

Section 5.0 – Specialized Investigations	Page 1 of 6
Sub Section 5.1 – Missing Person Investigations	Effective: September 1, 2016
Subject 5.1.2 – Risk Assessment Process	Revised: n/a

## Definitions

**“High risk missing person investigation”** – a missing person investigation in which the missing person’s health or wellbeing may be in immediate danger due to:

- (a) Their own vulnerability (e.g., the very young and very old, persons with physical illness, disability, addictions or mental health concerns, persons who may be suicidal and persons involved in activities that may place them at increased risk of harm);
- (b) Being part of an identifiable group that is at an increased risk of harm;
- (c) The weather or physical conditions where the missing person is believed to be; or
- (d) Reasonable grounds to believe they may be the victim of a crime.

A “high risk missing person investigation” under these Standards does not have the same meaning as a “person at risk” under the *Missing Persons Act* or regulations.

**“Missing person”** – anyone reported to police or by police as someone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of their disappearance, and who are considered missing until located.

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

**“Missing Person Risk Assessment Template”** – a template in PRIME-BC for assessing the level of risk related to a missing person report, which includes all of the questions and instructions contained in the sample template in Appendix A of these Standards.

## Standards

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

### Initial risk assessment

- (1) An initial risk assessment is completed by a police officer without delay for all missing person reports within the police force’s jurisdiction.
- (2) Consideration is given to completing an initial risk assessment pending the determination of jurisdiction and/or transfer of the investigation to the police force of jurisdiction.

- (3) The initial risk assessment includes:
  - (a) Completion of the *Missing Person Risk Assessment Template* in PRIME; and
  - (b) Determination of risk in consultation with a supervisor.
- (4) If the response to **all** questions on the *Missing Person Risk Assessment Template* is “no”, the police officer must then consult with a supervisor to confirm the screening result.
- (5) If the response to **any** question on the *Missing Person Risk Assessment Template* is “yes”, the matter requires **immediate review** and consultation with a supervisor to assess the appropriate response and resources.
- (6) The consultation under Standard (4) includes consideration of the following factors:
  - (a) Any reason to suspect the missing person may have been abducted;
  - (b) Any suspicious, dangerous or unknown circumstances surrounding the missing person’s disappearance, which suggest the missing person may be the victim of a crime;
  - (c) The mental or emotional state of the missing person (e.g., emotionally distraught, suicidal or likely to cause harm to self or others);
  - (d) Whether the missing person has been involved in a violent or threatening incident prior to going missing (e.g., domestic or relationship violence, bullying or elder abuse);
  - (e) Whether the missing person is part of an identifiable group that is statistically at an increased risk of harm (e.g., Aboriginal women);
  - (f) Characteristics of the missing person which may make them vulnerable, such as their age, addiction to drugs/alcohol, infirmity, inability to communicate or other factors;
  - (g) The weather and physical conditions (e.g., terrain) in the location where the missing person may be and their preparedness to deal with those conditions (e.g., clothing, equipment, and/or experience), if known;
  - (h) Whether the missing person requires any essential medications;
  - (i) Whether the missing person has any physical illness, disability or mental health problems;
  - (j) The circumstances of any previous incidents of going missing (e.g., suffered harm while missing, previous designation as a high risk missing person by the same or another police force);
  - (k) Whether the behaviour is out of character for the missing person;
  - (l) Whether the missing person was scheduled to testify in court either as a witness or victim;
  - (m) Whether the missing person was involved in activities that may put them at increased risk of harm (e.g., sex trade, hitchhiking, gambling and/or transient lifestyle);
  - (n) Whether the missing person is associated to gangs or organized crime;

- (o) Whether the missing person may have been involved in an accident or mishap;
  - (p) The length of time the person has been missing; and
  - (q) Any other circumstance or factor that leads the officer conducting the risk assessment to determine that the missing person may be at an increased risk of harm.
- (7) The completed *Missing Person Risk Assessment Template* and decision regarding risk are approved by a supervisor and documented in the case file.

#### High risk missing person investigations

- (8) If the initial or ongoing risk assessment determines that a missing person investigation is a high risk missing person investigation:
- (a) Appropriate resources are immediately assigned;
  - (b) A senior ranking officer and the missing person coordinator (see Standard (1) of *BCPPS 5.1.4 File Review and Monitoring*) are notified;
  - (c) The file is continuously and actively investigated;
  - (d) The file is scored and documented as a high risk missing person investigation in PRIME; and
  - (e) The family/reportee are notified of the action to be taken, unless to do so would jeopardize the missing person or the investigation.

#### High risk missing person investigations – foul play suspected

- (9) In addition to Standard (8) above, if foul play is suspected, the investigation is assigned to a section or investigator responsible for major or serious crime investigations.

#### Non-high risk missing person investigations

- (10) If the initial or ongoing risk assessment determines that a missing person investigation is **not** a high risk missing person investigation:
- (a) Appropriate resources are assigned;
  - (b) The missing person coordinator is notified; and
  - (c) The family/reportee are notified of the action to be taken.

### Ongoing risk assessment

- (11) The level of risk is re-evaluated as an ongoing process throughout the investigation by the officer assigned to the investigation, for both high risk and non-high risk missing person investigations, including at minimum:
- (a) When new information pertaining to the missing person or their disappearance is obtained or received; and
  - (b) With the exception of investigations where the missing person is reasonably believed to have committed suicide, within 7 days of the start of the investigation.
- (12) The ongoing risk assessment is based on the factors listed in Standard (6).
- (13) Any decision to vary or change the level of risk must be reviewed by a supervisor, and documented in the case file, including updating PRIME scoring.

### Policies and procedures

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

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## Appendix “A” for BCPPS 5.1.2 – Risk Assessment

### Missing Person Risk Assessment Template

Click here to enter police force name  
**MISSING PERSON RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**

File Number	Year (yyyy)
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

This form must be completed by the investigating member upon the initial contact with the Complainant. In the event the Missing Person returns prior to or upon initial contact with the complainant, this form is not required.  
 If you answered Yes to any of the questions in the Risk Assessment Section, the matter requires immediate review and consultation with a supervisor to assess the appropriate response and resources.  
 A supervisor must review all missing person investigations.  
**Note:** This is an investigational aid only. Appropriate monitoring of all Missing Person investigations must be ongoing. There may be other factors to consider and document when determining risk and investigational response. A supervisor must review all missing person investigations regardless of the risk factors considered.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

Missing Person Surname Click here to enter text.	Given Name Click here to enter text.	Date of Birth (yyyy-mm-dd) Click here to enter text.
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Missing Person Information Questions	Answers
1. Is the person the subject of a crime in progress? E.g. Abduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Is this person emotionally distraught, suicidal or likely to cause harm to self or others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Has the person been involved in a violent or threatening incident prior to going missing? E.g. Domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Is this person vulnerable due to age, addiction to drugs / alcohol, infirmity, inability to communicate or other factors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Are there inclement weather conditions, terrain, inadequate clothing or lack of proper equipment that would seriously increase risk to health?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. Does the person require essential medication?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Does the person have any physical illness, disability or mental health problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Has the person been subject to bullying / elder abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9. If previously missing, did he / she suffer any harm at that time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
10. Is this behaviour out of character? E.g. overdue and / or personal property has not been taken?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11. Is this person scheduled to testify in court either as a witness or victim?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
12. Is this person involved in the sex trade, hitchhiking, gambling and / or transient lifestyle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
13. Is the person associated to Gang Members or other Organized Crime?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**COMPLETED BY**

Rank Click here to enter text.	Surname Click here to enter text.	Given Name Click here to enter text.	Number Click here to enter text.
Signature		Date of signature (yyyy-mm-dd) Click here to enter a date.	

**REVIEWED BY (SUPERVISOR)**

Rank Click here to enter text.	Surname Click here to enter text.	Given Name Click here to enter text.	Number Click here to enter text.
Signature		Date of signature (yyyy-mm-dd) Click here to enter a date.	