

## Missing Adult Cases

Listed below are some suggestions for the person reporting the disappearance to assist law enforcement in the search for a missing adult.

- Verify** by checking with family, friends and associates of the missing adult to verify that the individual is in fact missing.
- Immediately** report the missing adult to the local police department where the individual resides.

Note: You may also file a report with the jurisdiction where the missing individual was last seen. If the local police department declines to take the report, contact the County Sheriff's department. If the County Sheriff's department declines to take the report, contact the State Police agency and request a missing person report be filed. **(There is no need to file with all of these options. If any one of the agencies takes a report, the information is accessible to all law enforcement agencies through NCIC).**

- Request** that the law enforcement agency taking the report open a missing person investigation.
- Request** that the law enforcement agency enter the missing person's descriptive information into the NCIC Missing Persons File. Ask the agency to provide you with the NCIC entry number.
- Provide** law-enforcement investigators with all of the facts and circumstances related to the disappearance of the missing adult. It is very important to provide all of the information leading up to the disappearance. Do not hold back any information even if it may be embarrassing or difficult to divulge. Investigators will need to know as much information as possible if the search for the missing adult is to be successful.
- Provide** a detailed description of the missing adult including personal identification marks such as birthmarks, scars, tattoos, etc. Inform the investigators of any injuries, broken bones, or surgical procedures that the missing person has experienced in the past.
- Provide** copies of recent photographs of the missing person in both black and white and in color. Inform the investigators of any changes in hair color, hairstyle or other features that are inconsistent with those depicted in the available photographs.
- Provide** information regarding the missing adult's dentist, dental charts, DNA samples and fingerprints to the case investigator.

- Provide** case investigator with missing adults cell phone number(s), email address and if applicable the social networking site address of the missing person.
- Obtain** a case number and a copy of the report.
- Obtain** the name and contact telephone number for the investigator assigned to the case.
- Preserve** the room or living quarters of the missing individual for law enforcement. Do not attempt to access computers or telephone messages until law enforcement has had the opportunity to thoroughly examine them.
- Check** for any notes, letters or communications that may have been left in plain view by the missing adult.
- Ask** the investigator what you can do to assist in the search for the missing adult and provide the investigator with information concerning all of the actions and activities that you have already performed or initiated. Brief the investigator of all the agencies and missing-person organizations that you have contacted for assistance.
- Compile** a list of credit cards, debit cards, drivers license, social security numbers and other forms identification that the individual may be using. Include account numbers and identification numbers with the list. Provide this list to the case investigator.
- Develop** a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the case investigator.
- Contact** investigating officer frequently for updates. The investigator should be able to answer any questions that you may have. Be aware that the investigating office may not be able to provide you with all of the details of the investigation.
- Contact National Missing and Unidentified Persons System - NamUs via the Internet:** <http://www.namus.gov>. The Missing Persons Database contains information about missing persons that can be entered by anyone; before it appears as a case on NamUs, the information is verified. NamUs provides the ability to print missing persons posters and even map out possible travel routes in a search for a missing person. Other resources include links to state clearinghouses, medical examiner and coroner offices, law enforcement agencies, victim assistance groups and pertinent legislation.
- Contact** Your state missing person's clearinghouse to provide them with information regarding the missing adult. The missing person's clearinghouse will be organized under the State Police or State Attorney General's Office. **The law enforcement agency may have already provided the clearinghouse with the missing person information you have reported to them.**

Note: The Missing-Child Clearinghouse Program (Hyperlink) is divided by individual state. Many state missing child programs are included in missing person programs.

- Contact** nonprofit organizations (NPO) that can help you with the search for the missing adult. You can obtain information about several NPO's that provide assistance in missing adult cases by contacting the Association of Missing & Exploited Children Organizations (AMECO) at [www.amecoinc.org](http://www.amecoinc.org).
- Create** and distribute posters of the missing person using recent photographs and a detailed description of the individual including clothing, vehicles used, license plate number and places that individual would likely frequent. **Remember to use the contact number of the investigating law enforcement agency to report a sighting or lead. DO NOT use your own telephone number or contact on the poster. This may delay the processing of important leads and sightings.** Click here for AMECO's Recommendations for Missing Children's Posters; many of the guidelines are relevant for adult posters.
- Distribute** posters to airports, bus and train stations, hospitals, medical examiners, coroners, detention facilities, missions and other types of adult shelters.
- Get** media involved in the search for the missing adult. Use every opportunity to get the missing poster on television, in newspaper articles, and newsletter distributions. Accept interviews and any other media activity that will inform the public of the missing person's disappearance. *Check with law enforcement first.*
- Immediately** supply the case investigator with any tips or leads that you may receive concerning the location of the missing adult.
- Notify** the investigating agency and all other organizations involved in the search if the missing adult returns home or is located.
- Remember** self-care so you have the strength to search for your missing loved one and motivate others to assist in your search. Family trauma and crisis support should be addressed to make sure all members of the family impacted by a missing loved one's absence remain healthy. This could mean seeking out a peer support network, seeking the assistance of additional family members, or seeking support from a mental health professional.