



MISSING
PERSONS
REGISTRY

State Crime Command
Standard Operating Procedures

MISSING PERSONS, UNIDENTIFIED BODIES & HUMAN REMAINS

Sensitive: Law Enforcement

Document Control

Title	Standing Operating Procedures
Subject	Standing Operating Procedures – Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains
Strategic Intent	This document provides a comprehensive set of procedures that must be followed in the management of Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases in NSW. Police have a common law authority to make all necessary inquiries to protect and preserve life. This document is accompanied by the Missing Persons and Unidentified Bodies/Human Remains Policy.
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Document Classification

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NSWPF MISSING PERSONS AND UNIDENTIFIED BODIES/HUMAN REMAINS STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES

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1.0 Purpose and context

This document provides a comprehensive set of procedures to be followed in the management of Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases in NSW. Police have a common law authority to make all necessary inquiries to protect and preserve life.

Each year, there are over 11,000 Missing Person reports in NSW. That equates to over 200 Missing Person 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, illness and some are victims of crime. Most people are located almost immediately, however some go on to become long term Missing Persons. While more than 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 Missing Persons incident or the discovery of Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains (UBHR). 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 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been designed to maximise the chance that Missing Persons are found safe and well. They provide clear direction to New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) officers at each stage of a Missing Persons Case via a Risk Assessment Process to determined risk levels that align with nationally agreed protocols including 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 Missing Person cases are often highly emotional and potentially serious incidents, it is vital police have the knowledge and skills to deal with the matter in an appropriate and professional manner. For the friends and family of a Missing Person, 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 Missing Persons matters professionally, efficiently and sensitively.

It is acknowledged that some people become recidivist Missing Persons, which places a significant drain upon police resources. These recidivists often include young people in care who frequently fail to come home before curfew. It is encouraged that Police Area Commands (PACs) and Police Districts (PDs) work with local Family and Community Services offices to reduce the incidences of recidivism relating to Missing Person cases.

These SOPs reflect the responsibilities of NSWPF officers when dealing with Missing Persons, as well as explaining the assistance that can be provided by the NSWPF Missing Persons Registry. The SOPs place a strong emphasis on supervision of Missing Person investigations at various levels and signal the introduction of Missing Persons Coordinators (MPC's) within individual Commands. The role of MPC's (See chapter 8.7) is to manage and coordinate Missing Persons investigations within PAC/PD's. MPC's will receive specialist training aimed at improving and standardizing the NSWPF response to Missing Persons investigations at a local level.

2.0 Scope

These SOPs establish the **minimum** standards for NSWPF officers in their management of Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations. They support an agreed National and International approach which provides a consistent framework across police jurisdictions. The NSWPF adheres to the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) Missing Persons Policy (2015) and the Guiding Principles contained within it.

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3.0 Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies & Human Remains Policy

The NSWPF accepts responsibility for ensuring community safety by appropriately responding to and investigating all Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains matters. It is the expectation of the 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. Similarly, when an Unidentified Body or Human Remains are located, all necessary inquiries are undertaken to identify them. In all Missing Person cases, police will show sensitivity and understanding to the involved family and friends, maintaining regular contact throughout the investigation, even if there is no new information.

4.0 Categories of Missing Persons

For the purposes of accurately capturing and recording data relating to Missing Persons cases in NSW, they are divided into eight (8) Categories. If a person meets the definition of a Missing Person, a 'Missing Person Incident' **MUST** be created in COPS. In circumstances where a matter is initially recorded in COPS as another type of Incident (i.e. Abduction, Homicide etc), a Missing Persons Incident must also be created if the whereabouts of a person/body remain unknown. Without a Missing Person Incident within COPS, cross referencing of relevant databases to reconcile Missing Persons with Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains will not occur.

4.1 Missing Person Categories

All Missing Person COPS reports must be recorded in one of three major age related categories relating to age:

- Missing Child (Aged 0 to 10)
- Missing Young Person (Aged 11 to 17)
- Missing Adult (Aged 18 and over)

Each major age category requires further classification within COPS:

- Abduction
- Missing Overseas
- Missing Interstate
- Immigration related
- Suspected unsolved homicide
- Solved homicide
- Lost, Victim of Accident/Misadventure
- Other

NOTE: For the category 'solved homicide', there is no requirement for a Coronial brief to be compiled if the matter has been dealt with before a criminal court & a P79A or P79B submitted during that process.

4.2 Associated Risk Factors

There are various risk factors that should be considered and selected within the COPS Event including:

- No associated Risk Factor
- Bias motivated crime related
- Mental Health
- Health related
- Youth/Foster care related
- Aged Care facility related
- Mental Health facility related
- Care and Protection Orders
- Sex worker related
- Domestic violence related
- Significant family conflict/abuse
- Financial issues
- Organised crime related

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- Overseas tourist/Backpacker
- Other vulnerability (i.e. autism, dementia etc.)

5.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions apply:

- **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. For Missing Person reports to be taken, there must be a genuine concern held for the safety or wellbeing of the person.

- **Child**

A person aged between 0 and 10 years.

- **Young Person**

A person aged between 11 and 17 years.

- **Voluntary Missing**

Voluntary missing includes a person who has control over their actions and who has decided upon a course of action, for example a runaway child; or a person whose absence is not suspicious.

- **Involuntary Missing**

Involuntary missing includes a suspected crime such as abduction, suspicious and unusual circumstances, or someone who is missing against their will.

- **Unidentified Living Person**

An unidentified living person occurs when a person comes into the care or custody of police or another government service provider but who has not been identified.

- **Unidentified Body or Human Remains**

Unidentified bodies or human remains include all or part of a human body that have been discovered and where their identity is unknown.

- **High Risk Missing Person**

A person is classified a high-risk Missing Persons upon completion of the Risk Assessment (See Chapter 11.0).

- **Long-term Missing person**

A long-term Missing Person is someone who has been missing for more than three months.

- **Homicide**

Homicide is the killing of one human being by another.

- **Parental child abduction**

Parental child abduction is the hiding, taking or keeping of a child by his/her parent while defying the rights of the child's other parent or another member of the family.

- **Lost, Victim of Accident/Misadventure**

A person who is believed to be missing or deceased as a result of a misadventure or accident for example: bushwalking, drowning, light-aircraft crash.

- **Risk of Harm**

The assessment that the Missing Person is at risk of harm to themselves or the community. This includes: suicide risk, mental illness, dementia, Alzheimer's, autism, physical disability, schizophrenia, bipolar, paranoia, drug/alcohol use or dependency, need for essential medication, depression etc.

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- **Suspicious Circumstances**

The possibility that the person is not voluntarily missing and may be detained and/or have come to harm by a person or persons known or unknown.

- **Suspected Homicide**

The likely assessment that the Missing Person has been killed by a person or persons known or unknown.

- **Immigration Case**

The person is deliberately avoiding law enforcement detection due to issues relating to their immigration including: illegal immigration, visa overstay etc.

- **Risk Assessment**

Managing the risks associated with Missing Persons reports is a dynamic, and at times challenging process. The 'Risk Assessment Tool' used by the NSWPF for all Missing Persons cases is contained within the COPS system. Risk assessment for Missing Person cases requires continual and ongoing review. Therefore, the police response to individual Missing Person cases may escalate or de-escalate depending upon ongoing risk assessments (See Chapter 11).

- **Amber Alert**

The process that involves the urgent broadcast of relevant information through the media and other means to the public to facilitate the search for, location and the safe recovery of an abducted child or high-risk missing child or young person aged 16 years and under (See Chapter 20.1).

- **Senior Next of Kin (SNOK)**

The definition of a SNOK for Missing Persons matters is identical to s6A of the Coroners Act 2009 (NSW).

6A Meaning of "senior next of kin"

(1) For the purposes of this Act, the senior next of kin of a deceased person [Missing Person] is:

- (a) the deceased person's [Missing Person's] spouse, or
- (b) if the deceased person [Missing Person] did not have a spouse or a spouse is not available—any of the deceased person's [Missing Person's] children who are adults, or
- (c) if the deceased person [Missing Person] did not have a spouse or child or a spouse or child is not available—either of the deceased person's parents, or
- (d) if the deceased person [Missing Person] did not have a spouse, child or living parent or a spouse, child or parent is not available—any of the deceased person's [Missing Person's] brothers or sisters who are adults, or
- (e) if the deceased person [Missing Person] did not have a spouse, child, living parent, brother or sister or a spouse, child, parent, brother or sister is not available:
 - (i) any person who is named as an executor in the deceased person's [Missing Person's] will, or
 - (ii) any person who was the deceased person's [Missing Person's] legal personal representative immediately before the deceased person's [Missing Person's] death.

(2) A coroner may treat a person who was a deceased person's [Missing Person's] legal personal representative immediately before the deceased person's [Missing Person's] death as the deceased person's [Missing Person's] senior next of kin for the purposes of this Act if the coroner is satisfied that the person who is available to act as senior next of kin is unable to do so.

6.0 Objectives

In responding to a Missing Person report, NSWPF officers will:

- Take reports immediately and submit them without delay, as the person may be the subject of a homicide, misadventure or be 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 determine the appropriate level of investigative response;
- If there is suspicion the Missing Person may have been murdered, immediately notify the State Coordination Unit so that On-Call Homicide Squad personnel are notified of the circumstances of the disappearance;
- Show sensitivity and understanding to the involved family and/or friends, maintaining regular contact throughout the investigation, even if there is no new information;

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- Continue with the enquiries, maintaining regular investigative activity to pursue resolution of the Missing Person matter;
- Make use of all possible identification methods, including visual, fingerprints, biometrics, dental and DNA, to confirm the identity of Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains;
- Ensure timeframes relating to Missing Persons reports and related actions, as agreed to between the NSWPF and the NSW Coroner, are adhered to;
- Ensure that detailed records are kept of all information gathered, inquiries conducted and investigative functions undertaken.

7.0 Key time frames

Although Missing Person cases can vary enormously, there are always three major stages that apply, **initial reporting**, **investigation** and **finalisation**. Within those three major stages, there are several mandatory time frames which have been agreed upon in consultation with the State Coroner. It is important to note the following are **maximum** time frames and quite often it will be appropriate to perform relevant functions much earlier than the stated maximum time frames. The functions described within the key time frames do not include all routine investigative functions that should be undertaken for each missing person investigation (**See – Annexure A**).

If suspicious circumstances exist, a notification to the On-Call Homicide Inspector should be immediately made via the State Coordination Unit. Irrespective of any On-Call Homicide Squad response, if suspicious circumstances exist, the PAC/PD should immediately allocate criminal investigators to take carriage of the investigation.

In circumstances where suspicion of harm is not immediately apparent, the following key time frames apply:

Immediately:

- Missing Persons reports should be taken immediately if the person falls within the definition. There is no 'waiting period' before a report can be taken.

Within 1 week:

- A Case should be created within the COPS Case Management system.
- DNA and potential fingerprint samples should be obtained and booked up as exhibits.

Within 2 weeks:

- Conduct 'Signs of Life' Checks via iAsk (See Chapter 22.0).
- Commence inquiries to identify relevant dentists with a view to obtaining dental records. When dental records are correctly obtained, they should be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for charting (See Chapter 10.5).

Within 4 weeks:

- The COPS Case should be transferred to an experienced investigator within the PAC/PD. In most circumstances, this should be a designated detective however there may be circumstances where this might not be necessary and/or appropriate.

Within 6 weeks:

- The investigation is to be transferred to the e@gle.i information management system, together with an Investigation Plan (**See – Annexure B**). A Word version of the Investigation Plan can be found in the 'Toolkit' within the Missing Persons Registry intranet site.

Within 3 months:

- Submit the completed Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) Ante Mortem (AM) form to the Missing Persons Registry to be uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS) database. **NOTE: The DVI AM form is a nationally recognized form used to upload relevant information to the NMPVS database.**
- The Missing Persons Registry are required to supply the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre photographs and other relevant details of Missing Persons for inclusion on their public facing website by 3 months. Authority for this release should be sought by OIC's, from SNOK for public release during the initial stages of an investigation. Once obtained, forward to the Missing Persons Registry who will provide that information to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre.

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- A review of a Missing Persons case is to be conducted with the Missing Persons Registry (See chapter 18.1). A list of any outstanding actions will be agreed upon during this review.

Within 6 months:

- Re-conduct 'Signs of Life' checks, particularly those concerning movements e.g. immigration and associated vehicles.
- A further review of a Missing Persons case is to be conducted with the Missing Persons Registry where outstanding actions from the 3-month review will be considered (See chapter 18.2).

Within 9 months:

- A completed Coronial brief is to be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for checking. Any outstanding actions will be identified for further attention by the OIC (See chapter 18.3).

Within 12 months:

- A completed brief of evidence is to be submitted to the State Coroner via the Coronial Law Unit (See Chapter 19.0).

8.0 Key roles in supervising Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations

Missing Person, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations remain the responsibility of PACs or PDs unless, investigative responsibility is accepted by the Homicide Squad, SCC. Reports can be taken at any Police Station however, the PAC or PD where the Missing Person was last seen will be the Command responsible for the investigation. Missing Person reports can be taken at any time and there is no "waiting time" necessary when a person is reported missing. As soon as a person reports the whereabouts of another are unknown, and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person, a report should be immediately taken.

8.1 Responsibility of the Missing Persons Registry

The Missing Persons Registry is a Unit within State Crime Command that co-ordinates the NSWPF response to Missing Persons investigations. The manager of the Missing Persons Registry reports to the Director, Crime Operations, State Crime Command. Although the Missing Persons Registry comprises a team of investigators and analysts, it does not assume responsibility for Missing Persons investigations.

The Missing Persons Registry is responsible for:

- Maintaining NSWPF policy and procedures (SOPs) for Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations;
- Monitoring adherence to these SOPs;
- Reviewing risk assessment processes for all Missing Person COPS Events;
- Monitoring Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains Events on COPS and providing support to the field by reviewing daily downloads and ensuring all available investigative tools are considered;
- Maintaining and collating information/data relating to Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases in N.S.W on the Missing Persons Database;
- Coordinating DNA Collection Program for Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases.
- Coordinating collection of dental records and providing them to forensic dentists for charting;
- Ensuring cross referencing of Missing Persons cases against Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains databases;
- Ensuring coordination and quality assurance for Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases;
- Maintaining liaison with both internal stakeholders and external agencies to facilitate timely investigation of Missing Person cases;
- Coordinating inquiries for interstate and international Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases;
- Conducting reviews for all long-term Missing Persons cases at the 3- and 6-month stages (See Chapter 18.0).
- Reviewing all Missing Persons Coronial briefs prior to presentation to the Coroner;
- Submitting details of all Missing Persons to the national Public Register of Long-Term Missing Persons;

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- Developing and delivering education and training packages, and other resources, including presentations at PAC/PD training days, specialist training days and the Constable Education Program;
- Coordinating various community awareness programs and initiatives including National Missing Persons Week, the Safely Home Program and the Family and Friends of Missing Persons Program;
- Participating in inter-agency forums and advisory groups at a state and national level;
- Providing initial and ongoing training to PAC/PD Missing Persons Coordinators (MPC's);
- Hosting an annual conference for Missing Person Coordinators.

8.2 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Missing Persons Coordinator (MPC)

It is acknowledged that Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations have become more complex. Although the Missing Persons Registry maintains responsibility to review all Missing Persons investigations, there is a need to have a suitably trained and experienced person at the local level to provide early intervention and guidance for these matters. These SOPs include the introduction of a new role within each PAC/PD for a Missing Persons Coordinator (MPC). In most Commands, the most suitable person to perform the function of the MPC would be the Investigations Manager. It may also be appropriate for the MPC role to be delegated to a CI Team Leader (Detective Sergeant), or other suitably experienced criminal investigator within a Command.

The role of the MPC is to:

- Liaise with the Crime Coordinator and obtain details of all Missing Person, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases;
- Monitor and review all Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases at the local level;
- Ensure all Missing Person, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases are appropriately investigated and sufficient resources allocated;
- Provide advice and guidance to OIC's of these investigations at the local level;
- Check, and where required, assign a COPS Missing Persons Event task to an officer or officer in charge of another station, for investigation or continuing inquiries;
- Act as a point of contact between the Missing Persons Registry and their Commands;
- Participate in case reviews (together with the OIC's) conducted by the Missing Persons Registry for all long-term Missing Persons cases (See chapter 18);
- Assist in the development of local procedures with relevant stakeholders (i.e: Mental Health facilities and care facilities for young people).
- **If a homicide is suspected, you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, SCC.**

8.3 Responsibility of the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command

If suspicious circumstances exist, the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command is to be notified immediately via the State Coordination Unit. Consistent with the Homicide Squad on-call policy, the on-call Coordinator will conduct an assessment and determine an appropriate level of response from the Homicide Squad.

Continual risk assessment of all Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains cases should be conducted and notification made to the Homicide Squad, SCC when suspicion arises that a Missing Person may be the subject of a homicide. Long-term Missing Persons cases will only be transferred to the Homicide Squad Unsolved Homicide Unit by direct referral from the Coroner.

8.4 Responsibility of PAC/PD Crime Manager

It is the responsibility of the Crime Manager to:

1. Ensure that the officer who receives the Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains report, complies with all relevant parts of: 'Responsibility of the officer who receives a report' at chapter 9.1 of this document;

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2. Ensure Missing Persons Events are concluded as soon as practicable after the Missing Person has been located and Missing Person-Now Located Incident created within the COPS Event;
3. Ensure if a major investigation is commenced into the Missing Person's disappearance, the investigation is to be the responsibility of the Command where the Missing Person's was last sighted;
4. **If a homicide is suspected, you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, SCC;**
5. Maintain a register of services, agencies or organisations which are available to support Missing Persons and families of Missing Persons;
6. Ensure that at three months the case is uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim Services database and the AFP National Missing Persons website;
7. Ensure that any located persons are removed from National Missing Persons Victim Services database and the AFP National Database if they have been placed on there;
8. Ensure 'case reviews' are conducted with the Missing Persons Registry at the three- and six-month points of Missing Persons investigations (See chapter 18);
9. Ensure the P79B and Coronial Brief are submitted to the Missing Persons Registry at nine months for quality review, or earlier when there is reasonable suspicion the person is deceased, and all investigative avenues have been exhausted;
10. Ensure the provisions of this document and the Missing Persons Policy are adhered to;
11. Ensure that all long-term Missing Persons cases are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that:
 - An OIC remains assigned to the case;
 - All outstanding actions and enquiries have been finalised (including any new information that may have been provided or come to light since the last review);
 - The OIC has made appropriate contact with the family and/ or person who made the Missing Person report since the last annual review, and confirm current contact details;
 - That an intelligence review (including search of NMPVS) has been conducted since the last review.

8.5 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Crime Coordinator

It is the responsibility of the PAC/PD Crime Coordinator to:

1. Within 1 week, create a Case on the Case Management System, allocating it to the Investigating Officer;
2. If the Missing Person was last seen at a location outside of the PAC/PD where the initial report was made, transfer the Event/Case to the relevant PAC/PD immediately, notifying the Duty Officer and confirming its receipt at the receiving location;
3. If suspicious circumstances exist, or at the four-week mark, transfer the Case to an investigator for attention;
4. Liaise with the Missing Persons Coordinator, Investigations Manager and Crime Manager ensuring COPS and Case Management procedures are adhered to;
5. Periodically monitor and review COPS to ensure Case Management procedures are adhered to.

8.6 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor

It is essential proper supervision is given to all Missing Person cases. Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors MUST provide adequate supervision to ensure all Missing Person investigations are properly attended to:

It is the responsibility of the PAC/PD Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor to:

1. Ensure all Missing Person cases are handed over at the end of each shift and are recorded on changeover/hand over sheets to alert the oncoming shift of outstanding tasks to be attended to;
2. Ensure Missing Persons matters are to remain on the hand over/change over sheets at the end of each shift until the Missing Person is located or, until the matter has been allocated to an investigator;
3. Where available, ensure a photo of all relevant Missing Persons are circulated to oncoming staff at the beginning of each shift;
4. Consult with the Crime Manager to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to all fresh Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations;
5. Ensure the COPS Risk Assessment has been completed and police actions/response are appropriate to the circumstances (See Chapter 11.0);

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6. Ensure dissemination of the information has been arranged (if appropriate);
7. Ensure the case receives immediate and continued attention;
8. Supervise the immediate investigation;
9. **If a homicide is suspected, immediately contact the Homicide Squad, SCC;**
10. Ensure the case is brought to the attention of other Units where appropriate (e.g. State Crime Command - Child Abuse & Sex Crime Squad, Robbery & Serious Crime Squad);
11. Ensure:
 - a. The Crime Manager is advised of the Missing Person Event;
 - b. Authority to release to the media has been requested;
 - c. Where the Missing Person occurrence involves a known vulnerability (age, mental health, physical health etc), the local search and rescue mission coordinator or officer trained to coordinate search operations is advised (See Chapter 16.0);
12. Ensure the particulars of any Missing Person are brought to the attention of the relieving Shift Supervisor or Duty Officer, and the station Intelligence Officer;
13. Consider the need for a search and rescue operation and take appropriate action.

8.7 Responsibility of the PAC/PD Shift Supervisor

It is essential proper supervision is given to all Missing Person cases. Shift Supervisors MUST provide adequate supervision to ensure all Missing Person investigations are properly attended to:

It is the responsibility of the PAC/PD Shift Supervisor to:

1. Ensure all Missing Person cases are handed over at the end of each shift and are recorded on changeover/hand over sheets to alert the oncoming shift of outstanding tasks to be attended to;
2. Ensure Missing Persons matters are to remain on the hand over/change over sheets at the end of each shift until the Missing Person is located or, until the matter has been allocated to an investigator;
3. Where available, ensure a photo of all relevant Missing Persons are circulated to oncoming staff at the beginning of each shift;
4. Consult with the Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to all fresh Missing Persons, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations;
5. Ensure particulars of the Missing Person and other relevant information resulting from inquiries, including any vehicles or vessels of interest, have been entered onto COPS, including the correct entry of the Missing Persons COPS 'category' and any relevant 'associated risk factor' (See Chapter 4.0);
6. Ensure the COPS Risk Assessment has been completed and police actions/response are appropriate to the circumstances (See Chapter 11.0);
7. Verify COPS Events before the conclusion of a shift;
8. Ensure dissemination of the information has been arranged (if appropriate);
9. Ensure the case receives immediate and continued attention;
9. Supervise the immediate investigation;
10. If a homicide is suspected, you must immediately contact the Homicide Squad, SCC;
11. Ensure the case is brought to the attention of other Units where appropriate (e.g. State Crime Command - Child Abuse & Sex Crime Squad, Robbery & Serious Crime Squad);
12. Ensure:
 - a. The Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor is advised of the Missing Person Event;
 - b. Authority to release to the media has been requested;
 - c. If the Missing Person occurrence involves a known vulnerability (age, mental health, physical health etc), the local search and rescue mission coordinator or officer trained to coordinate search operations is advised (See Chapter 16.0);
13. Ensure particulars of any Missing Person, Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains are brought to the attention of the officer in charge of the station, the relieving Shift Supervisor or Duty Officer, and the station Intelligence Officer;
14. Consider the need for a search and rescue operation and take appropriate action; and

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15. Ensure the COPS Event contains all required information. If not, resubmit the Event for the Investigating Officer to complete. This must be done before the end of the shift. Missing Persons Events are not to be left incomplete or in 'resubmit' at the end of a shift.

9.0 Responsibilities of officers taking reports and OIC's of Missing Person investigations

9.1 Responsibility of the officer who receives a report

The 'Missing Persons Checklist' should be used as a guide when obtaining details for a Missing Person report. The Checklist can be found at **Annexure A** or within the 'Toolkit' on the Missing Persons Registry intranet site.

The following procedures should be undertaken by the police officer who receives a report for a Missing Person, except for:

- an Australia resident missing overseas (referred to DFAT) – **See Chapter 9.2.9**; or
- a resident of another Australian state or territory missing from that state or territory (referred to the local police in that State/Territory) – **See Chapter 9.2.10**.

The officer is to immediately:

1. Confirm the identity of the person making the report and record their name, address and phone number;
2. Establish from the person all relevant details (**Annexure A**). Missing Person reports are not to be taken for family/friend reunion matters. Aim to establish why the Missing Person may have gone missing;
3. Determine if the Missing Person disappeared from a location outside of their PAC/PD. The investigating Command is where the Missing Person was last sighted unless there is reasonable cause to believe that PAC is not the most suitable. For example: If a mental health related Missing Person was transported from his PAC of residence to a hospital in a nearby PAC, the PAC in which the Missing Person resides may be better suited to manage the investigation. This decision should be made via negotiation between relevant Crime Managers. If the Missing Person is deemed to have gone missing outside the PAC where the report is made, liaise with the Crime Coordinator to transfer the case to the appropriate PAC/PD. Contact a suitable officer at the appropriate PAC/PD by phone so that steps can be taken to transfer the report. The initial response rests with the PAC/PD in which the Missing Person report was taken until the investigating PAC/PD has formally had the case transferred and it has been accepted at the receiving Command;
4. Conduct a COPS check to determine if any previous CNIs exist before creating a new CNI;
5. Create a Missing Persons Event in COPS (before end of shift) and enter all required information (**Annexure A**). The reporting officer is to include sufficient details to substantiate the person being recorded as missing.
6. Assign the Missing Person a 'category' and any relevant 'associated risk factor' (See Chapter 4.0);
7. Complete the mandatory Missing Persons Risk Assessment within the COPS Event (See Chapter 11.0);
8. Initiate inquiries aimed at locating the Missing Person and enter the result of those inquiries and other relevant information in the COPS Event;
9. Place a warning on the Missing Person's COPS Profile stating the person is missing;
10. Obtain clear and recent photographs of the Missing Person, including photographs of identifying features, relevant clothing etc (if hard copy photographs provided, take a digital copy of the photograph and return the original to the provider as soon as possible);
11. Notify the Shift Supervisor or Duty Officer of the Missing Person, the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and any action taken.
12. Where the officer cannot create the Missing Person report prior to the termination of the shift, provide the relevant details to their Shift Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor or Crime Manager. This person is to ensure the details are entered and all necessary action and inquiries are made as soon as possible.
13. Advise the person reporting and family members of the counselling services available (See Chapter 24.0);
14. Provide the person reporting a copy of the 'Pamphlet for those reporting someone missing' (**Annexure O**).

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9.1.1 What to do if a report hasn't been made but a person fits the definition of a Missing Person

There will be occasions where police become concerned for the safety or wellbeing of a person, their whereabouts are unknown yet, no person has reported them as missing. Examples of this might include a person who rings '000' or a counselling service threatening self harm. In these situations, the obvious priority should be directed to addressing the immediate risk to the person's safety. Matter of this type are initially attended to by the State Coordination Unit who attempt to triangulate the location of the telephone service used to make the call. Once the last known location has been established, the matter will be referred to the relevant PAC/PD for attention.

If the person cannot be located within a reasonable period of time, it is essential that a Missing Person report (Incident) be created within COPS, even though another person may not have presented themselves to police to make that report.

Once this Missing Person report has been created, the matter should be investigated in the usual manner (See **Annexure A**).

9.2 Responsibility of the Officer in Charge (OIC) of an investigation

It is possible and often appropriate for the officer who takes the report to be the OIC. Supervisors and Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors should assess all Missing Persons cases and allocate appropriate resources to conduct investigations. The below times are **maximum** timeframes. Tasks should be completed before but not after the indicated intervals. All actions undertaken by the OIC should be recorded in either COPS, Case Management or on e@gle.i.

9.2.1 Immediate responsibilities of the OIC for adult Missing Person cases

1. Immediately (within the first 24 hours):

- a) Refer to the Missing Persons checklist (**Annexure A**) for information to be gathered;
- b) Where a physical land or marine search is necessary immediately notify the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit or Marine Area Command via the State Coordination Unit (See Chapter 16.0);
- c) Where a homicide is suspected, or suspicious circumstances exist, in accordance with the Homicide On-Call protocols, contact the Homicide Squad On-Call Team via the State Coordination Unit;
- d) Initiate inquiries aimed at locating the Missing Person and enter the result of those inquiries and other relevant information in the COPS Event;
- e) Obtain consent to publicly release details of the case, including the photograph (**Annexure N**);
- f) When appropriate, obtain permission from the Supervisor to create a NEMESIS message, making sure to attach a photo;
- g) Identify and speak with any person who may be able to offer relevant information (e.g. family members, friends, school teacher, work colleagues). Record details of any person spoken to and information obtained to assist in obtaining statements at an appropriate time and if necessary;
- h) Maintain regular contact with the informant/legal guardian/SNOK (where appropriate), at least weekly for the first two months of the investigation and then maintain contact at least at the intervals indicated below. Record any contact as an Action Item;
- i) Ensure that all important details of the investigation are captured on the handover sheet and are appropriately disseminated to Shift Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor etc;
- j) If the Missing Person is aged 16 and under, an Amber Alert can be considered (See Chapter 20.1).

9.2.2 Maximum investigation time frames for OIC

1. One Week:

- a) Ensure that DNA and potential fingerprint reference samples are obtained from the Missing Person's residence/property and booked up as exhibits (See Chapter 10);

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- b) If a direct DNA sample (tooth brush, hair brush etc) cannot be obtained, ensure that a DNA reference sample is obtained from an appropriate family member of the missing person (**Annexure C**);
 - c) Obtain details of the Missing Person's current medical practitioner and dentist.
- 2. Two Weeks:**
- a) Conduct 'Signs of Life' checks and record on COPS (See Chapter 22.1);
 - b) Commence inquiries with a view to obtaining the Missing Person's dental records (Refer to the Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist (**Annexure D**), Family member consent to obtain dental records form (**Annexure E**) and the pre-formatted letter to a dentist (**Annexure F**). When records are obtained, submit to the Missing Persons Registry for referral to Odontologists for charting.
- 3. Four Weeks:**
- a) The Case should be transferred to a competent investigator within the PAC/PD.
- 4. Six weeks:**
- a) The investigation is to be transferred to the e@gle.i information management system.
- 5. Three Months:**
- a) Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to ensure that the case is uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS);
 - b) If public release has been granted, forward relevant documents to the Missing Persons Registry for upload to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre public facing website;
 - c) If public release has not been granted, re-request from family/guardian/SNOK;
 - d) Ensure the DVI AM form is completed (See 'Toolkit' in MPR intranet site);
 - e) Ensure dental records have been correctly sent for charting (See Chapter 10.5).
 - f) Participate in formal case review with the Missing Persons Registry (See chapter 18).
- 6. Six Months:**
- a) Reconduct 'Signs of Life' Checks, particularly those concerning movements e.g. immigration and associated vehicles;
 - b) Participate in further case review with the Missing Persons Registry following up on outstanding actions from the Three-month review (See chapter 18).
- 7. Nine months:**
- a) Completed Coronial brief is to be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for checking;
 - b) Any identified outstanding enquiries will be forwarded back to the OIC for completion.
- 8. Twelve Months:**
- a) The P79B/Coronial Brief should be submitted by the OIC to the Coroner by 12 months. However, it is expected that the P79B/Coronial Brief will be submitted as soon as there is reasonable suspicion that the Missing Person is deceased. This is also the case if all inquiries that can be made to determine whether the person is living or not have been exhausted.
- 9. Ongoing:**
- a) Record in the Missing Persons Event narrative whether the family/reporting person wishes to have ongoing contact;
 - b) Advise the Coronial Support Unit – who will update Justice Link – if there is a change in OIC;
 - c) If at any point in the investigation, suspicious circumstances come to light, the Homicide Squad is to be advised;
 - d) If, after an Open Finding from the Coroner, a belief is formed that the Missing Person is now deceased (based on new evidence etc.), the case is to be put back before the Coroner by submitting a new P79B;
 - e) The OIC is to maintain contact with the SNOK at least once per year unless the SNOK specifically requests no further contact from the police. This request is to be recorded in the Event.

Note: If the Missing Person is deemed an immigration case at any point in the investigation, the Missing Person Incident Classification should be updated to "Transfer – Other LEA" and the case referred to the Department of Immigration (See chapter 9.2.11).

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9.2.3 Additional responsibilities if the Missing Person is a Young Person or Child

In addition to the responsibilities mentioned at 9.2.1, the OIC of matters relating to missing young people should:

1. Immediately:

- a. If the informant is not the parent, and if circumstances permit, endeavor to notify the parents or guardians of the incident;
- b. If a child is in parental responsibility of the Minister (PRM), and if circumstances permit, endeavor to notify:
 - I. Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) through the Child Protection Helpline via 132 111;
 - II. The service provider exercising primary case responsibility for the child or young person (contact information about the service provider is obtained from the Child Protection Helpline);
 - III. The child's authorised carer (if contact information is available).
- c. Where a physical search is necessary contact the appropriate Unit/Command (See Chapter 16.0);
 - i. Land Search: Police Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit;
 - ii. Water Search: Marine Area Command;
- d. Obtain a clear, recent photo of the young person/child and make a digital copy; returning the original to the provider as soon as possible;
- e. Obtain consent from the SNOK, or for a child in parental responsibility of the Minister, consent should be sought from DCJ through the Child protection Helpline (132 111), to publicly release details of the case, including the photograph;
- f. Where appropriate, obtain permission from the Supervisor to create a NEMESIS message, making sure to attach a photo;
- g. Establish if the young person/child falls into one of the following categories;
 - i. is reasonably suspected of having been abducted or taken away by a person;
 - ii. they appear to be at imminent risk of death or serious harm;
 - iii. is missing in concerning or suspicious circumstances;
- h. If the young person/child falls under one or more of the above categories, advise the Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor to **immediately** consider contacting the Police Media Unit to issue an Amber Alert (See Chapter 20.1);
- i. If the young person/child falls under one of the above categories, **immediately** inform the State Coordination Unit (Duty Operations Inspector) who will notify the appropriate Squad within the State Crime Command;
- j. If there are no suspicious circumstances, contact the young person/child's school and seek information regarding their attendance record, their networks and any other information which may assist the investigation.

In addition to the maximum investigation time frames listed in Chapter 9.2.2, adhere to the additional investigative time frames for young persons/children:

2. 48 hours:

- a. Identify and speak with any person who may be able to offer relevant information (e.g. parents, friends, school teacher). Record details of any person spoken to and information obtained to assist in obtaining statements at an appropriate time and if necessary;
- b. If there are growing concerns for the safety and wellbeing of the young person/child, and a search has not previously been conducted, coordinate an appropriate search.

9.2.4 If it is suspected the Missing Young Person or Child may be exposed to harm if returned to parent/carers.

In circumstances where police suspect a young person/child may be at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) or Immediate Risk of Significant Harm (IROSH), if returned to a parent, guardian or carer, a Child at Risk incident should be immediately created on COPS. Creation of this incident will facilitate eReporting to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

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Mandatory Reporting

Section 23 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* defines when a child or young person is considered at risk of significant harm. Sections 27 & 27A of the Act define the mandatory reporting obligations of police (regardless of duty type) where there are grounds to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm. When doing so:

- Use the DCJ Child Protection Pocket Guide to inform the collection and assessment of relevant information;
- Create an Event with a 'Child at Risk' Incident;
- Add an additional Incident for any associated offence/s;
- Use the online '**Mandatory Reporter Guidance (MRG) Tool**' to determine the suspected 'Risk of Significant Harm' and response as follows:
 - 'Imminent Risk of Significant Harm' (IROSH) – Electronically disseminated to the FACS Child Protection Helpline, with the option in urgent cases of also making direct contact via 132 111;
 - 'Risk of Significant Harm' (ROSH) - Electronically disseminated to the FACS Child Protection Helpline;
 - 'Non-Risk of Significant Harm' (Non ROSH) – Electronically disseminated to the NSWPF Child Wellbeing Unit (CWU). 'No further intervention required' – No other agency involvement or action.

Emergency Removal

Section 43 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* also provides that, where police are satisfied on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm, and the making of an apprehended violence order would not be sufficient to protect them from that risk, they may without warrant:

- Remove the child or young person from the place of risk;
- Enter any premises or place (or adjacent place, having just left the premises or place) in which they suspect the child or young person (or the person suspected on reasonable grounds of being the child or young person) may be; and
- Search for the child or young person in that premises or place (or any adjacent place).

In such cases police should consider:

- Immediate and ongoing safety, wellbeing and welfare of the child or young person, including whether they need care and protection;
- The least intrusive and most effective method of intervention;
- The rights of any non-offending parents, guardian or carer;
- The statutory definition of a child at risk of significant harm (ROSH) and necessary criteria for removal of children and young persons without warrant (as set out in sections 23 and 43 respectively of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*).

9.2.5 If the Missing Young Person or Child was in the care of the State.

The Secretary of Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) exercises parental responsibility for children and young people in parental responsibility of the Minister (PRM). Therefore, police must make a referral to DCJ for all children and young persons under the age of 18 who are reported missing and identified as being in PRM.

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 Secretary of DCJ when a young person/child is reported as missing to police. If the Secretary becomes aware that a young person/child reported as missing is safe, the Secretary is required to advise

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police that the young person/child is safe, but not of the whereabouts of the young person/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 Secretary.

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

The DCJ – Housing, have a policy (**See Annexure P**) regarding reporting children/young persons in their care, to police as missing. That policy states:

Where the child is suspected to have been abducted; or is missing and efforts to make contact have been exhausted; or contact has been established and maintained but the child's location is unknown:

- *report this immediately to Police;*
- *make a critical incident report to the Helpline;*
- *provide a dot point a summary to Cross Cluster Issues Management;*
- *attempt to find the child.*

Extra information: *Information needed to file a missing person's police report includes:*

- *a letter signed by the Manger Case Worker (MCW) stating the child's current legal status or FACS involvement and/or a copy of current court order;*
- *name, date of birth and address of the missing child;*
- *photograph, if available, and full description (weight, height, special features, eyes and hair colour etc.);*
- *details about where and when the child was last seen or heard from;*
- *details and contacts of friends, favourite haunts etc.*
- *medicines or medical needs;*
- *safety concerns, especially any high-risk behaviours or suicidal risks;*
- *proposed placement details (where relevant) when the child is found.*

When taking a report from a DCJ care facility, ensure a record is made of what information has been provided, including what *"efforts to make contact [with the child/young person] have been exhausted"*.

9.2.6 Parental Abductions

Parental child abduction is the hiding, taking or keeping hold of a young person/child by his/her parent while defying the rights of the young person/child's other parent or another member of the family. This type of abduction generally occurs when the parents separate. Children that are the subject of parental abductions fit the NSWPF definition of a Missing Person. Police should take Missing Persons reports of these young persons/children in all circumstances, irrespective of whether Family Law proceedings have been instituted or a Recovery Order exists. Where a parent fails to return a young person/child pursuant to a parenting plan or court order, and the young person/child cannot be sighted by police, they are to be treated as a Missing Person. Once a Missing Person report has been taken, the matter should be investigated in accordance with Chapter 9.2.3.

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, or for a child in PRM, from DCJ, for police use only.

Investigating police should consider activating a PACE Alert for young persons/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 young person/child concerned from Australia to a place outside Australia.

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If police locate a missing young person/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 young person/child from the 'abductor' parent.

If police locate a missing young person/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*. The International Social Service, a non-government organisation funded by DCJ, traces family members separated by adoption or other legal intervention, international child abduction, and voluntary or forced migration (See Contacts – Chapter 26).

If there is concern of international child abduction, young persons/children can be placed on the Family Law Watchlist. Police can request any person be placed on the Watchlist where there are concerns for abduction by removal to a foreign jurisdiction. The *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1983*, is an international treaty for children who are wrongfully removed or wrongfully retained by a parent. Participating countries are required to return children as quickly as possible to the country in which they reside, so that issues of custody can be resolved by the courts in that country.

9.2.7 If the Missing Person is a Mental Health patient

In the case of a Missing Person from a Mental Health Unit, the NSWPF is required to do certain things in accordance with the MOU entered into in 2018 with NSW Health. Chapter 3.4.7 (**Annexure M**) of that MOU sets out the process to be followed when a Mental Health patient is reported missing.

- The hospital should first implement its AWOL Policy, contacting security, searching their grounds and conducting enquiries with next of kin, places frequented etc;
- If the patient is unable to be located, the hospital should ring the local PAC/PD Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor or Shift Supervisor and discuss circumstances;
- The hospital should complete an 'Absconded Patient' form (Appendix A to MOU) and email same to local police.

The NSWPF/NSW Health MOU states, *"If the risk is deemed to require an immediate police response, the hospital is to phone the Police Duty Officer or delegate at the Police Station nearest to the hospital. A request for police assistance is based on the risk the person poses and not solely on their legal status. However, as the legal status of the patient may affect the response, police must be informed of the patient's legal status. The hospital is to send the Absconded Patient Form (Appendix A) to the Police Station by fax or email as agreed. The Police Duty Officer is authorized to allocate resources to assist to locate the person..."*

Police should then:

- Create a CAD message and advise VKG;
- Duty Officer/Supervisor allocate the job to an appropriate officer to create a Missing Person COPS event;
- Risk Assessment to be conducted as part of the COPS event creation process;
- Investigating police to attend the Mental Health Unit to re-asses risks and commence inquiries;
- Obtain a photo of the Missing Person from the hospital or the SNOK and circulate to searching police;
- Establish locations the Missing Person is likely to attend and any history of previous Missing Person reports;
- If the Missing Person cannot be quickly located, immediately consider notifying the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit via the State Coordination Unit.

If NSW Health staff locate an absconded patient who has been reported to police, they must contact police to verbally update them and complete an Absconded Patient Outcome Form (Appendix B to the MOU) and forward it to police.

Section 79 of the *Firearms Act 1996 (NSW)* provides for the notification to the NSW Police Force Commissioner by certain health professionals if they are of the opinion that a person to whom they have been providing professional services may pose a threat to their own or public safety if in possession of a firearm. In this instance, health

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professional refers to a Medical Practitioner, Registered/Enrolled Nurse, Registered Psychologist, Counsellor or Social Worker. If a person absconds from a Mental Health Unit and they have access to firearms, appropriate action should be taken.

9.2.8 If the Missing Person is suspected of being Lost or involved in an Accident or Misadventure

In addition to the responsibilities detailed in Chapter 9.2.1;

1. Immediately:

- a. Coordinate Search (See Chapter 16.0);
- b. Obtain a clear, recent photo of the missing person and make a digital copy; returning the original to the provider as soon as possible;
- c. Obtain consent to publicly release details of the case, including the photograph.

2. One Week:

- a. Ensure that DNA and potential fingerprint reference samples are obtained from the Missing Person's residence/property (See Chapter 10);
- b. If a direct DNA sample cannot be obtained, ensure that a DNA reference sample is obtained from an appropriate family member of the missing person (**Annexure C**);
- c. Obtain details of the Missing Person's current medical practitioner and dentist.

3. Two Weeks:

- a. Conduct 'Signs of Life' checks and record on COPS (See Chapter 22.1);
- b. Commence obtaining the Missing Person's dental records using the Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist (**Annexure D**), Family member consent to obtain dental records form (**Annexure E**) and the pre-formatted letter to a dentist (**Annexure F**);
 - i. Submit to the Missing Persons Registry for referral to Odontologists for charting.

4. Four weeks:

- a. The Case should be transferred to a competent investigator within the PAC/PD.

5. Six weeks:

- a. The investigation is to be transferred to the e@gle.i information management system.

6. Three months:

- a. Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to have the case uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS);
- b. If public release has been granted, forward relevant documents to the Missing Persons Registry for upload to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre public facing website;
- c. If public release has not been granted, re-request from family/guardian/NOK;
- d. Ensure the DVI AM form is completed (See Toolkit in MPR intranet site);
- e. Ensure dental records have been correctly sent for charting (See Chapter 10.5);
- f. Participate in formal case review with the Missing Persons Registry (See chapter 18);
- g. The OIC is responsible for submitting a P79B to the Coroner for determination. The investigator is to submit the Coronial brief and provide an OIC statement at the time of submission of the P79B. In an accident misadventure incident, the P79B can be submitted earlier than three months but should be submitted following the three-month case review with the Missing Persons Registry;
- h. Submit the Coronial brief to the Missing Persons Registry for review prior to it being submitted to the Coroner.

4. Ongoing:

- a. Monitor the case for possible unidentified bodies/human remains;
- b. Establish whether the family wishes to maintain contact (noting this in the COPS Event narrative); and, if yes, maintain periodic communication with the family.

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9.2.9 If the Missing Person is an Australian resident missing overseas

If the event relates to a resident of Australia missing overseas the officer receiving the report is to make thorough inquiries with the informant to establish (See flow chart – Annexure I):

- The person is a Missing Person;
- The matter is not simply a lack of contact; and
- The informant is not seeking only to establish the whereabouts of a person.

If the reporting officer's inquiries establish the person is missing overseas they should:

1. Complete a Missing Person Event in COPS;
2. Send the details of the investigation to DFAT at Centre.Conops@dfat.gov.au who will become the lead agency. DFAT will advise Interpol of the matter;
3. Maintain contact with the informant;
4. If available, provide the informant with information about the web page 'What to do when someone is missing overseas', issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (www.smartraveller.gov.au);
5. Update the Event to reflect the Missing Person is recorded as a Missing Person Overseas and reported to DFAT for referral to Interpol;
6. The person is to remain a Missing Person on COPS until advised they have been located;
7. At three months;
 - a. Upload the details of the Missing Persons Case to the National Missing Persons Victim Services Database;
 - b. Confirm if public release has been granted, and if it has, that details of the Missing Persons Case have been provided to the AFP National Missing Persons Coordination Centre for upload to their public facing database.

9.2.10 If the Missing Person is a resident of another Australian State or Territory and is reported missing to NSW Police OR if the person is a NSW resident and is reported as missing in another State or Territory

If the event relates to a resident of another Australian State or Territory and the Missing Person is believed to be missing from that State or Territory, the reporting officer should:

1. Complete a Missing Persons Event in COPS;
2. If the person is a NSW resident but is believed to be missing in another State or Territory, the case is to be transferred to that State/Territory via the Missing Persons Registry (See Chapter 10.1);
3. Advise the Missing Persons Registry who will pass on the information to the Missing Persons Unit in the State/Territory where the Missing Person resides, including details of the Missing Persons Event (including reference number);
4. The MPR will update the COPS Event narrative that the relevant State/Territory has been advised;
5. Update the Missing Person Event category to "Missing Interstate" and update the Classification to "Transfer – Other LEA" to reflect the Missing Person is recorded as a Missing Person in the relevant State/Territory (including reference number from the home State/Territory in the narrative and/or action);
6. If the Missing Person is from another State/Territory but based on reasonable evidence, it is believed they are in NSW, the NSWPF has jurisdiction of the case. The Missing Persons Registry receive these files from interstate and allocate them to the appropriate PAC/PD for attention;
7. The Missing Person Event will remain active until the person is located;
8. The investigating officer from the State/Territory responsible for the investigations is also responsible for uploading the case to National Missing Persons Victim Services database.

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9.2.11 If the Missing Person is deemed to be an illegal immigrant

If the report relates to a person that is deemed an illegal immigrant, the Missing Persons Event is to be rejected and an illegal immigration Event created. Illegal immigrants are not within the scope of these operating procedures unless there is evidence to suggest that the person is not missing as a result of their own free will.

IMPORTANT: The possibility of the person going missing under suspicious circumstances must be ruled out before the Missing Persons event is rejected. Ensure that the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is advised.

9.2.12 If the person is a resident of another country and is reported missing in N.S.W.

If a visiting person from another country is reported as a Missing Person in N.S.W, the report should be taken in accordance with the standard process described in these SOPs. In addition, notification should be made to any relevant Embassy.

If the Missing Person remains outstanding beyond 72 hours, contact should be established with the Missing Persons Registry to seek advice regarding inquiries that need to be conducted overseas (i.e. gathering dental records, DNA and medical records).

9.2.13 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 COPS as a 'Located Person' event. Check if the person is wearing a Safely Home bracelet (See chapter 26) or other forms of identification.

Then:

- Create a State-wide NEMESIS message (with a photo of the person) for all police to view;
- Conduct a COPS check on recent Missing Persons reported in the surrounding areas;
- Check the NSWPF Missing Persons Database;
- Indicate in the 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 Registry Homepage. Enter the Safely Home identification number and the details of the located person will be displayed. Alternatively, contact the Missing Persons Registry hotline number located on the bracelet, quote the identification number to obtain details of the person's identity.

10.0 Key investigative functions

10.1 Transferring cases interstate or overseas

If a Missing Person report is taken for someone that was last seen at an interstate or overseas location, the case should usually be transferred to police in that interstate or overseas jurisdiction. In these circumstances:

- Create a Missing Persons COPS Event and have a Case created;
- Transfer the Case to the Missing Persons Registry for attention;
- The Missing Persons Registry will then transfer the Case to the Missing Persons Unit in the relevant jurisdiction for their attention via the Missing Persons Interstate Referral form;
- The Case will be suspended and held at the Missing Persons Registry and routine follow up enquiries made with the receiving jurisdiction to establish if the Missing Person has been located;
- If it is later established the Missing Person has been located interstate, the Missing Persons Registry will create a Missing Person Now Located incident in COPS and finalise the Case.

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10.2 Collecting fingerprint evidence for Missing Persons investigations

If whilst taking the report of a Missing Person, suspicion develops that a serious criminal offence may have been committed, relevant crime scene(s) should be declared, the scene(s) preserved, and a Crime Scene Warrant sought. Crime Scene officers should be called to the scene for appropriate forensic examinations to be undertaken.

For all Missing Persons investigations, consideration should be immediately given (or at least within the first week) to collecting reference sample fingerprints that may later be required to assist identification of a located body. Attention should be given to locating items only handled by the Missing Person such as personal diaries, personal papers, colouring books, drawings, other personal effects etc. These items should be collected as exhibits, entered onto EFIMS and forwarded for fingerprint examination as soon as practicable.

10.3 Collecting fingerprint evidence for Unidentified Bodies & Human Remains investigations

For Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains investigations, consideration should be given to the collection of items near the body or remains. For outdoor locations, items such as drink bottles, food wrappers, personal papers etc, should be collected. For indoor locations, similar items should be collected however in protected environments, additional consideration should be given to having items such as internal wall surfaces, doors bathrooms areas etc, fingerprinted. It should be remembered that dependent upon the condition of any unidentified body or human remains, fingerprints may not be obtained from the body however, items located near the body may yield fingerprints to establish identity when compared with fingerprints on file.

10.4 Collecting DNA for Missing Persons investigations

For all Missing Persons investigations, consideration should be immediately given (or at least within the first week) to collecting DNA reference samples. Generally, DNA can be obtained from items used by the Missing Person such as tooth brush, hair brush, razor etc. If these items aren't available (possibly due to a late report) consideration should be given to obtaining medical samples such as a blood spot from a Guthrie card, blood samples from hospitals, biopsy, Pap smear or stored baby teeth. For more information see **Annexure C**.

When a direct DNA sample is not available, consideration should be given to obtaining a DNA sample from a suitable family member (**Annexure C**). The DNA Collection Instructions outline the most suitable family members from whom to obtain a DNA sample. Once a suitable family member has been identified, they should be provided with a 'Forensic Procedure Information Sheet Volunteer – Missing Person Index' form. This form can be located on the DNA Management Unit intranet site under the 'Missing Persons' tab. When the relevant family member is approached, they should be requested to sign a 'Forensic Procedure Consent Form' in the 'Volunteer – Missing Person Index' book which is on hand at all police stations.

Items collected are to be entered into Exhibit Forensic Evidence Information and Miscellaneous Property System (EFIMS) as an exhibit under the relevant Missing Persons Event. Contact Local Crime Scene Section and create an EFIMS job for analysis at FASS. For guidance on using EFIMS, visit: <http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/eguides/efims>

DNA Profiles obtained on analysis will be automatically uploaded and searched on the National and State databases against DNA collected from Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains.

10.5 Collecting Dental Records for Missing Persons investigations

Inquiries should commence at the 2-week mark to identify the location of any dental records for the Missing Person. All relevant inquiries should be conducted to locate any/all dentists previously used by the Missing Person. Generally, family members will be able to identify relevant dentists however, inquiries should be conducted to identify ALL dentists the Missing Person may have visited. Forensic Odontologists who chart these records on national databases for comparison purposes will be unable to perform that function unless all available records are obtained. If family members are unable to identify relevant dentists, iAsk checks should be submitted to obtain details from Medicare and Health Funds regarding any dentists visited by the Missing Person (Chapter 22.0).

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Once a dentist has been identified:

- Prepare the pre-formatted 'Request for Dental Records' letter (**Annexure F**) to the dentist, requesting ALL relevant dental records for the Missing Person. If possible, have a family member sign the pre-formatted 'Family Permission for Medical/Dental Records' letter (**Annexure E**) to be provided to the dentist;
- Obtain a copy of the Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist document (**Annexure D**);
- Attend the dentist and provide them with the pre-formatted letter(s) and request all relevant dental records. These records should include X-rays, dental charts, referrals to specialist, billing information and any other relevant records of implants, dental procedures etc. If possible, obtain all records (including X-rays) in digital form on a usb, or via email;
- Complete the Ante Mortem Dental Records Checklist with the assistance of the dentist;
- If a dentist refuses to supply relevant records, contact the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the need for a Coroner's Order;
- Any records obtained from a dentist should be treated as an exhibit and entered into EFIMS;
- All dental records and the Dental Records Checklist document should then be transferred to the Missing Persons Registry who review the file before arranging for them to be delivered to the Forensic Odontologists and placed upon the National Missing Persons Victim Services database once the Missing Person becomes a Long-Term Missing Person (3 months).

11.0 Risk assessment procedures

A Risk Assessment is required for each missing person. An early assessment of a Missing Person report to determine the urgency of investigative functions is critical. This can be compared to the triage used in assessing casualties and the speed of response needed to save lives. Core to this process is assessment of the level of risk to the Missing Person and how immediate that risk is. The assessment and categorisation of risk and the circumstances of the case should shape the police response, informing the investigative and search strategies. Risk should also be regularly reviewed to consider new information and evolving circumstances. The first step in the process requires gathering of all information that might impact upon the risk assessment.

11.1 Missing Person risk assessment questions

When taking the initial report of a Missing Person, police should ask all relevant questions, so that 'risk' can be properly assessed. These questions are contained within the COPS 'Risk Assessment Tool' and all answers should be recorded. When verifying Missing Person COPS events, Supervisors should review the initial risk assessment and record how identified risks will be addressed by the police response.

The COPS risk assessment tool is an automated process. Once responses to all questions have been recorded, a rating of 'High', 'Medium' or 'Limited' should be chosen (See chapter 11.2 for description of risk ratings). A free text box within COPS will then allow the person taking the report to record their rationale for the risk rating and a further free text box to record how they intend responding to the identified risks. Supervisors verifying Events are required to consider responses to risk assessment questions and also rate the risk as either 'High', 'Medium' or 'Limited'. Supervisors are also required to complete a free text box within COPS to record the rationale for their risk rating and articulate how they intend to respond to the identified risks.

It is important to remember risk assessment is an ongoing process. The risk assessment process within the COPS and Case Management systems will prompt users to consider whether a new risk assessment should be conducted when new information is entered into those systems. If necessary, multiple risk assessments can be conducted and recorded within COPS.

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11.1.1 High Risk 'Red Flag' questions

If the answer to any of the following five (5) questions is 'yes', this would indicate the need for an immediate high-level police response.

1. Is there evidence to suggest the Missing Person is suicidal? (Consider: reported stated intent, history of previous attempts, suicide note found etc)
2. Is there evidence of a homicide? Are the circumstances of the disappearance suspicious? (Consider: possible victim of crime e.g. abduction etc)
3. Did the Missing Person leave with a child in their care?
4. Is the Missing Person particularly vulnerable due to age / disability? (i.e. child, elderly, autistic)
5. Is the Missing Person missing in weather conditions or in geographical area that would seriously increase risk to health and / or safety? (e.g. Missing in snow, dense bushland, last seen in / near body of water etc)

11.1.2 Questions regarding the Missing Persons vulnerabilities

1. Does the Missing Person need essential medication or treatment that is not likely to be available to them? (e.g. mental health, diabetic etc)
2. Does the Missing Person have a mental health diagnosis? (are they currently unwell? currently taking medication?)
3. Is there a history of addiction: drug/alcohol dependence, gambling? (Were they intoxicated when last seen?)
4. Was the Missing Person recently exhibiting behaviour that is considered out of character?
5. Is the person in youth/foster care, special accommodation, aged care facility, or other care facility?

11.1.3 Situational/Context questions

1. Did the Missing Person not complete their last known intended action/keep intended appointment?
2. Have they left behind personal belongings/items required for a period of absence?
3. Is there a recent history of serious family conflict/abuse? (DV, child or elder abuse, victim or perpetrator)
4. Has there been any other recent issues of significance? (Prompt: education, relationship, employment, financial issues, bullying or harassment (physically/social media) issues?)
5. Have they been involved in a recent confrontation? (consider violent, homophobic and /or racist incident)
6. Are they involved in a civil or criminal court matter as a witness/defendant/victim? (consider also current AVOs, child custody issues)
7. Are they an overseas student/tourist who has disappeared without any notice?
8. Known to have been sighted at a point of departure?
9. Have they acquired new friends or relationships recently? (Consider also online acquaintances)
10. Have they been reported missing by a person other than someone they normally reside with/not the logical reporting person?
11. Is the Missing Person a sex worker?
12. Is the Missing Person likely to raise media/political interest? (overseas tourist etc)

11.1.4 Other relevant questions

1. What do you think may have happened?
2. Is there any other reason for the person to go missing or any other information you would like to give?
3. If we need to, who else could we approach that may be able to provide relevant and recent information about the MP? (e.g. friends, co-workers etc)
4. Are there any other factors that the Officer or Supervisor believes should be taken into consideration? (including factors that may mitigate risk)

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Once responses to all questions have been obtained, an informed decision can be made regarding the risks to the Missing Person and the appropriate police response required. All police conducting a risk assessment must document their reasoning for the risk determination and the determined level of police response.

11.2 Description of 'risk ratings' for Missing Persons

Once all risk assessment questions have been addressed in the COPS risk assessment tool, a decision should be made as to the appropriate risk rating. Contained below is a relevant guide to consider when making that decision:

High Risk	
<p>The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing the missing person is in danger. The might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are suspicious circumstances • the behaviour is out of character • there are indications of a criminal offence • answers to any of the 'Red Flag' questions (See 11.1.1) indicate a high risk 	<p>This category requires immediate notification to a Supervisor/Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor. Ensure appropriate crime scene/forensic response. If the missing person is lost, an immediate search and rescue response is required. Immediate consideration should be given to utilising all investigative tools to locate the missing person.</p>
Medium Risk	
<p>Where the missing person potentially poses a risk to themselves or others.</p>	<p>This category requires an active and ongoing response by police and other agencies in order to locate the missing person. All investigative tools should be considered to locate the missing person.</p>
Limited Risk	
<p>There is no indication of a threat of danger to either the missing person or others.</p>	<p>This category requires an active and ongoing response until the missing person is located.</p>

11.3 COPS free text box

11.3.1 Responsibility of the person taking the report

A free text box appears below the risk rating selection for all Missing Person incidents recorded in the COPS system. The person taking the report should complete the risk assessment process by answering all appropriate questions, selecting a risk rating and then recording their rationale for their decision in the first free text box, and in the second how they intend to address the police response to the incident. An Event cannot be submitted to a supervisor if the COPS risk assessment process has not been completed.

11.3.2 Responsibility of the supervisor

When supervisors verify a Missing Person Event, they must also undertake the risk assessment process by reviewing the answers to the risk assessment questions. Supervisors must also allocate a risk rating however, they are not bound by the risk rating assigned by the person taking the report. The Supervisor verifying a Missing Person Event in COPS must also record their rationale for their decision in the first free text box and if relevant, why they rate the risk differently to the person who took the report. In the second free text box they must record how they intend to address the police response to the incident.

12.0 Procedures for a Missing Person located alive

12.1 Missing Person aged 18 or located alive (or accident misadventure victim)

Important: A Missing Person must be sighted to be located. Sighting authorities include Police, Customs Officer, Family and Community Services Officer, Department of Immigration and Border Protection Officer, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade official, Doctor, Mental Health Practitioner, or School Principal. Do not accept second hand reports or over the telephone reports. In exceptional circumstances, locating a Missing Person without sighting them may be approved by the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry. To facilitate this process, a manuscript report must be submitted through the chain of command to the Manager, Missing Persons Registry.

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1. When practical, ascertain the circumstances surrounding the Missing Person's disappearance;
2. Enter details regarding the location of the Missing Person and all relevant information into the COPS Event prior to the termination of the shift. This includes;
 - a. Create a new Incident - 'Located Person' with the further classification of 'Identified Person';
 - b. Update the Person of Interest status to 'Missing Now Located Person' (this is the only category that negates the Missing Person Incident Category);
3. Remove the 'Missing Person' warning from the COPS Profile;
4. Ensure removal of Missing Person from NMPVS and the AFP database if they have been located;
 - a. To remove from NMPVS, contact the Missing Persons Registry;
 - b. To remove from the AFP website, email National-Missing-Persons-Unit@afp.alein;
5. Ensure that, if the Missing Person is from interstate, that the appropriate State/Territory Missing Persons Unit is informed via the Missing Persons Registry.

12.2 If the Missing Person located is under the age of 18

1. Follow all procedures as above except that in all cases a 'Located Interview' should take place;
2. Use **Attachment F: Located Interview for Missing Children and Young People** to ensure that all questions are asked;
3. Record all relevant answers in the Missing Persons Event;
4. If the child or young person indicates they were missing or absent due to harm or the threat of harm, immediately refer the case to FACS via an eReport submitted via COPS (follow the mandatory reporting guidelines as set out on the Intranet);
 - a. Mandatory reporting guide – child at risk incident;
5. If the child or young person's answers indicate that returning them to their place of residence will put them at **immediate risk of harm** the OIC is to call the Child Protection Helpline which will advise the Officer to subsequent action.
6. If the circumstances indicate the child or young person is at risk of harm and they refuse to return to their home or care facility, contact the Child Protection Helpline which will advise the Officer to subsequent action.

12.3 Missing Persons avoiding location

It is acknowledged there will be occasions when people reported missing, actively avoid location. An example of this might include a person reported missing, who has outstanding arrest warrants. Despite the reason why a person might not want to be located, if the person reporting doesn't know the whereabouts of the Missing Person and they have fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person, a report must be taken.

In these circumstances, all necessary actions (as described in Chapter 8) should be commenced. If, however, evidence can be gathered to clearly demonstrate the person is safe and well, in consultation with the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry, it might be appropriate for that person to be recorded as 'Located'. Suitable evidence to establish that a person is safe and well might include:

- Evidence the Missing Person regularly withdraws money from a bank account; and
- CCTV footage or images showing the Missing Person withdrawing money from an ATM machine.;

If circumstances exist where an OIC believes a Missing Person is actively avoiding being located by police, contact should be established with the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the matter. A manuscript report will then be required, through the chain of command, for the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry to approve the person being recorded as 'Located' on COPS.

13.0 Responsibilities when finalising a Missing Persons investigation

13.1 Responsibility of the OIC

Upon locating a Missing Person alive:

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1. Ensure the Located Persons is safe and well and provide any assistance that may be necessary, for example medical attention;
2. Keep the whereabouts of the Located Person confidential unless they consent to their whereabouts being disclosed;
3. If the Located Person is under 16 and does not wish to return home, refer to Chapter 12.2 (Located interview) and Chapter 9.2.4 (Exposed to Harm if Returned to Parental Care);
4. If located alive, create a Located Person Incident (See Chapter 12.1);
5. Ensure both the Event and any Case are finalised correctly;
6. Return or appropriately have destroyed any exhibits or forensic material gathered during the investigation.

13.2 Responsibility of the Supervisor/Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor

Upon locating a Missing Person alive:

1. Ensure the COPS Event is updated correctly with a new Incident created – ‘Located Person’, a further classification of ‘Identified Person’ and POI Status updated to ‘Missing Now Located Person’ (See Chapter 12.1);
2. Ensure any outstanding issues are finalised and no further police action is required so that the Event can be appropriately updated to ‘Cleared’;
3. Consult with the Crime Manager and Missing Persons Coordinator to ensure all Missing Persons Events and Cases are finalised appropriately;
4. Ensure all exhibits or forensic material gathered during the investigation have been returned or destroyed.

Never determine that a Missing Person investigation will be ‘Rejected’, ‘Suspended’ or marked ‘No further Investigation’, whilst a person reported missing fits the NSWPF definition of a Missing Person. If a determination is made there are no longer any fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of the Missing Person, clear evidence must be recorded as to who made that decision and what evidence was relied upon to come to that determination.

13.3 Responsibility of the Missing Persons Coordinator

Upon locating a Missing Person alive:

1. Liaise with OIC’s, Supervisors and Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors to ensure COPS Events are updated correctly with a new Incident created – ‘Located Person’, a further classification of ‘Identified Person’ and POI Status updated to ‘Missing Now Located Person’ (See Chapter 12.1);
2. Liaise with OIC’s, Supervisors and Duty Officers/Sector Supervisors to ensure the SOPs are adhered to;
3. Ensure that Cases are finalised appropriately.

Ensure that Missing Persons investigations are never ‘Rejected’, ‘Suspended’ or marked ‘No further Investigation’, whilst a person reported missing fits the NSWPF definition of a Missing Person. If a determination is made there are no longer any fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of the Missing Person, clear evidence must be recorded as to who made that decision and what evidence was relied upon to come to that determination.

14.0 Located Deceased where identity becomes known

There are often circumstances where deceased persons are located and it quickly becomes apparent they are known Missing Persons.

14.1 Responsibility of the Officer in Charge when circumstances not suspicious

1. Confirm identification (visual, dental, fingerprints, DNA etc) as per Chapter 15.0;
2. **Immediately** inform family members (if viable) when identification is made;
3. Update the Missing Person Event;
 - a. Create a ‘Located Person’ Incident with a further classification ‘Identified Person’ and update the Person of Interest status to ‘Missing Now Located Person’;
4. Create a Deceased Incident;

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- a. When located with flesh the further classification is: **Located Body;**
 - b. When bones are located, the further classification is: **Located Remains;**
 - c. Record in the narrative, details of the body/remains found e.g. if it was a partial body located such as an arm etc;
 - d. If a Deceased Event is created separate to the Missing Person Event, ensure the Events are linked. Also ensure the Missing Person Event has been updated as per Point 3;
5. Record the details in the Event including;
 - a. Time and place of death;
 - b. Circumstances of death;
 - c. How the body was identified;
 - d. Any other relevant information;
 6. Contact the MPR to have the Missing Person removed from NMPVS and the AFP database if they were uploaded;
 7. Complete and submit a P79A to the Coroner;
 8. Advise any interstate parties if required;

If the person is located as a result of being matched to Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains

1. Ensure the family/SNOK is made aware of the match;
2. Ensure the family/SNOK is made aware of the location of the remains;
3. Work with the family/SNOK to arrange for the pick-up/burial/disposal of the remains;
4. Complete and submit a P79A to the Coroner;
5. Make enquiries into whether the person constitutes a 'Destitute Burial' case. If the deceased meets these criteria, complete the P372 for referral to the Coronial Support Unit.

15.0 Procedures for Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains (UBHR)

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

If suspicious circumstances exist, the Homicide Squad, State Crime Command is to be notified immediately via the State Coordination Unit. Consistent with the Homicide Squad On-Call policy, the On-Call Coordinator will conduct an assessment and determine an appropriate level of response from the Homicide Squad.

Continual assessment of all Missing Persons cases should be conducted, and notification made to the Homicide Squad when suspicion arises that a Missing Person may be the subject of a homicide.

The OIC of a deceased matter is responsible for ensuring a deceased body is identified as soon as possible using the most appropriate method. Advice and assistance can be sought from the Coronial Law Unit for matters which have been reported to the State Coroners Court at Lidcombe, the local Coroner in other areas, or the local pathologist. The Missing Persons Registry holds records for all unidentified deceased persons in the State and is also available to give advice and to assist with identifying an unidentified body or human remains.

In situations where bodies or skeletal remains cannot be immediately identified, police must enter details in COPS as a 'Deceased' incident and contact the Missing Persons Registry. The morgue reference number must also be included in the COPS event. Ensure the 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, property or other items found on or near the body.

NOTE: Human remains (including bones) should never be retained by police as exhibits. All bones and human remains should be transferred to the relevant morgue and NEVER returned to police custody.

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15.1 Responsibility of initial attending police

PAC/PD police provide the initial response to the discovery of an unidentified body or remains. Those responsibilities include the following:

- Search COPS and the Missing Persons Database for possible matches to reported Missing Persons;
- Record the particulars of the deceased person on COPS by creating a 'Deceased' incident using the status as 'Unidentified Body' or 'Unidentified Remains' (See Chapter 15.2.1);
- Liaise with the Missing Persons Registry for assistance;
- Photograph the unidentified person. This is normally done at the morgue with the help of personnel from Forensic Evidence & Technical Services Command. 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;
- Take close up photos of the head, from directly above (full face) and one of the side of the head (profile);
- Photograph 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;
- Arrange collection of fingerprints for comparison on National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS). Contact Forensic Evidence & Technical Services Command for assistance;
- Request Forensic Odontological charting – this is an examination of the unidentified persons' teeth and jaw by a Forensic Dentist (Forensic Pathologist and/or FETS can assist to arrange this). These records can be matched against dental charts for all long-term Missing Persons on the National Database;
- Request collection of DNA material for comparison against DNA obtained from all long-term Missing Persons.

15.2 Responsibilities of the Officer in Charge (OIC)

When a body or skeletal remains cannot be immediately identified, the investigation should be transferred to an officer within the Criminal Investigation Unit at the PAC/PD. That officer should:

1. Review results of post mortem samples collected and sent to FASS Biology;
2. Confirm identification (visual, dental, fingerprints, DNA etc);
3. Ensure dental samples are collected and forward to the Missing Persons Registry for referral to Odontologists for charting and upload to the National Missing Persons Victim Services database;
4. Ensure DNA profiles are loaded onto relevant databases. All NSW DNA profiles for Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains are recorded on both the State database and the National Criminal Investigation DNA Database (NCIDD) – Integrated Forensic Analysis (NCIDD-IFA) system. This system automates a process to match DNA profiles from Missing Persons against Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains.

15.2.1 When an identification is made

1. **Immediately** inform family members (if viable) when an identification is made;
2. Update the Deceased Incident:
 - a. When located with flesh the further classification is: **Identified Body**;
 - b. When bones are located, the further classification is: **Identified Remains**;
 - c. Record in the narrative, details of the body/remains found e.g. if it was a partial body located, for example an arm.
3. If the body/remains are identified to a Missing Person, link the Deceased Event to the Missing Person Event;
4. Update the Missing Persons Event:
 - a. Create a 'Located Person' Incident with a further classification of 'Identified Person' and update the Person of Interest status to 'Missing Now Located Person'.
5. Record the details in the Event including:
 - a. Time and place of death;
 - b. Circumstances of death;
 - c. How the body was identified;

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- d. Any other relevant information.
6. Notify the Missing Persons Registry to ensure the Missing Person is removed from the National Missing Persons Victim System (NMPVS) Database if they were uploaded;
7. Complete and forward a P79A to the Coroner;
8. Advise any interstate parties if required.

15.2.2 When an identification has not been made

1. When all avenues of inquiry have been exhausted and the body/skeletal remains cannot be formally identified, a P79A is to be completed and forwarded to the Coroner. This must be completed within two months of locating the body. Wherever possible, every effort should be made to match human remains to existing Missing Persons;
2. When results are obtained from FASS and an identity is still unable to be confirmed, liaise with the Missing Persons Registry to have the case uploaded to the National Missing Persons Victim System database. This is to be completed a maximum of three months from locating the body/remains;

15.3 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 via the Crime Scene Officer for an archaeological expert to examine the site;
- Advise the ACLO, attached to the PAC/PD in which the remains were found;
- If the expert certifies the remains are of ancient Aboriginal origin (by issuing a certificate);
 - a. enter details as a 'Deceased' incident (unidentified remains/body) on COPS. Include details on station summary;
 - b. complete a P79A form;
 - c. attach the certificate;
 - d. send all documents to the Coroner, filing a copy in VIEW.
- 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 (See Chapter 15).

15.4 Collecting fingerprint evidence for Unidentified Bodies & Human Remains

When Unidentified Bodies or Human Remains are located, a crime scene should be declared and the scene preserved for forensic examination. Crime scene personnel should immediately be called to the scene together with a notification to the On-call Homicide Squad Inspector via State Crime Command Coordination Unit if a murder is suspected.

It is acknowledged there will be occasions where remains or bones are located and it is uncertain at the time if they are human. Where this uncertainty exists, the located bones will be seized by FETS personnel and transferred to a morgue for examination/classification. In indoor locations protected from the elements, consideration should be given to having fingerprint personnel attend the scene to fingerprint wall surfaces and other items available at the scene. In outdoor locations consideration should be given to locating and collecting any items in proximity to the body for fingerprint and DNA examination.

16.0 Land and Marine Searches

For Missing Person cases, consideration should immediately be given to conducting searches, in relevant circumstances. It is important to note that land searches do not only relate to bushland areas, they also include urban areas or large buildings/structures that require a coordinated response. The NSWPF has significant resources to assist with land searches that do not incur significant expenses to the requesting PAC/PD. These resources generally include:

- Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit (LandSAR coordinators);
- Marine Area Command (MarineSAR coordinators);

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- Polair; and
- Police Dog Unit.

There are additional external resources may be called upon including:

- State Emergency Service personnel; and
- Rural Fire Service personnel.
- Marine Rescue NSW
- Surf Life Saving NSW

Apart from providing and coordinating specialist resources, Land Search Coordinators will properly record details of the search conducted for later presentation, if required.

16.1 Land Searches

If relevant to the circumstances, a land search should be considered as a priority. Where a physical land search is necessary, immediately notify the Rescue and Bomb Disposal Unit via the State Coordination Unit. The Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit provide accredited Land Search and Rescue (LandSAR) coordinators and experienced search team leaders to support police commanders in relation to search and rescue operations for missing or overdue persons, vehicles, unregistered aircraft and physical evidence in a land environment.

A qualified Land Search Coordinator must be nominated to undertake the actual search operation planning and coordination function. Search Advisors attached to the Operational Support Group (OSG) and/or Public Order & Riot Squad (PORS) are not accredited Land Search Coordinators for the purpose of Missing Persons. In the first instance a Land Search Coordinator must 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 Land Search Coordinator deployments should be directed through the Region Operations Manager within the area of operations. Once a Land Search Coordinator is appointed they will be responsible for managing the actual search operation planning and coordination function. The Land Search Coordinator will record details of the search and complete an Urgency (Risk) Assessment Form.

A search coordinator from either the Police Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit or Region Police Rescue Squad will attend if:

- Urgency Assessment Score results in an 'Emergency Response';
- LANDSAR Operation extends beyond 6 hours;
- High Risk Category (young child, self-harm, dementia, intellectual disability etc);
- High Profile Searches.

No Land Search and Rescue Operation will be suspended, postponed or discontinued without first consulting with either the Operations Coordinator or Commander, Police Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit (Alexandria) on the actions undertaken by the Search Controller and or Search Coordinator. This includes the decision to withdraw resources based on environmental, climatic factors or impending hours of darkness.

Searching of land that has water in the search area (i.e. lakes, dams, creeks, rivers of coastal waters) needs to be considered as part of the search area. If the water areas are unable to be searched, a request for assistance to the Marine Area Command should be sought.

16.2 Marine Searches

Searches in the Marine environment are the responsibility of the NSWPF.

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The Marine Area Command will coordinate and control all marine search and rescue incidents along the NSW Coastline and will task appropriate assets depending on the circumstances.

16.2.1 Marine Search and Rescue Operations

Read this in conjunction with the Incident/ Emergency General Action Check Sheet and IESOPS at the first available opportunity.

Police are responsible for arranging and coordinating marine search and rescue (SAR) operations necessary in respect of pleasure craft and fishing vessels at sea, charter vessels under jurisdiction of the state, unregistered aircraft e.g. hang gliders, Missing Persons in a land or coastal environment, persons and vessels on inland waters and all non-military vessels within port limits. [National Search and Rescue Manual](#)

‘Marine search and rescue’ includes locating of vessels and/or persons in distress at sea or in sheltered waters and bringing the vessel and its occupants to safety or, if not be feasible, recovering the occupants and bringing them to safety.

Section 50 of SERM sets out: ‘The senior police officer present at the scene of a rescue operation is responsible for coordinating and determining the priorities of action of the agencies engaged in the rescue operation’. When related to marine search and rescue, ‘present at the scene’ refers to the senior Police officer present in the Search and Rescue Coordination Centre from which the operation is being controlled (IESOPS).

In the case of a person or vessel missing, overdue, or in distress in **enclosed** waters, Police Area Command/Police District police are the coordinating authority.

Where the incident is beyond the capacity of local police facilities and resources, or is offshore, action should be taken to seek the assistance of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Command, who assumes the SAR coordination role (1800 MACSAR).

16.2.2 Marine Area Command mandatory incident notification

Notify the Marine Area Command on 1800 622 727 wherever:

- A MAYDAY is received; or
- A request for assistance is received from AUSSAR; or
- A person involved in an incident has died or sustained a serious/life threatening injury; or
- Advise is received that a person is in a life-threatening situation; or
- Advise is received that a vessel is seriously disabled and is in danger of sinking; or
- A vessel requires assistance in the offshore/open waters environment.

In addition to the above criteria, the Search and Rescue Coordination Centre or Marine Rescue Base must also as soon as possible notify the MAC on phone No 1800 622 727 when there is no immediate threat to life or property but where the incident may involve collateral damage, which has been sustained, or is likely to be sustained to a vessel, facility or the environment.

16.2.3 Suspension of search

Suspension of a Marine Area Command Mandatory Incident Notification is at the approval of the NSW Police Force Marine Area Commander or his delegate. Approval for suspension must be requested through NSW Police Force Marine Area Command Coordination Centre.

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16.2.4 Police Divers

Should you need divers to assist in an operation contact the Supervisor, Police Diving Unit on e/n 57430 or 9230 7430 during business hours. If unattended, or outside business hours contact the Supervisor, Sydney Water Police on e/n 57499 or 9320 7499 who will contact on call Dive Supervisor.

Police Divers are available 24hrs a day to provide a range of underwater services to any area of the state, including Missing Person searches and body recoveries. There is no cost to the requesting Command for the provision of Police Diving Unit services.

16.2.5 Requests for Assistance

Forms are located on the [Marine Area Command Intranet site](#) or via the BluePortal. Completed Request for Assistance Form for the Police Divers needs to be sent to divers@police.nsw.gov.au

17.0 Using mobile phones to urgently locate someone at risk

In circumstances where urgency exists to access the location of a mobile telephone device, contact should immediately be made with the State Coordination Unit.

17.1 Telecommunications Act 1997 (Commonwealth) – Sect 287

Sect 287 states:

“Police may access Telecommunications information of a person if Police believe on reasonable grounds that the disclosure or use is reasonably necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a person.”

All telecommunications carriers (telcos) in Australia are obliged to help police locate individuals they believe are at risk of a serious injury or imminent threat to life. Previously known as triangulation, the emergency location tool relies on the closest tower to the mobile phone. Generally, the telco can only provide a direction and a distance from the tower, which can be up to 1km radius. The mobile must have an active SIM card and be able to receive incoming calls. This location search does not use GPS technology, so it’s not like Find my iPhone or other mobile location apps. If a call is made by a mobile to Triple Zero (000), a mobile location indicator (MOLI) can be requested from PoliceLink to show the closest tower, without police needing to contact the State Coordination Unit.

17.2 Police actions prior to a request

Investigators should assess what the serious and imminent threat to life is, and how old the threat is.

- Have you patrolled the area?
- Have you created a CAD job?
- Have you established the person is not at home?
- Have you confirmed the person has a mobile phone with them?
- Is the mobile switched on?
- Have you confirmed the number?
- Have you called it?
- Have you sent a text message offering help?

17.3 When to use a s287 request

Section 287 of the Telecommunications Act provides for a person, the State Coordinator, based upon the circumstances/facts provided to them, to form a reasonable belief that accessing a person’s information will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a person.

A few examples of appropriate circumstances when a request should be made might include:

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- A person is threatening self-harm;
- There is a credible threat to kill another person;
- Reports of a kidnapping;
- Lost bushwalker or stranded motorist in imminent danger;
- A person is known to have committed a series of ongoing violent crimes.

This type of search should not be used for criminal matters, breach of AVOs or parolees except in extreme circumstances, when they need to be approved in writing by an inspector. All other non-life threatening or investigative requests to establish the location of a handset can be done via iAsk.

17.4 Search areas

The smallest possible search area is 500-700m radius, which can include up to 50 houses in metro areas.

Telstra:

- Cities – minimum 700m radius;
- Country – up to 50sq km.

Optus:

- Up to 1km radius in both city and country areas.

Vodafone:

- Tower address closest to the mobile, with a maximum distance and compass bearing.

All telco attempts to locate an in-service mobile can be affected by:

- mobile tower locations and distances;
- whether the towers are single or multidirectional;
- mountain ranges and valleys;
- nearby lakes and enclosed water masses;
- cliff lines that face the ocean;
- peninsulas or narrow land masses;

17.5 Mapping updates

The State Coordination Unit has access to live Optus and Telstra updates, while other providers will update the State Coordination Unit on request. Investigators need to call the State Coordination Unit at regular intervals for an update.

17.6 What happens when you call

The following information will be required before a request is considered.

- Is the mobile connected to a network?
- Did you hear a message advising the phone is off or not in a service area?
- Does the phone ring out or go to message bank?
- Does the phone answer but the person refuses to say where they are?

17.7 About the informant

The following information will be required before a request is considered.

- Where did the information come from?
- Who is the informant?
- Have you spoken to them directly?
- Have you seen the text messages?
- How credible is the information?
- Where and when was the person last seen?
- When did they last make contact?
- Are they on foot, in a vehicle or on public transport?
- Do police have a good enough description of them?
- Does your Duty Officer or Crime Manager support your request?

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If a mobile phone stays in the one location for a number of hours, the State Coordination Unit will contact the officer in charge to ensure mapping is still required. It's up to the OIC to maintain the investigation and to cancel the request when it's no longer required. If the person has been missing for a considerable time, it's very likely the threat is no longer imminent and an iAsk request might be more suitable.

17.8 Ongoing investigations

The State Coordination Unit will maintain the mobile location until the person is located or time renders the risk no longer imminent. Ongoing mapping and tower information can always be continued by an iAsk request.

17.9 Submitting a Request for Emergency Mobile Location via the State Coordination Unit

A Request for Emergency Mobile Location form (**Annexure H**) should be completed and submitted. The form can also be found in the Missing Persons Registry intranet site under 'toolbox'. The completed form should be emailed to the State Coordination Unit at #SCU.

17.10 Use of Live 'CAD' via s287 in Missing Persons investigations

'CAD' is near to real time telecommunications call records. Section 287 of the Telecommunications Act (Commonwealth) also allows for the use of 'Live CAD' to assist in the location of Missing Persons if there is an imminent risk to the life or health of a person.

The data obtained from the use of 'CAD' can include the time and date of activation of the telecommunications device, whether those activations consist of incoming or outgoing calls, and cell tower location information. The data can also include the type of activation (*eg; phone call A and B Party, SMS and internet access*). The data does not include the content of those communications.

The Telecommunications Interception Unit may facilitate the use of 'CAD' via the Travertine system, to assist in location missing/at risk persons in limited circumstances. Consideration of the use of 'CAD' includes:

1. The use of triangulation services by the State Coordinator (See Chapter 17.2) has been ineffective in locating the missing/at risk person;
2. If the target device is not connected to the network, there exists the possibility that reconnection of the service will occur in the circumstances of the case;
3. The telecommunications device of the missing/at risk person has shown activity within a period of 24 hours;
4. All other reasonable means of establishing the location of the missing/at risk person have been unsuccessful;
5. That there is an agreement between the responsible PAC/PD Crime Manager and the Telephone Intercept Unit Manager (or on call delegates) that there is benefit in utilising 'CAD' in relation to;
 - a. The objective seriousness of the matter;
 - b. The importance of identification of communications to and from the said service to assist in the investigation of the matter (*eg; identification of persons in contact with the missing/at risk person, cell site location and the deployment of resources*);
 - c. The remoteness or other locational difficulties relating to the investigation;
 - d. The existing capabilities of the carrier (*Telstra/Vodafone/Optus*);
 - e. Any other relevant circumstances.

The intended use of this service is only to be used where all reasonable attempts have been made to locate the missing/at risk person have been unsuccessful and it is believed the use of this service will benefit the investigation.

The Telecommunications Interception Unit requires:

- That a Request for Assistance be submitted by the investigating command outlining all relevant details as far as practicable;
- That all costs associated with the connection of 'CAD' services will be borne by the investigating command. This may include connection and after-hours carrier call out fees;

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- That initiating commands maintain carriage of the investigation unless otherwise advised;
- That commands utilise their local RMF site to monitor the investigation;
- That 'CAD' will only be utilised for a maximum period of 7 days and extended only where the investigating command submits further correspondence requesting same;
- That the investigating command undertakes to advise the Telephone Intercept Unit where the 'CAD' service is no longer required within the 7 day period or where an extension is sought.

The Telecommunications Interception Unit can be contacted on 9780-0800 during business hours and after hours on 9780-0803. After 2am, contact can be established via the State Coordinator.

17.11 Emergency disclosure of Facebook information

In certain circumstances, Facebook can provide information to law enforcement agencies responding to emergencies. In urgent circumstances where there are reasonable grounds to believe a person is threatening self-harm and communication via Facebook might assist preventing "*imminent bodily harm to oneself or to others*", an 'Emergency Disclosure Form' should be emailed to subpoena@facebook.com and include "**Emergency Request**" in the subject header. If Facebook believe in good faith that the matter involves *imminent bodily harm to oneself or to others*, the Facebook Security Team will respond within a timely manner. 24/7 hotline: 0011-1-650-543-4938 for law enforcement only.

Requests to Facebook to assist with the emergency disclosure of information can be submitted via the following link: http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/organisational_units/investigations_and_counter_terrorism/state_intelligence_command/strategic_intelligence_and_capability/information_services/oia_service_centre/urgent_requests

17.12 Use of mobile phone iAsk requests to help locate a Missing Person

There are a number of mobile telephone related iAsk requests that might provide valuable information to assist with Missing Persons investigations. Examples of this include Call Charge Records (CCR's) or Reverse Call Charge Records (RCCR's).

In urgent circumstances, triangulation (See Chapter 17.1) or the use of 'Live CAD' (See Chapter 16.10) should be considered in the first instance. In less urgent circumstances, CCR or RCCR data can provide investigators with cell tower locations which can be used to progress investigations. If for example, a Missing Person's mobile telephone is in regular contact with a particular cell tower, intelligence sources might be able to identify associates or associated premises within that geographic area where the Missing Person might be located.

18.0 Review processes for long-term Missing Person investigations

To ensure consistency and value to the management of Missing Person investigations across NSW, the Missing Persons Registry will conduct 'Case Reviews' with OIC's, MPC's and Crime Managers associated with these investigations, at regular intervals. The reviews will be conducted at 3 months and 6 months with Coronial Briefs of Evidence required to be submitted to the Missing Persons Registry at 9 months for review prior to being submitted to the Coroner at 12 months. For Unidentified Bodies and Human Remains matters, briefs of evidence should be submitted to the Missing Persons Registry prior to being provided to the Coroner within two months of them being located.

18.1 Three-month review of Missing Persons investigations

Three months after a report has been received for a Missing Person, and they have not been located, they become regarded as 'Long Term Missing Persons'. At this time, the Missing Persons Registry will forward a file via the RMS (TRIM) system notifying the responsible PAC/PD that a 3-month review is scheduled. The invitation to the review will include a 'checklist' of tasks that need to have been completed prior to the review.

Reviews will generally be conducted via video conference however, for some matters it may be more appropriate they are conducted in person. The review should include the OIC of the investigation, the Command's MPC, their

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Crime Manager, the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry (or their delegate) and other specialist Registry personnel. Prior to the formal review the OIC, the Command's MPC, Crime Manager and Registry personnel will review all holdings.

The objective of the review is to ensure all avenues of inquiry have been considered and appropriately attended to. The outcomes of the reviews will be documented, including further tasks/avenues of inquiry that may be identified during the review.

18.2 Six-month review of Missing Persons investigations

Six months after a report has been received for a Missing Person, and they have not been located, the Missing Persons Registry will forward a file via the RMS (TRIM) system notifying the responsible PAC/PD that a second formal review of the case has been scheduled. The invitation to the review will include the review report completed at the three-month review identifying tasks that need to have been conducted prior to the second review.

Six-month reviews will generally be conducted via video conference however, for some matters it may be more appropriate they are conducted in person. The review should include the OIC of the investigation, the Command's MPC, their Crime Manager, the Manager of the Missing Persons Registry (or their delegate) and other specialist Registry personnel.

The objective of the review is to ensure all avenues of inquiry have been considered and appropriately attended to, including the outstanding actions agreed upon at the three-month review. The outcomes of the reviews will be documented, including further tasks/avenues of inquiry that may be identified during the review. Discussion will also take place during this review regarding the need to have a Coronial Brief of Evidence submitted by nine months.

18.3 Submission of Coronial Brief of Evidence to the MPR at nine months

Nine months after the initial report of the Missing Person, the Missing Persons Registry will forward a file via the RMS (TRIM) system notifying the responsible PAC/PD that a Coronial brief of evidence should be prepared and forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry for checking. The brief should be prepared and submitted electronically within the [e@gle.i](#) information management system. The electronic [e@gle.i](#) brief will be reviewed by the Missing Persons Registry with a view to identifying any outstanding material that may be required by the Coroner. At this time, if required, a statement will also be provided by the Missing Persons Registry regarding any inquiries or actions they may have undertaken relevant to the investigation. If outstanding tasks are identified, the OIC, the Command's MPC and Crime Manager will be notified so they can be attended to and the brief completed within 12 months. At that point, it will be the responsibility of the OIC to submit the brief to the relevant Coroner.

18.4 Ongoing Review of long-term Missing Person investigations

All long-term Missing Persons matters should be reported to the Coroner within 12 months of the initial report being made. At Inquest, a Coroner may recommend a long-term Missing Person case be referred to the Unsolved Homicide Unit within the Homicide Squad, SCC. If that recommendation is made, responsibility for long term management of the investigation will transfer to the Homicide Squad. If no such recommendation is made by the Coroner, the long-term Missing Persons case remains the responsibility of the PAC/PD. For these matters, the Missing Persons Registry will liaise with the relevant PAC/PD each year to conduct further reviews. OIC's will be responsible for updating any SNOK of reviews conducted and outcome (if any).

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19.0 Placing matters before the Coroner

For many people, having a Missing Person's investigation reported to the Coroner can be distressing. Families may have difficulty understanding the process and hold different views about whether a death has occurred. It can help to:

- Inform the family when a report is made to the Coroner, why it has been reported, and what this means (the process, role of the coroner, any expected timeframes);
- Identify where families can access support through this process e.g. CISP (court based counsellors who can help explain coronial procedures) and FFMPU (offers counselling, support, and information before, during and after coronial investigations);
- Provide families with "A guide to coronial services in NSW for families and friends of missing people" (a plain language guide produced by the NSW Department of Justice) available from the court, FFMPU or online:
http://www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/support_services/support_missing_persons.aspx
- Seek advice from the Sergeants Assisting/Missing Persons Registry about your role in keeping the family informed about the progress of the coronial investigation.

19.1 Coroner's Act

The *Coroner's Act 2009* ('the Act') is the legislation which outlines the role and function of the Coroner. It outlines the types of matters that are 'reportable' to the Coroner and gives Coroners the jurisdiction to conduct **inquests** (a formal court hearing in relation to a reportable death/suspected death). The Act confers additional powers on the Coroner, for example the power to establish 'coronial investigation scenes' (Chapter 5 of the Act) or to compel the production of documents for the purpose of a coronial investigation (Section 53 of the Act).

19.2 Why are Missing Persons matters reported to the Coroner?

Section 35 of the Act confers an obligation on police to report a death or **suspected death** to the Coroner 'as soon as possible after the report is made', i.e. as soon as possible after police receive notification or become aware of a death or suspected death.

The reporting of Missing Persons matters therefore depends on police forming the view that the Missing Person is a '**suspected death**'. Forming this view can be difficult depending on the unique circumstances of a Missing Persons case.

The current protocol is that Missing Persons matters should be reported to the Coroner within **12 months** of the report having been received by police in circumstances where no signs of life have been identified. This does not prevent police from making a report before 12 months has elapsed if they have formed the view that the Missing Person is likely to be deceased ('a suspected death'). An example of this would be where a person has gone missing in suspicious circumstances, or a misadventure where a vessel is lost at sea and the occupants are presumed drowned.

For Missing Persons investigations, when in doubt if to report a matter to the Coroner, it is expected that police seek advice from the Missing Persons Registry (and the Coronial Law Unit if needed).

19.3 How do I report a Missing Person to the Coroner?

A Missing Person is reported to the Coroner by completing a **P79B Report of Suspected Death to the Coroner**. Once completed, this form is submitted to the Coroner via #CORONERSYDNEY. The Sergeants Assisting (Coronial Case Management Unit) monitor this SMAC box and the completed P79B will be put before the Coroner for consideration and an order will be made to the police OIC for a full coronial brief.

The police OIC will receive the brief order electronically. This brief order will show the **due date**.

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19.4 What does the Coroner have to consider in a Missing Persons matter?

Section 81 outlines the Coroner's 'primary duty' which is '*...to determine and record if a death has occurred and, if so, the **identity** of the deceased, the **date** and **place** of the death and the **manner** and **cause** of such death*'.

These five criteria can be summarised into 6 questions that the Coroner is required to answer:

- Has the person died? And if so;
- Who died? **Identity**
- When did they die? **Date**
- Where did they die? **Place**
- What caused their death? **Cause**
- What were the circumstances of their death? **Manner**

Police should keep these questions in mind when compiling their coronial brief and attempt to cover aspects in their OIC statement to enable the Coroner (where possible) to make a finding as to whether the Missing Person is deceased and any of the additional criteria of section 81 outlined above.

19.5 How do I get help with my Coronial Brief?

Police should have obtained a significant number of relevant statements and documents from witnesses in the initial response phase to a Missing Persons case, all of which should be included in the coronial brief (Refer to Initial Response Checklist). Once a brief order is received, police should consider the attached checklist (**Annexure G**) to assist in identifying additional items that may be needed.

Police are encouraged to seek advice from the Coronial Law Unit (Police Prosecutors who assist in coronial matters) for more specific advice on additional evidence that may be required for their individual coronial brief. Police will need to access iAsk to assist in obtaining 'signs of life checks' and seek the assistance of the Missing Persons Registry who will prepare a statement outlining any additional enquiries made.

If an extension to the due date for the brief is required, a **Coronial Brief Extension Request** can be completed and submitted to the Coroner's Court registry (lidcombe.coroners@justice.nsw.gov.au) for the Coroner to consider.

19.6 Relevant powers under the Coroner's Act.

There are two sections of the Act that police should be aware of when investigating Missing Persons matters.

The first is the power under **Section 53** of the Act for the Coroner to compel the **production of documents** or other things for the purpose of a coronial investigation. When investigating a missing persons case, police can request the Coroner to exercise this power to obtain documents required for their investigation. This can be helpful in circumstances where there are no alternate means to obtain the information (via iAsk or otherwise).

Section 40 of the Act gives the Coroner the power to establish a 'coronial investigation scene' at a specified place (**A coronial scene order**). **Sections 42** and **43** authorises police officers and other persons to enter the specified place and exercise several functions including photographing the scene and seizing evidence (refer section 43). This power can be helpful in Missing Persons investigations where a location of interest is identified during the course of the investigation need to be forensically examined.

For these powers to be exercised by the Coroner, a report to the Coroner (P79B) must have already been submitted. If you are investigating a Missing Persons matter and believe these sections of the Act may assist you, please contact the Coronial Law Unit for advice.

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19.7 Missing Persons Inquests.

There are certain categories of deaths where it is mandatory for a Coroner to hold an inquest under section 27 of the Act. This includes Missing Persons matters as in those matters, it may not have been 'sufficiently disclosed' whether a person has died. This is the central question in inquests relating to Missing Persons matters.

In Missing Persons matters an inquest is often also required as the date, place and manner and cause of the person's death have not been 'sufficiently disclosed'.

Once police have submitted a coronial brief of evidence, this will be considered by the Coroner. Following this, the matter is allocated to a Coronial Advocate (Coronial Law Unit – Police Prosecutors) who will then liaise with the OIC in relation to any follow up required in the matter. The allocated advocate can answer any questions about the Inquest process.

20.0 Release of Information to the media

The media can be an extremely useful tool to assist in the management of Missing Persons investigations. From issuing Amber alerts to reaching out through social media, it is encouraged that all police involved in the investigation of Missing Person matters, seek advice from the Police Media Unit.

20.1 Amber alerts

Amber alerts are a process that involves the urgent broadcast of relevant information through the media and other means to the public to facilitate the search for, location and the safe recovery of an abducted child or high-risk missing child or young person 16 years and under. If an Amber alert is appropriate, Duty Officers should contact the Police Media Unit for assistance (See Public Affairs SOPS for Amber Alerts).

Amber Alerts require the following criteria to be met:

- the child is 16 years of age or younger;
- the child is abducted by either a stranger or by a person known to the child;
- there are no known issues with kidnapping and/or ransom associated with the abduction;
- there is a reasonable belief that the child is at risk of serious harm and/or death;
- there is a reasonable belief that activating an alert will *not* increase the risk of harm to the child by alerting the offender to police activity;
- there is sufficient descriptive information available to make an alert effective in assisting the location and safe recovery of the child; and circumstances warrant activation.

Amber alerts can be issued regardless of whether the incident *is or is not* a child custody related or Family Court matter.

An Amber alert **cannot** be activated:

- if there is a reasonable likelihood that kidnapping and/or ransom is associated with the abduction. State Crime Command will assume responsibility for the case and proceed in accordance with appropriate investigative processes;
- if the person is over 16 years of age;
- if there is a reasonable likelihood that activating the alert will increase the risk of harm to the child.

When an Amber alert cannot be issued, other means of seeking community assistance may be implemented. For example, general media releases and appeals for assistance may be used. Contact the Police Media Unit, Public Affairs Branch on Ph: 8263 6101 or E/N 45101 for assistance. The Local Area Command could also make application to the Telecommunications Interception Branch, Special Services Group, for a telephone interception on the child's or suspect's telephone to obtain a general location of the child.

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20.2 Restrictions on releasing information to the media

Officers are to comply with s. 121: 'Restriction on publication of court proceedings' of the *Family Law Act* (Cwlth), which places restrictions on the publication of identifying information under the Act. When considering the release of information to the media, care is to be taken not to infringe the legislation. Particulars of Family Law proceedings are to be included in the COPS Missing Person's report.

20.3 Family Law matters

If the Missing Person is the subject of a court order under the *Family Law Act* (Cwlth), advise the guardian a warrant must be obtained from a Family Court by the guardian who has custody. The warrant authorises police to remove the child if there is a need to use any force. This function is usually performed by officers of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and is attended to by an officer of the NSWPF when an officer of the AFP is unavailable.

20.4 Officers should liaise with Missing Person's parents/relatives/carers

When authorising the release of particulars of a Missing Person, the Supervisor or Duty Officer should liaise or direct another officer to liaise with the Missing Person's parents, relatives or inquirer with a view to minimising any misunderstandings.

If an OIC of a Missing Person investigation is unable to obtain consent to publicly release information, contact should be established with the Missing Persons Registry to discuss the matter.

21.0 Managing the financial affairs of a Missing Person

21.1 NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009

When a person is missing there can be difficulties in managing the person's financial and property affairs. Section 54 of the [NSW Trustee and Guardian Act 2009](#) enables an application to be made to the [Supreme Court](#), after a person has been missing for at least 90 days, to declare the person missing and appoint a financial manager.

The court can appoint a person (such as a family member) or the [NSW Trustee and Guardian](#) as manager of the Missing Person's estate. The NSW Supreme Court can only make a declaration that the person is missing and make a financial management order when satisfied that:

- the person is a Missing Person;
- the person's usual place of residence is in NSW; and
- it is in the person's best interests to do so.

21.2 Assisting families considering an application to manage the financial affairs of a Missing Person

It is suggested that families:

1. Access the [NSW Trustee and Guardian](#) website for information relating to missing persons, https://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/missingpersons/ffmpu_financial.aspx.
2. Engage a legal representative to assist with the application. LawAccess NSW may be able to assist with referral information.
3. Contact the Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU) within the NSW Department of Communities and Justice on 1800 227 772 or (02)8688 8173 to discuss support and referral needs.

Further information about procedures in other jurisdictions can be obtained by visiting <https://missingpersons.gov.au/support/practical-matters>.

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22.0 iASK request for Missing Person investigations

There are numerous iAsk Requests that can be submitted to assist with Missing Persons investigations (**Annexure K**). Although many iAsk Requests will be routine and not necessarily urgent, consideration should be given to conducting urgent or priority requests when appropriate.

If you have any enquiries regarding the priority iAsk process during business hours contact the State Intelligence Command, Information Services on 02 8835 7766 / EN 27766 / #IASKPRI. #IASKPRI, will only be monitored during business hours. For any after hours enquiries about the priority iAsk process contact the State Coordinator.

The Client Liaison Unit (and after hours, the State Coordinator) of State Intelligence Command, Information Services, is the appropriate point of contact for officers to follow up and progress outstanding Priority iAsk requests after they have been made and where urgent response to the request is properly justified in the circumstances.

If urgent inquiries need to be made to ascertain what, if any, iAsk checks have been submitted for a particular Missing Person investigation, contact iAsk during business hours. If urgent inquiries need to be made after hours, contact the Real Time Intelligence Centre (RTIC) on (02) 88358964 / 28964 or 28963 email: #RTIC. The RTIC can conduct a 'back office' search of the iAsk system using only the Missing Person Event number. That search will reveal all iAsk requests submitted under that Event number and any results that have been returned.

22.1 Signs of Life checks

Reference is made in these SOPs to conducting 'Signs of Life' checks via iAsk. The iAsk system contains a specific request for a Signs of Life check. When this request is submitted, iAsk check various systems for evidence of activity relating to the named Missing Person. Those checks do not extend to the databases or systems of other States and Territories.

Prior to the submission of a brief to the Coroner, a new Signs of Life check should be submitted via iAsk. Additionally, an email should be sent to the Missing Persons Registry (#SCCMR) requesting 'Interstate Signs of Life Check'. The Missing Persons Registry will then establish contact with Missing Persons Units in the other States and Territories and they will conduct inquiries on their police (and other accessible) systems to establish any activity relating to the Missing Person. These requests must contain:

- Full name, date of birth and know previous addresses;
- The time frame for which checks should be conducted, i.e. last 12 months;
- Details of any specific checks required other than police mainframe and RMS checks which will automatically be conducted.

23.0 Intelligence Support for Missing Persons investigations

If a Missing Persons investigation requires intelligence support, police should initially approach their local intelligence office. Like NSWPF investigators, all intelligence analysts receive the same intelligence training and have the same ability to access general intelligence holdings and systems. Command intelligence analysts can provide local police with general intelligence assistance such as access to intelligence information and systems, conducting background inquiries, submitting iASK requests as well as looking into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the Missing Person.

23.1 Real Time Intelligence Centre

If local police require intelligence assistance after normal business hours, police should contact the Real Time Intelligence Centre (RTIC) on (02) 88358964 / 28964 or 28963 email: #RTIC. The RTIC is staffed seven (7) days a week between 6am to 2am. In the near future, the RTIC will be staffed 24/7.

The RTIC is staffed by qualified intelligence analysts who have access to a vast range of intelligence systems, products and tools and has been set up to provide intelligence support to the field. On top of the usual intelligence

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support provided at a Command level, the RTIC is able to conduct Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (MANPR) checks on vehicle plates as well as remotely upload vehicle plates onto the MANPR system (conditions apply), conduct urgent IPND subscriber checks, conduct open source and social media inquiries, immigration checks, submit iASK requests, view classified IRs etc etc. They are also able to liaise with interstate police if required.

Also sitting inside the RTIC is the Intelligence Coordination Centre (ICC). This unit is staffed seven (7) days a week between the hours of 6am and 4pm. The ICC collect and receive intelligence information from internal collection processes as well as external agencies. They can search and collect from the intelligence holdings of the NSWPF as well as coordinate the exchange of information between the NSWPF and external agencies.

If urgent inquiries need to be made to ascertain what, if any, iAsk checks have been submitted for a particular Missing Person investigation, contact iAsk during business hours. If urgent inquiries need to be made after hours, contact the RTIC. The RTIC can conduct a 'back office' search of the iAsk system using only the Missing Person Event number. That search will reveal all iAsk requests submitted under that Event number and any results that have been returned.

23.2 Missing Persons Registry intelligence support

Currently, the primary role of the intelligence analysts at the Missing Persons Registry is to provide intelligence support to the business requirements of the Registry. Missing Persons Registry analysts currently focus on long-term Missing Person cases (three months or more) to examine whether all possible intelligence avenues have been explored to locate the Missing Person.

Missing Persons Registry analysts are required to review Missing Person Events/Cases prior to three- and six-month reviews conducted by the Registry and provide advice on possible intelligence avenues for further investigation. Once a Missing Person becomes a long-term Missing Person, Missing Persons Registry analysts will enter the case on the long-term Missing Persons database and create a Missing Person Profile which is then sent to the National Missing Person Coordination Centre for inclusion on the National Missing Persons database.

Missing Persons Registry analysts have full access to the NSWPF Missing Persons Database as well as access to the National Missing Persons Victim Services database. Analysts are able to interrogate and conduct analysis of these databases to assist the field should they require that type of assistance as part of their Missing Person investigation, or with unidentified bodies or remains.

23.3 Inquiries to establish if the Missing Person is 'on shore'

In relevant circumstances, it will be necessary to make inquiries to establish if a Missing Person has travelled from Australia to an overseas location. To ascertain if a Missing Person is 'on shore' or 'off shore', an email should be sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) at lelnsw@homeaffairs.gov.au.

Urgent or after-hours requests (24/7) should in the first instance be directed to the DFAT NSW Intelligence on-call service on (02) 8339 6662 (and as a follow up an email request sent to lelnsw@homeaffairs.gov.au). Requests can also be made via this process for photographs or video images to confirm the identity of any person travelling using the passport of a Missing Person.

23.4 Facial ageing (age progression) tool for Missing Person investigations

The imaging technique of age progression is used within missing persons cases to provide an insight into a person's appearance many years after their disappearance.

Utilising family photos both past and present as well as a knowledge of the effects of aging, Image Technicians within the Facial Recognition Unit (FRU) can provide an 'artists impression' of;

- Youth (who have been missing for two years or more)

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- Adults (who have been missing five years or more)

The image created approximates what the person would look like today. This insight not only provides the family and police vital information, it also provides a new avenue in which to seek public attention and publicity.

Image Technicians (trained in age progressions) work with supplied information to create an image that best depicts the missing person's likely appearance.

Where available, photographs should be supplied to the FRU for this work to be carried out, including;

- Images of the missing person prior to their disappearance;
- Images of parents from both past and present, especially any images taken around the age the missing person would now be;
- Images of any siblings from both past and current, to demonstrate how the missing person's siblings have aged.

For the best results these images should be a high-quality digital images or original prints or negatives that can be scanned at high resolution. Keep in mind that an age progression is an educated artistic impression of what a person might look like and may not look identical to the person in all regards. Variables that may alter a person's appearance may include hair-style, hair colour, make-up, facial hair, weight gain, weight loss and so on.

For further information on age progression, please contact the Facial Recognition Unit on e/n 27617, or #FRUNIT.

24.0 Counselling and external services for families

24.1 Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU)

FFMPU is unique in Australia. It is the only unit that provides counselling and support from trained professionals to families and friends of missing people. FFMPU is part of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

Services provided by FFMPU include:

- Free and confidential counselling, information and referrals for families and friends affected by the loss of a Missing Person;
- Support group meetings & events to help bring families together;
- Help understanding missing persons' issues, agencies and search options;
- A Facebook page and other Missing Persons' publications;
- Policy development;
- Research into Missing Persons' issues;
- Clinical support and information for service providers;
- Liaison with agencies across the Missing Persons' sector.

FFMPU does not search for people, they work collaboratively with search agencies to support those left behind. If the family require assistance from a tracing agency, FFMPU may be able to assist with a referral to one of the listed search agencies.

The FFMPU can be contacted Monday to Friday on **1800 227 772** or via **ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au**

25.0 Associated policies and Standard Operating Procedures

- Australia and New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) – *Missing Persons, A Policy for Australian Policing 2015*;
- Amber Alerts: SOPs for Issuing;

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- Child Wellbeing and Child Protection – NSW Interagency Guidelines – NSW Government – Family and Community Services;
- Children & Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act, 1998 - Providing Information under Chapter 16A – SCC Child Abuse Squad;
- Evidence Act – Procedures – Performance Improvement and Planning;
- Exhibit Procedures Manual – Forensic Evidence & Technical Services Command;
- Forensic Procedures SOPs – Forensic Evidence & Technical Services Command;
- Incident & Emergency SOPs (IESOPS) – Emergency Management Unit;
- Leadership of Homicide and Suspicious Death Investigations – SCC Homicide Squad;
- Sexual Servitude & People Trafficking Offences: Investigation Of – SCC Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Squad;
- Guide to the Privacy (Person Reported as Missing) Rule 2014 – Australian Government Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- 2017 Mental Health Emergency Response MOU – NSW Health – Ambulance Service NSW – NSWPF;
- Facebook Law Enforcement Guidelines.

26.0 Safely Home Program

26.1 What is the Safely Home Program?

The Safely Home Program (<https://www.dementia.org.au/support/in-your-region/nsw/safely-home>) is a joint initiative between Dementia Australia (NSW) and the NSWPF. The program was launched in 2003. The Safely Home Program provides rapid and accurate identification of an unidentified/wandering person to allow them to be returned home. Safely Home provides a stainless-steel bracelet, designed to be worn at all times by the registered person. It features an engraved toll-free telephone number and personal identification number linked to the NSW Police Missing Person's Registry database. The confidential database includes a detailed description of the registered person, including a photograph, where provided, contact information, previous residential addresses and locations the person may visit. The database is accessible by Police at all times from the Missing Persons Registry intranet site. Safely Home is suitable for anyone with intellectual disabilities at risk of becoming lost who resides in NSW.

26.2 How does the Program work?

When someone finds the lost person, they telephone the Missing Person's Registry and quote the identification number on the bracelet. The police will make arrangements for them to be returned home.

Carers can use Safely Home to instigate a search for the person with dementia by contacting their local police station and filing a Missing Persons Report.

Safely Home is ideal for use both in home situations and aged care facilities.

26.3 How do people join?

To obtain information, direct enquirers to download the Safely Home Brochure from the internet. The brochure includes program details and forms to apply for the bracelet and how to register with the Missing Person's Registry and instruction guide for filling in the registration form. Further details can be obtained by calling the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500. Safely Home has a nominal registration charge of \$54.

27.0 Contact list

Missing Persons Registry (MPR) – New South Wales Police Force.

State Crime Command, Level 2B, Police Headquarters

1 Charles Street, Parramatta NSW 2150

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

Tel: 8835-7658 E/N: 27658

Email: missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au

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Fax: 8835-7665 E/N: 27665

#SCCMPR

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.missingpersons.gov.au

The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC), Australian Federal Police

NMPCC was established in 2006 to drive national coordination in response to Missing Persons in Australia, and to complement the investigative role of State and Territory police. Its mandate is to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons in Australia.

Ph: **1800 000 634**. E: missing@afp.gov.au; Web: www.missingpersons.gov.au; and Facebook.

The NMPCC hosts the Australian [Public Register](#) - a website that profiles Missing Persons' cases across the country, where the person has been missing for more than three months. If you have a question about adding a Missing Person's profile to the Public Register, please speak with the police officer in charge of the investigation.

Families & Friends of Missing Persons Unit, NSW Department of Communities and Justice

Address: Level 3, 160 Marsden Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 or
Locked Bag 5118, FFMPU, Victim Services, Parramatta NSW 2124

Phone numbers: 1800 227 772 (Counsellor Toll Free)
02 8688 8173 (FFMPU Counsellors)
02 86888178 (FFMPU Coordinator)

Email: ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au

Web Address: www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au

Translating & Interpreting Service (TIS National) 131 450

Useful Link: https://www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/missingpersons/ffmpu_search_agencies.aspx

International Social Service

The International Social Service traces immediate family members in conjunction with its social work across 150 countries. It requests a contribution towards costs. More information: [International Social Service](#)

Australia-wide

P: 1300 657 843 (cost of a local call)

E: iss@iss.org.au

W: www.iss.org.au

Victorian Office

A: Level 2, 424 William St, West Melbourne, Vic 3003

P: (03) 9614 8755

E: iss@iss.org.au

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NSW Office

A: Suite 501, 80 William St, Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011

P: (02) 9267 0300

E: issnsw@iss.org.au

Victorian and NSW Offices provide services nationwide. They can also be contacted through their social media platforms:

Australian Red Cross, Restoring Family Links Service

The International Red Cross/Red Crescent global Restoring Family Links network reaches out to more than 190 countries to re-establish contact between people who are separated by war, conflict, disaster or migration. The service is free of charge, confidential and available to anyone in Australia.

You can contact the Australian Red Cross Restoring Family Links service on 1800 875 199 (free call from all Australian landlines).

Australian Red Cross can help find a family member missing as a result of war, disaster or migration through family tracing; check the welfare of overseas relatives when unable to reach them due to illness or other circumstances; send a message to relatives where there is no formal means of communication; and provide families with a confirmation of detention in certain cases.

More information: [Australian Red Cross - https://www.redcross.org.au/tracing-restoring-family-links](https://www.redcross.org.au/tracing-restoring-family-links)

If you have been separated from family by war, disaster or migration, the Red Cross might be able to help you. Contact the Red Cross at: tracing@redcross.org.au or Phone: **1800 875 199** (free call from anywhere in Australia). If you live overseas, see the [Restoring Family Links](#) website.

Link-Up (NSW)

Link-Up (NSW) provides a range of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including [Reunification](#) and [Family-Link](#) programs. To find out more see their website. Other state and territory Link-Up services are listed [here](#).

Missing Persons Advocacy Network (MPAN)

MPAN creates awareness for missing people, as well as providing practical support to their families and friends.

MPAN have an online guide of what to do when someone disappears. Email: info@mpan.com.au; Website: www.mpan.com.au; and Facebook.

Australian Missing Persons Register

A free [Australian website](#) and [Facebook](#) page created to raise awareness of missing persons to the public.

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**28.0 Attachments****28.0 Attachments**

- Annexure A: Missing Persons Checklist for officers taking a report
- Annexure B: Pre-formatted Missing Persons Investigation Plan
- Annexure C: DNA collection instructions
- Annexure D: Ante Mortem dental records collection checklist
- Annexure E: Family consent form for collection of dental/medical records
- Annexure F: Letter to dentist for collection of dental records
- Annexure G: Coronial brief checklist
- Annexure H: RA for tracking mobile phone locations
- Annexure I: Flow chart for Australians missing overseas
- Annexure J: Checklist for Unidentified Bodies & Human Remains investigations
- Annexure K: iAsk request list for Missing Person investigations
- Annexure L: Located Interview for Missing Children and Young People
- Annexure M: NSWPF/NSW Health MOU – Chapter 3.4.7
- Annexure N: Authority to publicly release information form
- Annexure O: Pamphlet for those reporting someone missing
- Annexure P: DCJ – Housing Policy re: Missing Children

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure A****MISSING PERSONS CHECKLIST**

Respond to the next of kin or person reporting in a respectful and supportive manner.

- Record in official police notebook details, including:
 - Establish the facts and keep accurate records of what was said and by whom;
 - Missing Persons details, including name (alias and nicknames), age, description of person, description of clothing, current residential address, contact details of immediate family members, names and contact details of friends and/or associates, employment details, vehicle details or other transport used;
 - The circumstances surrounding how the Missing Person went missing;
 - Details of the computer/device used by the Missing Person, including its whereabouts (these items should be seized as exhibits and if appropriate. Referred to the State Electronic Evidence Branch for forensic examination);
 - Details of the Missing Person's mobile telephone and its whereabouts;
 - Identify and obtain any details of any bank accounts, passport details (does the Missing Person have the passport with them), diaries, financial records, notes, social networking sites or other platforms used by the Missing Person;
 - Name, address and telephone number of person reporting. If the Missing Person is in a care facility obtain alternative and out of hours contact details.

- Notify a supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor.
 - The Supervisor, Duty Officer/Sector Supervisor should review the risk assessment and record their own assessment. This should happen immediately in high-risk/ at-risk incidents, and as soon as practicable in all other cases.

- Assess the safety of the Missing Person by seeking answers to the following 'risk assessment' questions:

High Risk 'Red Flag' questions:

 - Is there evidence to suggest the Missing Person is suicidal? (Consider: reported stated intent, history of previous attempts, suicide note found etc);
 - Is there evidence of a homicide? Are the circumstances of the disappearance suspicious? (Consider: possible victim of crime e.g. abduction etc);
 - Did the Missing Person leave with a child in their care?
 - Is the Missing Person particularly vulnerable due to age / disability? (e.g. child, elderly, autism);
 - Is Missing Person missing in weather conditions or in geographical area that would seriously increase risk to health and / or safety? (e.g. Missing in snow, dense bushland, last seen in / near body of water etc).

Questions regarding the Missing Person's vulnerabilities:

 - Does the Missing Person need essential medication or treatment that is not likely to be available to them? (e.g. mental health, diabetic etc);
 - Does the Missing Person have a mental health diagnosis? (Are they currently unwell? Are they currently taking medication?)
 - Is there a history of addiction? (e.g. drug / alcohol dependence, gambling)
 - Was the Missing Person intoxicated when last seen?
 - Were they recently exhibiting behaviour that is considered out of character?
 - Is the person in youth/foster care, special accommodation, aged care facility, or other care facility?

Situational/Context questions:

 - Did the Missing Person not complete their last known intended action/keep intended appointment?
 - Have they left behind personal belongings/items required for a period of absence?

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- Is there a recent history of serious family conflict/abuse? (e.g. DV, child or elder abuse; victim or perpetrator)
- Has there been any other recent issues of significance? (Prompt: education, relationship, employment, financial issues, bullying or harassment (physically/social media) issues?)
- Have they been involved in a recent confrontation? (consider violent, homophobic and /or racist incident)
- Are they involved in a civil or criminal court matter as a witness/defendant/victim? (consider also current AVOs, child custody issues);
- Are they an overseas student/tourist who has disappeared without any notice?
- Are they known to have been sighted at a point of departure?
- Have they acquired new friends or relationships recently? (Consider also online acquaintances)
- Have they been reported missing by a person other than someone they normally reside with/not the logical reporting person?
- Is the Missing Person a sex worker?
- Is the Missing Person likely to raise media/political interest? (overseas tourist etc);

Other relevant questions to be asked:

- What do you think may have happened?
 - Is there any other reason for the person to go missing or any other information you would like to give?
 - If we need to, who else could we approach that may be able to provide relevant and recent information about the MP? (e.g. friends, co-workers etc);
 - Are there any other factors that the Officer or Supervisor believes should be taken into consideration? (including factors that may mitigate risk);
- Take action to identify, secure and preserve crime scenes;
 - Assess the need for specialist resources, such as the aviation unit, Bomb & Rescue for Land Search Coordination, Marine Area Command (police divers), dog unit, specialist investigators;
 - If a search is required, commence search operations as soon as practicable;
 - Notify FETS (where required at the completion of the Risk Assessment) for attendance;
 - Request Supervisor assistance if necessary. Brief Supervisor, Duty Officer /Sector Supervisor regarding relevant circumstances;
 - Search incident records for previous reports relating to the Missing Person, and relevant criminal activity in they are involved in (i.e. prowlers etc);
 - Broadcast known details on relevant police radio channels;
 - Obtain and record permission to search the area where the incident took place (i.e. bedroom, vehicle etc);
 - Evaluate appearance of Missing Person's room and take photographs;
 - Obtain a photo of the Missing Person, the photo should be current and obtain in a digital format (where possible);
 - Obtain a signed Authority to Publish for both police and public use;

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- Ensure the assessment of a DNA sample of the Missing Person is conducted. In a high-risk incident FETSC will attend. For low-risk incidents local resources are to be used. Examine items such as a toothbrush and hairbrush for potential DNA. Fingerprints can be obtained from items such as books, diaries and drinking glasses. All relevant items are to be seized and sent for examination by FASS;
- Identify relevant (see flyer in tool kit) biological family members for obtaining a voluntary DNA sample, where practicable arrange the taking of a DNA buccal swab;
- Obtain contact details of the Missing Person's Dentist;
- Obtain details of the Missing Persons treating Doctor;
- Obtain a full statement from the person reporting as well as details of any key persons, including the last person to see the Missing Person (It may not be appropriate to obtain statement(s) immediately, but all relevant information should be obtained and recorded so it can be used to guide any statement taken, if necessary, at a later time);
- Where evidence may be deleted or lost, consider preservation orders for international social networking accounts such as Facebook (this can be done by iASK request through State Intelligence Command- SIC);
- Make immediate relevant enquiries and actions to locate the Missing Person including signs of life checks via iASK;
- Circulate details of the Missing Person with relevant organisations, such as hospitals, NSW Ambulance Service, taxi/ride share services, State Rail Authority;
- Canvass area for CCTV footage. Obtain/seize a copy of relevant CCTV footage. Record in Event/COPS;
- Create a COPS event, immediately. In high-risk incidents a SITREP is to be generated;
- Create warnings attached to the event outlining the details, circumstances and action to be taken relating to the Missing Person, including a NEMESIS message;
- Keep the next of kin or person reporting informed of what is happening;
- Arrange for a support person to be present is necessary;
- Provided an accredited interpreter if the person reporting does not does not speak English;
- Consider using the media to seek an appeal for public help (also consider Amber Alert);
- Consider activating a PACE alert if the Missing Person matter relates to a parental abduction or has links to overseas countries.

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure B****INVESTIGATION PLAN**

(The Investigation Plan is designed to assist you in planning your investigation's focus and direction. The checklist provides prompts regarding a number of key areas that may need to be considered in developing the Plan's strategies and execution. It is acknowledged that not all key areas need to be included in the Plan and that other key areas may be identified. The Plan should be developed to suit the individual needs of the specific investigation).

SITUATION

(A brief description of the matter under investigation - usually reflecting the 'Brief Description' field in the Investigation Details of [e@gle.i](#) may also include strategies already undertaken / completed prior to the preparation of the Plan).

MISSION

(As defined by the 'Terms of Reference')

STRATEGIES/EXECUTION

(How you intend to achieve the 'Mission')

Tactical *(immediate investigative priorities)*

Strategic *(long term/future investigative priorities)*

Time Frames *(if definable)*

Checklist (key areas):

(NB: individual key areas do not have to be addressed in the plan if not applicable)

- Information Management (including Incident Room & Investigation security)
- Investigative Roles & Responsibilities (identified staff tasked to specific areas of investigation, eg. Senior Investigating Officer, Exhibit Coordinator)
- Crime Scene Management
- Canvassing
- Searching
- Exhibit Management
- Forensic Evidence Management
- Victim (including victimology and ongoing victim care)
- Witness Management
- Persons of Interest (including identification, profiling, investigation, interviewing etc)
- Technical & Physical Surveillance
- Operations (including controlled operations, search warrants etc)
- Informant Management
- Intelligence
- Media Management
- Constraints (Actual)
- Investigation Risks (including identified and potential risks)
- Estimated Costings
- Investigative Opportunities
- Internal/External Stake Holders (e.g. N.S.W.C.C., A.F.P.)
- Review of Investigation

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Annexure C

DNA COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS

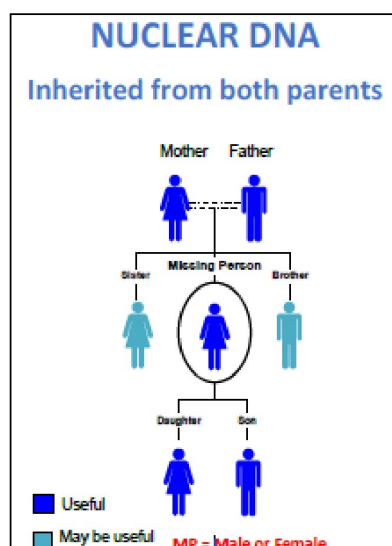
Buccal Swab

ONLY **ONE** sample per relative is to be taken

A single sample can be used for both nuclear DNA and mitochondrial DNA

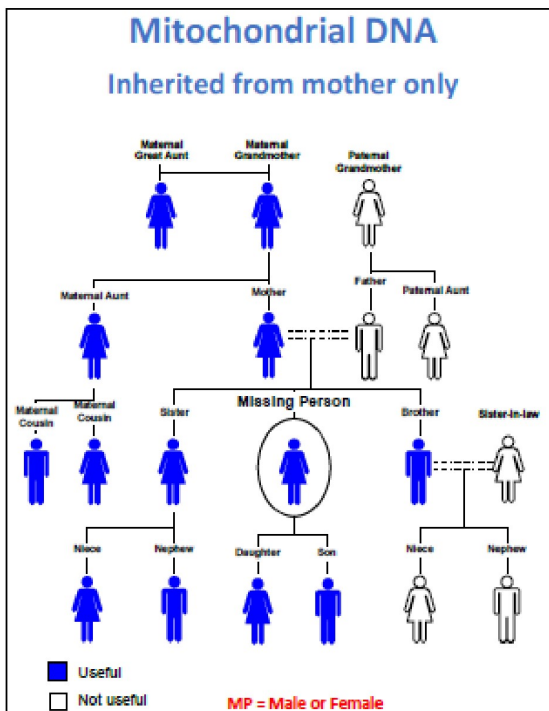
REFERENCE DNA (Volunteer) SAMPLES

1. Identify biological relative (see images below or contact FIRM or FASS for assistance when selecting suitable relative samples – see contact details on page 2).
2. Collect Buccal Swab as per FSG SOPS.
3. Create Forensic Procedure incident within the Missing Person event in COPS.
(The volunteer must be listed on the 'limited purposes index' by answering "YES" to "Is this on behalf of the Missing Persons Unit?")
4. After completing swab details, record in comments section, the relationship of the volunteers sample to the missing person (e.g. mother, son, maternal grandmother, maternal aunt, paternal grandfather, paternal uncle etc).
5. Only one reference DNA sample is required per relative as nuclear and mitochondrial DNA testing can be performed by FASS from a single reference sample.
6. Sample to be delivered to **FASS** with 2 x P967 attached. Hand deliver for Metro area's or via Toll Priority Courier Service if outside Metro area, within 5 days of sample collection.
7. Mitochondrial DNA testing can be used to determine maternal inheritance if required. (See mitochondrial testing approval procedures).
8. Y-DNA testing (nuclear DNA from males) can be used to determine paternal inheritance.

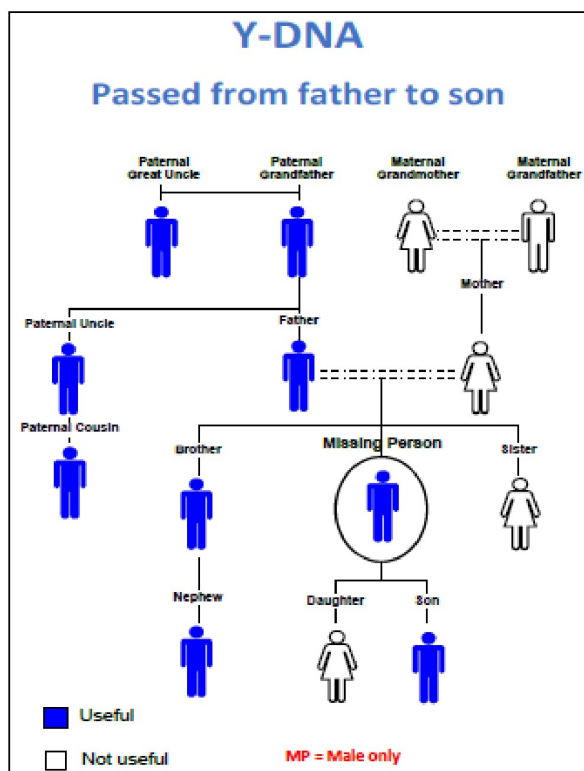


Page 1 of 2

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These images can be used to identify relatives when considering mitochondrial DNA or Y-DNA testing.



Note: If volunteer resides interstate or overseas, sample requests must be made through the Forensic Intelligence and Results (DNA) Management Unit (FIRM) on E/N: 28527 or (02) 88358527. For general DNA enquiries, contact the DNA helpdesk on 8835 8527 - E/N: 28527.

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure D****NSW Police Force****ANTE MORTEM DENTAL RECORDS CHECKLIST**

MISSING PERSON: _____

DOB: _____ NMPVS REFERENCE NO: _____

DENTIST NAME / PRACTICE: _____

DENTIST ADDRESS: _____

DENTIST TEL #: _____

DENTIST EMAIL: _____

TREATMENT RECORDS: Electronic Hand Written DENTAL CHART/S: Electronic Hand Written FINANCIAL RECORDS: DENTAL X RAYS: Printouts Film DENTAL X RAYS DIGITAL: Email USB CLINICAL PHOTOGRAPHS: YES NO REFERRAL LETTERS /
CORRESPONDANCE YES NO PLASTER CASES: YES NO IMPRESSIONS: YES NO MOUTHGUARD: YES NO DENTURES/
APPLIANCES YES NO

OTHER INFORMATION/CONTACTS: _____

Collected By: _____ Date: _____

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Annexure F



**DVI ANTE MORTEM
OPERATIONS CENTRE**

To: [Redacted]

The NSW Police Force DVI Ante Mortem Operations Centre requires Dental records for the following person:

The reco [Redacted]

[Redacted] (disaster) on ___/___/___ (date).

**ONLY ORIGINAL CHARTS, RADIOGRAPHS, X-RAYS (STUDY MODELS, PHOTOGRAPHS ETC) ARE
ACCEPTABLE**

Please release these records into the custody of accompanying Police Officer: [Redacted]

Thank you for your co-operation, your assistance is greatly appreciated

Officer Name: [Redacted]

Signature: [Redacted]

Date: ___/___/___

**DVI ANTE MORTEM OPERATION CENTRE – FORENSIC EVIDENCE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES
COMMAND
6-20 Clunies Ross St, Pemulwuy, NSW, 2145
Email: DVIAM@police.nsw.gov.au
Sensitive – Health Information**

Sensitive: Law Enforcement

Sensitive: Law Enforcement

Annexure G



**CORONIAL
LAW UNIT**



**MISSING
PERSONS**

This checklist has been prepared to assist operational police with the completion of coronial briefs of evidence for Missing Persons matters that have been reported to the NSW State Coroner.

This form does not need to be included with your brief and has been prepared as a tool to guide you.

This list is not exhaustive and is a guide only. If you would like specific advice on preparing the coronial brief for your Missing Persons matter, please call the Coronial Law Unit on 02 9563 9400.

The Australasian Coroner's Manual (2015, Federation Press, 153) by former Deputy State Coroner Hugh Dillon and Marie Hadley provides a detailed list of possible brief inclusions and has been used as a reference in the development of this checklist.

CORONIAL BRIEFS – MISSING PERSONS – CHECKLIST

Details of Missing Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Name <input type="checkbox"/> Date/Place of Birth <input type="checkbox"/> Age at time of disappearance, age at time of report to Coroner	
Personal History of Missing Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Background (relationships, family, children) <input type="checkbox"/> Medical History <input type="checkbox"/> Employment History <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook/Social media searches	<i>Obtain statements from relatives, carers, friends, colleagues and medical practitioners where relevant and include evidence about these details</i>
Circumstances of Disappearance	<input type="checkbox"/> The MP's activities at the time of their disappearance (and any evidence on their normal routine/travel pattern) <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence on the MP's state of mind and appearance (including any evidence of possibly suicidal ideation) <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant evidence (e.g. swipe card records, CCTV, photographs of scene)	<i>Consider including SMS messages/social media interactions where relevant</i>
Details of Police MP Investigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Police search for the missing person <input type="checkbox"/> Details of searches of places frequented by the MP <input type="checkbox"/> Details of searches of relevant locations for MP (national parks) <input type="checkbox"/> Details of collection of identifying material (DNA, fingerprint records, dental records) and any comparisons undertaken	<i>Include any attempts to match material with unidentified remains</i>
Evidence Post Disappearance	<input type="checkbox"/> Details of any relevant intelligence since the MP's disappearance <input type="checkbox"/> Statements from any witnesses who claim to have sighted the MP since their disappearance	<i>Include details of intelligence reports/Crime Stoppers</i>
'Signs of Life' and Additional Records	<input type="checkbox"/> Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Passport check/Immigration check <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Accounts – details and activity <input type="checkbox"/> Centrelink/Medicare/PBS/Government records <input type="checkbox"/> Police holdings (criminal history)	<i>Refer to 'Missing Persons' Tab on iAsk and Signs of Life Statement Proforma</i>
Relevant Media Documents	<input type="checkbox"/> Press clippings or articles relating to the MP <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant media releases or publicity measures taken by police and family of MP	

CORONIAL BRIEFS – MISSING PERSONS – OIC STATEMENT

<input type="checkbox"/> Chronological order – include headings <input type="checkbox"/> Provides an overview of the MP's history, background and circumstances of disappearance <input type="checkbox"/> The circumstances of the report to police and police actions following report <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits seized <input type="checkbox"/> You should express at the end of your OIC statement YOUR OPINION as to whether you think the MP is deceased and the reasons why <input type="checkbox"/> Signs of Life Statement (use Signs of Life Statement Template)
<p>You can (and should) include in your OIC statement (and statements from witnesses), HEARSAY evidence (including first person conversations with witnesses) and OPINION evidence (including lay opinion).</p>

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Annexure H



NSW POLICE FORCE *Request For Emergency Mobile Location*

Once completed, send this form to the State Coordinator (SC) in Sydney at Fax (02) 9265-4272, ENet 54272 or email it to #SCU

Requesting Officer's Declaration:	
Pursuant to Section 287 of the Telecommunications Act, I have been provided with information which leads me to reasonably believe that this request is necessary to prevent a SERIOUS AND IMMINENT threat to the life or health of a person or persons. This request is NOT solely for the purposes of criminal investigation.	
I have read the Guidelines for Emergency Mobile Location and this request is lawful under Section 287	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the limitations of this service	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have verified the mobile number provided for this search	<input type="checkbox"/>
I verify that I have attempted to ring the mobile number and it either ...	rings <input type="checkbox"/>
	goes straight to voice mail without ringing, or appears otherwise to be switched off or out of range <input type="checkbox"/>
I have sent a text or street data message to the POI in an attempt to assist them	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the investigation remains with the requesting officer/command and that I need to regularly monitor CAD or call the SC for updates and for extended period of inactivity the SC may return carriage of mapping updates to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
This request relates to Choose an item.	

CAD NUMBER	-
POI Name:	
POI's Mobile Number:	
This request is necessary as the person being triangulated ...	Choose an item.

Requesting Officer's Particulars	Choose an item. NAME REG NO. LAC / COMMAND
Contact phone (including mobile if available)	
Date & time of request	Click here to enter a date.

Mental Health S287 Request Authorised by: (State Coordinator or Supervisor only)

Authorising officer's particulars	Choose an item. NAME REG NO. LAC / COMMAND
Date & time of authorisation	28 March 2016

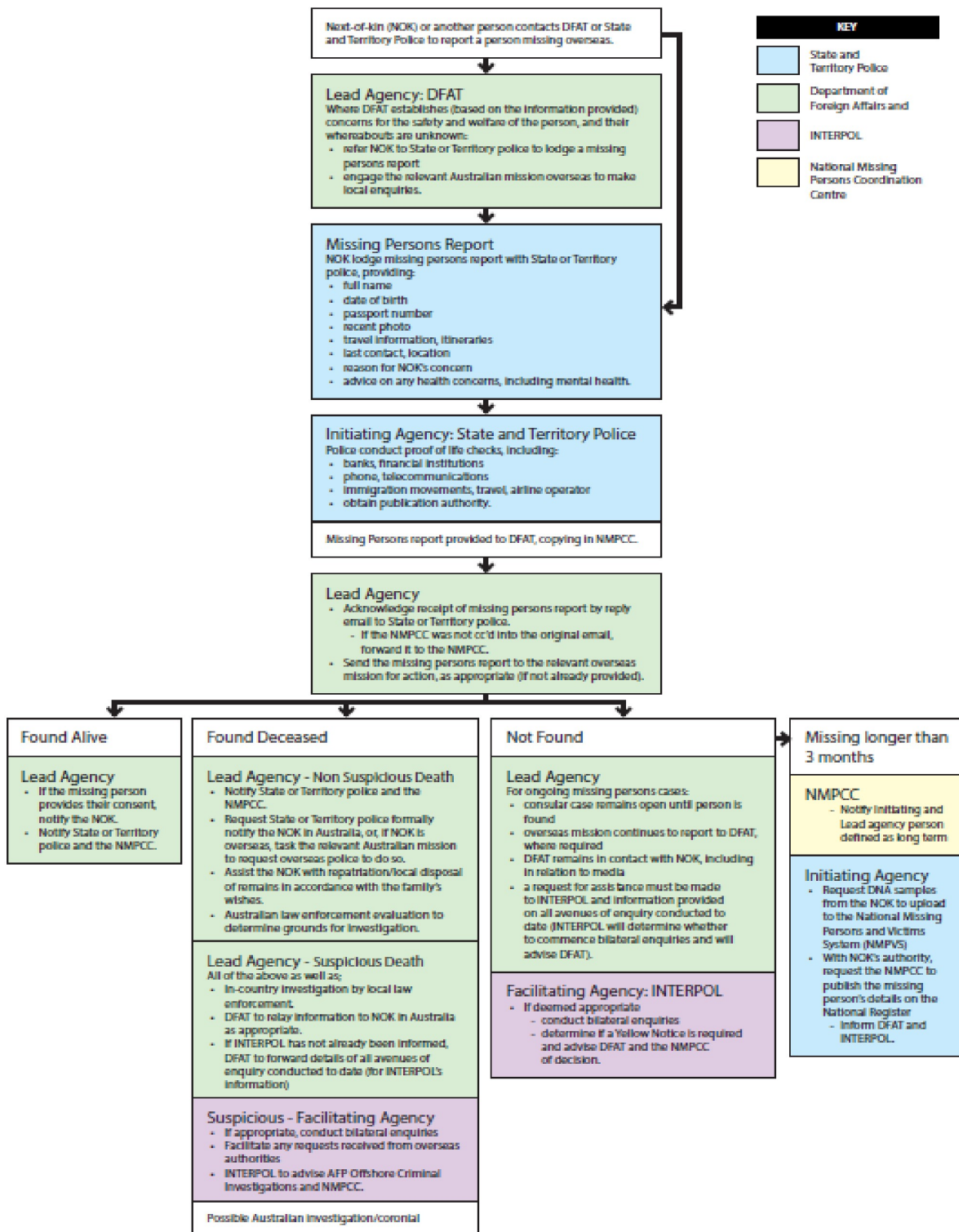
Crime Related S287 Request Authorised ONLY by: (Duty Officer or Crime Manager)

Authorising officer's particulars:	Choose an item. NAME REG NO. LAC / COMMAND
Date & time of authorisation	Click here to enter a date.

JOB COMPLETED by State Coordinator	
Name:	Date & time completed Click here to enter a date.

Annexure I

Australian Missing Overseas



Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure J****IDENTIFICATION OF SKELETAL REMAINS CHECKLIST**

- Police called to the scene;
- Immediately establish, secure and preserve the crime scene;
- Immediately notify a supervisor/DO to attend;
- Designated Criminal Investigators to attend and take carriage;
- Assessment at the site/ crime scene, contact FETSC for advice;
- Notify FETSC for attendance at the scene;
- Notify the on-call Homicide Squad Team;
- Assess the need for a Crime Scene Warrant in accordance with LEPRa;
- Body is to be transported to the accredited facility, morgue;
- Notify the Missing Persons Registry;
- Identification of the deceased body as soon as possible, dental, Balance of Probabilities Report, DNA, medical records;
- Search COPS and the Missing Persons National Database for possible matches to reported missing persons;
- COPS event to be created;
- Where bodies cannot be immediately identified details are to be entered into COPS creating a 'Deceased' incident using the status as 'Unidentified Remains';
- Photograph the unidentified remain/s and upload the image to View IMS. This is to be done at the morgue – Contact FETSC for assistance;
- Record and photograph the unidentified remains and any items located with the remains;
- If an unidentified remain (jaw) is located, a Forensic Odontological charting of the unidentified remain (jaw) is to occur as soon as practicable. This examination is to be completed by a Forensic Dentist – a Forensic Pathologist, or FETSC can arrange this;
- Recording and photographing of items located and seized with the Unidentified Remain/s;
- Assess items located with the skeletal remains for fingerprinting;
- Collection of Biological samples including bone for future DNA testing – collected by the Forensic Pathologist at time of Post Mortem Examination;
- Complete a P79A as normal and attach the dental chart (if available/applicable) and photographs of the Unidentified remain/s (with approval of the Coroner) to the Coroner;
- Copy of the P79A and attachments including all photographs are to be forwarded to the Missing Persons Registry as soon as practicable;

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure K****Missing Person iASK Checklist****Immediate Requests (12-24 hours, location based)**

Within business hours, an Inspector must email iASK reference numbers to #IASKPRI advising the requests are related to a recent missing person. Outside of business hours, contact the State Coordinator for priorities. Consider a request for triangulation location of a mobile telephone (section 287), if applicable.

Telcos

If the carrier is unknown, submit iASK *Who is the CARRIER for this telephone number? (CLS)* before submitting any other iASK requests. This will only take 15-20 minutes to be returned and will prevent delays in returned iASK results.

The below iASK requests will be returned within the hour and should be considered while waiting for results of other requests:

During Business Hours: *What details are on the IPND database for this telephone number?*

After Hours: *State Coordinator (DOI) Urgent IPND Search - AFTER-HOURS ONLY*

Optus

- Optus Call Records Request: CCR +RCCR (*Submit in UTC*)
- What numbers has this Mobile sent SMS to and received SMS from? (Optus Only) (*Submit in UTC*)
- Mobile Internet Records (MIR) (*Submit in UTC*)
- Optus Roaming Location Records (VLR) – (*If no find from MIR*)
- Where is the Cell Tower located? (Cell ID Location)
- What phone numbers do they own?

VHA

- Vodafone (VHA) Call Records Request: CCR + RCCR
- Mobile Internet Records (MIR)
- Where is the Cell Tower located? (Cell ID Location)
- What phone numbers do they own?

Telstra

- Telstra Call Records Request: Select CCR + RCCR
- Mobile Internet Records (MIR)
- What phone numbers do they own?

International Numbers:

If the roaming carrier is unknown, the below requests must be sent to all three carriers:

- Vodafone (VHA) Call Records Request: CCR + RCCR
- Optus Call Records Request: CCR +RCCR (*Submit in UTC*)
- Telstra Call Records Request: Select CCR + RCCR
- Telstra IMEI/IMSI Request
- What phone numbers have been used in this IMEI? (*Optus/VHA*)
- Mobile Internet Request (*Optus/VHA/Telstra*)

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Transport

Road:

- MISSING PERSON- Request for Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition Records(MANPR)
- MISSING PERSON- Inquiries with Toll/eTag information Request
- MISSING PERSON- RMS Compliance Operations Branch request for images and camera/image related information
- Tolling Images and CCTV (M2, M5, SW, M7, Lane Cove Tunnel, Eastern Distributer, Cross City Tunnel)

Public Transport:

- Metro Trains Sydney CCTV Request
- Opal Card Information Request
- NSW/Sydney Trains CCTV and Person Safety Camera Request (Formerly RailCorp)
- Sydney State Transit Authority (STA) and B-Line Bus Information
- Newcastle Transport CCTV Request (Bus/Ferry/Light Rail)
- Transit Systems Australia Region 6 (TSA) Buses Request for Information (Depot's: Burwood, Kingsgrove, Leichhardt & Tempe)
- Transit Systems Australia Region 3 (TSA) Buses Request for Information (Liverpool, Hoxton Park, Blacktown, Parramatta)
- Sydney Light Rail (Tram) Request for CCTV

Outside of iASK

- Social media/ International companies will accept emergency requests outside of the iASK system. http://intranet.police.nsw.gov.au/organisational_units/investigations_and_counter_terrorism/state_intelligence_command/strategic_intelligence_and_capability/information_services/oia_service_centre/urgent_requests

Intermediate Requests (3-14 days, activity based)

Within business hours, an Inspector must email iASK reference numbers to #iASKPRI advising the requests are related to a recent missing person.

Outside of business hours, contact the State Coordinator for priorities. Consider a section 287, if applicable.

Activity

- MISSING PERSON Bank Information – Recent Activity
- MISSING PERSONS Airline information (Virgin and Tiger)
- Rental Car customer information
- MISSING PERSON Centrelink Information
- MISSING PERSON Medicare / PBS Information
- Create a new PACE Alert (*If there are sufficient details to identify the MP in terms of travel, including passport details*)
- Corrective Services NSW Information on Inmate (PCIU)
- Government School Information
- Do they have an Internet Connection/Subscription?

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International

If emergency requests were not submitted for international companies within the first two days, they will need to be processed via iASK. Keep in mind, they do not need to comply with Australian Law and usually require extensive details as to why the information is needed.

- Uber Request for Information – Step 1
- Who is the subscriber for this INTERNATIONAL Email address or social network user ID? (Facebook, Instagram, Google, Microsoft, Skype)
- Apple Information Request (*If they use Apple products and the details are known*)
- What information is available from AirBNB?
- PayPal request for Information
- eBay Request for Information
- Who owns this Australian based Email or I.P Address (Subscriber) (*Although not an International iASK this will be needed when I.P results are returned from the international iASKs*)

Ongoing or Long-Term Missing Persons Requests

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, iASK requests relating to Ongoing or Long-Term Missing Persons will not meet priority criteria.

Travel

- MISSING PERSONS Request for Australian Passport Facial Recognition
- Toll/eTag information
- Request for Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition Records (MANPR)
- ABF/Dept. Home Affairs – Offshore/Onshore Status, Movement Records, Passenger Cards

BDM

Typing 'BDM' into the iASK search bar will show the below requests:

- MISSING PERSONS Are they deceased? (BDM)
- Has this person changed their name? (BDM)
- What are their parent's details? (BDM)
- Who is their Next Of Kin / Emergency Contact? (BDM)
- Has this person changed their name? (BDM)
- Are they Married? (BDM)
- What are the partner details? (Personal Relationship) (BDM)
- What children do they have? (BDM)

Interstate

Typing 'interstate' into the iASK search bar will show the below requests:

- Do they have any INTERSTATE Police or Corrective Services Information/Intelligence available? (Restraining Order, Self Harm & Warnings)
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Motor Vehicle Details?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Criminal History?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Warrants?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Traffic Records & Licence Details?
- Do they have any INTERSTATE Address Records?

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- What are their parent's details (Interstate enquiry)
- What children do they have? (Interstate enquiry)
- Has this person changed their name? (Interstate enquiry)
- Are they married? (Interstate enquiry)
- Do they own any property INTERSTATE?
- Are they deceased? (Interstate enquiry)

Habitation

- Rental Bond Information - Residential (NSW Fair Trading and RBB)
- Rental Bond Information - Commercial (NSW Small Business Commissioner)
- What mortgages do they currently have?
- What mortgages have they had?
- Australia Post Request
- Do they own any property in NSW?

Financial

- Are they bankrupt?
- Banking information release/ Intention for a Notice to Produce (NTP) (STEP 1)
- Have they conducted and financial transactions? (Austrac)
- Centrelink Information

Other

- Medicare/PBS information
- MISSING PERSONS Request for RMS Photo from NSW Drivers Licence/Photo Card/Mobility Parking
- MISSING PERSONS Signs of Life Check for a Coroners Brief p79B
- What calls and SMS were made by this mobile phone number? (CCR) (VHA/OPTUS)
- What are their NSW electoral roll details?
- Juvenile Justice NSW Information

Other possible inquiries apart from iASK:

- If there is a VOI being used by the MP and the vehicle is relatively new, contact the manufacturer to enquire whether the vehicle has a GPS locator
- Interstate public transport enquiry
- Enquire if there are any fines from revenue fines.compliance@revenue.nsw.gov.au

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure L:****Located Interview for Missing Children and Young People**

In the event where a child or young person is located after being reported missing, the following two questions are to be asked and the response recorded in the COPS Missing Person Event.

This 'Located Interview' is to ensure duty of care for those placed at higher risk by going missing.

Question 1: What was your reason for not being at the place you were expected to be?

Question 2: Do you have any concerns for your safety?

If the child or young person expresses concern for their safety related to the place that they are required to be returned to, you must take appropriate action in ensuring that the child/young person is not at risk of harm should they be returned to the residence/facility. If there is credible risk to the safety of the child/young person by returning them to their residence, they are not to be returned and appropriate measures are to be taken e.g. contacting FACS.

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure M****NSWPF/NSW Health MOU – Chapter 3.4.7****Absconded patients**

This section applies to a patient detained under the MHA or MHFPA who leaves the hospital (including ED), without permission or fails to return to an inpatient unit in accordance with approved conditions for leave; or a voluntary patient who has not negotiated leave who is considered at risk.

Patients detained under the MHA who abscond while on escorted and unescorted leave

While the MHA allows for patients to be involuntarily detained for treatment, every effort is made to provide care in the least restrictive manner as part of recovery-oriented practice to ensure a successful return to the community. Recovery-oriented practice is how workers and services support people in their individual recovery journey. It is respectful of the person's autonomy and engages the person in a therapeutic relationship which makes space for self-agency in all areas of a person's life (*Mental Health Coordinating Council and Living Well- Putting People at The Centre of Mental Health Reform in NSW - A Report*). This means that patients should be given the opportunity to take periods of leave away from the inpatient setting when appropriate. Unnecessary restrictions on leave for inpatients recovering from illness delays recovery, prolongs hospitalisation and contributes to a perception that their illness requires a custodial rather than a therapeutic response. The decision to grant leave is always informed by careful, regular clinical review by senior clinicians.

Inter-agency response to absconding patients

Patients who abscond from care may represent significant risk to themselves or others. Hospital staff will complete a risk assessment of the person and the hospital's subsequent actions will be guided by that risk assessment.

Use of Health resources to locate the person is preferable in the first instance and should include the following actions:

- Searching the hospital grounds;
- Notifying health security staff who may conduct a further search of hospital grounds;
- Instigating the hospital's absconded patient policy;
- Calling the person's mobile phone;
- Contacting carers, family or the substitute decision-maker;
- Seeking assistance from the community mental health team to visit the address of the person and places the person frequents;
- For patients under the MHFPA, making necessary notifications.

If the risk is deemed to require an immediate police response, the hospital is to phone the Police Duty Officer or delegate at the Police Station nearest to the hospital. A request for police assistance is based on the risk the person poses and not solely on their legal status. However, as the legal status of the patient may affect the response, police must be informed of the patient's legal status. The hospital is to send the Absconded Patient Form (Appendix A) to the Police Station by fax or email as agreed. The Police Duty Officer is authorised to allocate resources to assist to locate the person. A discussion will occur between the hospital and police regarding the role of each agency and any need for other agency involvement, in searching for the person. When involving the police, the hospital should:

- Provide the most recent risk assessment conducted on the person

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- For an involuntary patient, legal paperwork confirming the person is being lawfully detained under the MHA e.g. a Schedule 1 or Form 1. Attention should be paid to the expiry date of legal documentation as a person cannot be legally detained under section 48 and section 49 of the MHA if legal documentation has expired.
- A recent photograph or other material that will assist in locating the person.

If a person is detained in a mental health facility under the MHA and they subsequently abscond, section 48 of the MHA provides for authorised persons to locate and return the person to the hospital from which the person absented themselves. While NSW Ambulance will not be involved in locating the person there may be occasions when they are involved in transporting the person to the hospital from which they absconded. Requests for Ambulance transport will be subject to NSW Ambulance prioritising processes.

Section 49 of the MHA allows for the authorised medical officer to request police assistance in locating and returning the person. The hospital remains the lead agency in locating and returning the patient, with police, or others, providing assistance. Wherever possible in the first instance, the patient should be returned to the hospital from which they absconded. Under this MOU, police may take the person to the nearest DMHF. If this is not the hospital from which the person absented themselves, police are to notify the hospital of their imminent presentation. All parties should liaise with each other to facilitate the safe and timely transport of the person to the hospital from which they absented themselves. This includes the conduct of a joint risk assessment to determine appropriate agency involvement in the transport.

It is the hospital's decision to initiate a search for a voluntary patient who is considered at risk who absconds from care. If the person does not agree to return to hospital, attending agency staff should consider exercising powers under the MHA (section 19, 20 or 22) in order to facilitate the person's transport and detention in a DMHF.

Health staff are to maintain ongoing liaison and communication with police throughout the process of searching for the absconded or missing person. Standard principles of information sharing apply in this circumstance. For patients under the MHFPA, communications should include the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

In all circumstances where the person's absconding status changes, i.e. Health staff locate the person, the person returns, or health staff decide on new information to discharge the person, Health staff must contact police to verbally update them as well as forward police a completed Absconded Patient Outcome form (Appendix B). Following the verbal update and the acknowledged receipt of Appendix B, police will cease their search for the person and update their statewide database accordingly.

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Annexure N

NSW POLICE



Authority for Publicity

*State Crime Command, Missing Persons Registry Level 2, Police Headquarters, 1 Charles Street PARRAMATTA NSW; EN: 28621
Telephone: (02) 8835 8621.*

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 (insert name) to be publicised under the following circumstances:

- a) For the purpose of being publicised by the media (including the internet and Social Media)

- b) For the inclusion in official Police publications which will be displayed for public viewing (Including AFP Publications and Campaigns)

(Police Officer)

(Next of Kin / Person Reporting)

Witness: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Print name: _____

Rank: _____

Address: _____

Station: _____

Date: _____

Phone No: _____

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Annexure O

Has Someone You Know Gone Missing?

Factsheet: What You Need to Know

You have been provided with this factsheet because somebody close to you has gone missing. It is important to understand the processes and procedures of a Missing Persons investigation, as well as receive adequate support during this difficult time.



MISSING
PERSONS
REGISTRY

Who is a Missing Person?

According to the NSW Police, a Missing Person is anyone reported to police whose whereabouts are unknown, and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person.

Key Information

- You do not have to wait 24 hours to report someone missing. You can lodge a report as soon as you have concerns for their safety.
- It is not a crime to go missing.
- **Far less than 1% of missing people remain missing after 12 months.**

What information do the police need?

To conduct a Missing Person investigation, the police will require as much relevant information as you are able to provide. This includes some of the following:

- The missing person's full name/date of birth, contact details and bank information;
- A detailed description of the missing person's appearance; height, build, hair colour/style, eye colour, complexion, distinguishing features (tattoo, birthmark, scars), and what they were wearing when they went missing;
- A recent photograph of the missing person and your consent to publicly release that photo and other relevant information;
- Any factors increasing your concern for their safety;
- Details of mobile phone numbers, social media accounts and vehicles in

which they might be travelling.

What to Expect from the Police

All missing person investigations are different. When you report someone missing, police will immediately take a report and respond appropriately. You will be given an 'Event Number' unique to your report. You will need to record this number for future reference.

You should also obtain the name of the officer you have spoken with and you can expect to be provided with regular updates throughout the investigation.

What Can You Do?

It is critical to take immediate action, especially when a person could be in danger. To assist with police investigations, you can also:

- Search their home or where they were last seen (Remember: children can hide in very small places);
- Look for any notes or clues regarding their whereabouts;
- Check your phone for any voicemails/emails;
- Secure anything that might be evidence that could assist police in locating them.

DNA Preservation and Collection

It is a routine police function during Missing Person investigations to gather forensic evidence that might assist in locating the person. Police might ask you for items such as the missing person's:

- Tooth brush or hair brush;

- Items that might contain the missing person's fingerprints;
- Letters or documents that might contain the missing person's handwriting;
- Details of doctors and dentists the missing person may have visited.

Although these items might be taken by the police, they can be returned to you later.

Managing Finances of a Missing Person

When a person is missing, there can be difficulties in managing the person's financial and property affairs. In NSW, when a person has been missing for 90 days, an application can be made to the Supreme Court to appoint a person or NSW Trustee and Guardian as the manager of the Missing Person's estate. For more information, follow the link in 'Useful Links' section.

Useful Links

Family and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU)
Ph: 1800 227 772

Web:
www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au

NSW Trustee and Guardian
Web:
www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/missingpersons/ffmpu_financial.aspx



Sensitive: Law Enforcement**Annexure P****Department of Community & Justice – Housing Policy****If a child is in Out Of Home Care (OOHC)**

If the missing child is in OOHC and parental responsibility is allocated solely to the Minister, or to the Minister for the aspect of residency, this is considered a critical event and further action is needed. Where the child is suspected to have been abducted; or is missing and efforts to make contact have been exhausted; or contact has been established and maintained but the child's location is unknown:

- report this immediately to Police;
- make a critical incident report to the Helpline;
- provide a dot point a summary to Cross Cluster Issues Management;
- attempt to find the child.

Extra information: Information needed to file a missing person's police report includes:

- a letter signed by the Manger Case Work (MCW) stating the child's current legal status or FACS involvement and/or a copy of current court order;
- name, date of birth and address of the missing child;
- photograph, if available, and full description (weight, height, special features, eyes and hair colour etc.);
- details about where and when the child was last seen or heard from;
- details and contacts of friends, favourite haunts etc.
- medicines or medical needs;
- safety concerns, especially any high-risk behaviours or suicidal risks;
- proposed placement details (where relevant) when the child is found.

If after 7 days of sustained efforts to find the child following the police media release (where that is determined to be the most appropriate course of action), send updated dot points to CCIM:

DeputySecretaryClusterIssuesManagement@facs.nsw.gov.au opens in new window.

Extra information: CCIM will alert FACS Media and the Deputy Secretary Northern Cluster. If the child is suspected to have been abducted, they will also alert the Office of the Secretary and Ministers Office staff. CCIM will work to ensure the appropriate approvals are granted should a police media release be required.

If the child has not been found after 7 days of sustained efforts, CCIM will alter those above and issue a formal allocation for a short notice briefing note if needed. Recording Create a whereabouts record in ChildStory, choose drop down of "Placement type: Absent-location unknown".

Add a Person Alert in ChildStory – see [ChildStory knowledge article opens in new window](#).

Offer support to help deal with the distress of not knowing where the child is and worry about their safety and well-being, and the impact of any media attention.

Sensitive: Law Enforcement**When a child is found**

Talk to the parents/carers to let them know that the child is safe.

Completed by: **Case Worker**

If there are risks to the child where they have returned to or currently staying, or there are risks for them at home or in placement, consider if legal action is needed.

If a police report was made, contact Police to let them know that the child has been found and returned. Confirm it in writing using the [Missing person withdraw advice letter \(DOC, 53 KB\) opens in new window](#) form so Police can close-off their missing person's report.

Review the child's case plan to make sure it is still meeting their needs.

Completed by: **Case Worker** Approval by: **Manger Case Worker (MCW)**

Practice Advice

Talk to the child and give them lots of opportunities to discuss what happened, why they went missing and what you, and others, can do to help change the situation so they feel safer, happier and more secure.

Recording

If the child returns to their placement, end date and close the whereabouts record in ChildStory.

If the child self-places elsewhere or is placed with a new carer or new arrangement, with or without authority to do so, create a new placement record in ChildStory – see [ChildStory knowledge article opens in new window](#). End date the Person Alert in ChildStory – see [ChildStory knowledge article opens in new window](#).