

Section 5.0 – Specialized Investigations	Page 1 of 2
Sub Section 5.1 – Missing Person Investigations	Effective: September 1, 2016
Subject 5.1.5 – Family Members and Reportees	Revised: January 1, 2017

Definitions

“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.

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

Standards

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

Communication with family members and reportees

- (1) During the initial stages of the investigation, the family and/or reportee of the missing person is provided with information about:
 - (a) Support services available;
 - (b) The investigative process;
 - (c) Actions they may take or information they may seek or provide to assist the investigation;
 - (d) Information to assist them in dealing with the media;
 - (e) The file number for the investigation; and
 - (f) The name and contact information of the family liaison.
- (2) A family liaison is appointed to each investigation and provides updates and timely information regarding the status of the missing person to the family/reportee throughout the investigation, unless to do so would jeopardize the missing person or the investigation.
- (3) The family/reportee are advised of any changes to the family liaison and/or the lead investigator.
- (4) Communication between the police force and the family/reportee is documented in the case file.
- (5) The family/reportee are advised in advance when details pertaining to the investigation will be released to the media and/or the public, unless to do so would jeopardize the missing person or the investigation.

- (6) The family/reportee are provided an opportunity to review and consent to any photo(s) and/or description(s) of the missing person that will be released to the media and/or the public, unless to do so would jeopardize the missing person or the investigation.
- (7) New information is conveyed to the family in a manner appropriate to the type of information being provided. Death notifications are provided in person, in a private setting whenever possible, subject to any special provisions requested in the communication plan.
- (8) A communication plan is established in consultation with the family/reportee of the missing person as soon as appropriate given the circumstances of the investigation, or at the latest, within two weeks of the start of the investigation. At minimum, the communication plan must establish:
 - (a) The name and contact information of the family liaison;
 - (b) The names and contact information of designated family member or members, the reportee and any other person(s) that are to be updated on the progress of the investigation;
 - (c) The frequency and type of information that is to be provided to the persons identified in the communication plan (e.g., the family's wishes and schedule for contact, updates on the progress of the investigation, significant developments in the investigation);
 - (d) The type of information that is to be provided to the family liaison by the persons identified in the communication plan; and
 - (e) The means by which information is to be provided.
- (9) The communication plan under Standard (8) is documented in the case file.

Policies and procedures

- (10) Policies and procedures regarding missing persons include a statement underscoring the stressful nature of a missing person event for family members/reportees and the need for all employees of the police force to treat family members/reportees with respect, compassion and empathy.
- (11) Policies and procedures regarding missing persons are consistent with these *BC Provincial Policing Standards*.