



What do I do when someone goes missing?

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT WHEN TAKING STEPS TO LOCATE A MISSING CHILD OR ADULT. This list has been put together based on our experience from advocating for missing persons only as a guide for you to start with. Please consult with law enforcement and follow their lead.

First Steps for a Missing CHILD:

- ✓ **CALL 911! Contact your nearest police department to report the child missing immediately.**
Be ready with age, height, weight, hair/eye color, tattoos, facial hair, scars, and description of what they wearing. Look for a couple clear photographs give to law enforcement. Take note of the police report number and who you spoke with.
- ✓ **Completely search the surrounding area the child disappeared from.**
Enlist the help of as many people as possible. Call friends and family to help you look.
- ✓ **Check with neighbors and businesses nearby for video.**
Have them review any video footage in the applicable time period for sightings of the child. Video files often only last a short period of time so do this ASAP.
- ✓ **Gather any wireless devices or computers your child uses.**
Do not attempt to conduct a search of these devices on your own, for risk of losing important clues. Ask law enforcement to look for clues in any gaming, chat and social-networking websites your child uses.
- ✓ **If your child is a teen, contact all friends and parents and try to determine when they last had contact.**
Take notes you can pass on to Law Enforcement along with contact information.
- ✓ **Alert Law Enforcement of any person who has shown your child unusual attention recently.**
New friends? Has your child been talking about any person in particular and making plans with them? Any information you can give to Law Enforcement to investigate is helpful.
- ✓ **Verify with Law Enforcement your child has been listed with NCIC.**
Federal law requires law enforcement to enter information about a missing child into NCIC (National Crime Information Center) within two hours after the receipt of the report.
- ✓ **Ask Law Enforcement what steps they will be taking next.**
Will they be canvassing the neighborhood? Will they be initiating an Amber Alert? What advice do they have for you to do immediately?
- ✓ **Contact the NCMEC.**
Report your missing child to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678). Website: MissingKids.org
- ✓ **Contact us to help you spread awareness online and in your community.**
We can help you with your missing person campaign and get the word out quickly. Social Media is the quickest way to get your child's photo and description circulated and engage the community to help locate him/her. We utilize Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok and recommend local residents post to the Nextdoor, Neighbors and Citizen applications as soon as possible.

First Steps for a Missing ADULT:

- ✓ **Check with all the missing persons friends and other family members.**
When was the last time someone heard from them? Ask for details, where, when, what were they wearing etc. Take written notes to pass on to law enforcement.
- ✓ **Check with the persons job or school and see if they have been in attendance and inquire about any possible conflicts or suspicious behavior.**
Take written notes and who the person was you spoke with to pass on to law enforcement.
- ✓ **Check social media to determine the last time they were active and reach out to them to see if they will respond.**
Take written notes to pass on to law enforcement.
- ✓ **Gather any wireless devices or computers the missing person uses.**
Do not attempt to conduct a search of these devices on your own, for risk of losing important data. Ask law enforcement to look for clues in any gaming, chat and social-networking websites they use.
- ✓ **Determine if they are on foot or driving a vehicle.**
If they are driving, put together a description of the vehicle and photos if you have them. Save for law enforcement.
- ✓ **If you suspect foul play...**
Preserve the crime scene by not touching anything or entering the area. Take as many photos as possible and seek law enforcement advice immediately.
- ✓ **Check with neighbors and businesses nearby for video.**
Have them review any video footage in the applicable time period for sightings of the child. Video footage sometimes only last a short time so this should be done ASAP.
- ✓ **Contact your nearest police department to report the person missing immediately. You do not have to wait 24 hours.**
Be ready with age, height, weight, hair/eye color, tattoos, facial hair, scars, and description of what they wearing. Look for a couple clear photographs give to law enforcement. Take note of the police report number and who you spoke with. Request they be reported to NCIC (National Crime Information Center) as soon as possible. Follow up at a later date to insure they have been listed. Federal law requires law enforcement to enter information about a missing person into NCIC (National Crime Information Center) within 7 days if foul play is suspected and within 30 days if no foul play.
- ✓ **Ask Law Enforcement (LE) what steps they will be taking next.**
Will they be canvassing the neighborhood? Will they be putting out an alert? Do they qualify for a silver or endangered alert? What advice do they have for you to do immediately?
- ✓ **After a period of time, of your choice, (we recommend 30 days) add your missing person to NamUS.**
*National Missing and Unidentified Persons System can be accessed at: <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>
You can submit DNA to help identify any potential remains.*
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