene material in relation to any criminal investigation and with profiles contained on the offenders, missing persons and unknown deceased person indexes.

Information on the DNA database may be accessed by an authorised person for one or more of the following purposes:

- a) forensic matching permitted under the Act;
- b) making information available to you;
- c) administering the DNA database system;
- d) providing access to other law enforcement officers or other prescribed persons under arrangements between N.S.W. and another State or Territory or the Commonwealth;
- e) for and in accordance with the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act 1987 or the Extradition Act 1988;
- f) to review, or inquire into, a conviction or sentence under Part 13A of the Crimes Act 1900;
- g) investigation of a complaint about police conduct under Part 8A of the Police Act 1990;
- h) a coronial inquest or inquiry;
- i) investigation of a complaint by the Privacy Commissioner;
- j) any other purpose prescribed by the regulations.

For Official Use Only*MISSING PERSONS – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES*

Following your agreement:

The profile obtained from an analysis of your DNA sample will be placed on the Volunteer (Unlimited Purposes) Index of the DNA database system and may be compared with crime scene material in relation to past, current and future criminal investigations and with profiles contained on the offenders, missing persons and unknown deceased person indexes.

Your profile, your DNA material and information which identifies you as the source of that material, will be retained by N.S.W. Police until N.S.W. Police receive a request in writing from you seeking its destruction.

Do you understand the information that has just been read to you? Yes / No

For Official Use Only