

MISSING PERSONS REGISTRY



Aletheia, seeker of truth

Making a Missing Person's Report: What you need to know

NSW Police Force Factsheet

What is a missing person?

The NSW Police Force (NSWPF) definition of a missing person is:

Anyone who is reported to Police, whose whereabouts are unknown and there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person.

What to do if someone is missing

If you have concerns for the safety or welfare of a person who is missing you can make a report at any local Police station. Reports cannot be accepted by email or over the phone.

If you are unable to get to a Police station, Police may be able to travel to you. Call your nearest Police station for advice.

Important facts

- ✓ You can make a report as soon you have concerns for the safety of a person who is missing. **You do not have to wait 24 hours.** There is no waiting period.
- ✓ Reports can be taken at any Police station. You do not have to make the report where the person went missing or where they usually live.
- ✓ You do not have to be a family member to make a report.
- ✓ People of any age can be reported missing.
- ✓ A person can be reported missing more than once in their life.
- ✓ It is not a crime to go missing – Police seek to find out if the person is safe and well.
- ✓ **Far less than 1% of missing people remain missing after 12 months.**
- ✓ Police cannot search for someone if there are no concerns for their safety, including searches for debt collection, family reunion, or post-adoption. In some cases, non-police search agencies may be able to provide advice or search assistance: <https://bit.ly/2RotB6T>

Information to provide Police

Police will require as much relevant information as you are able to provide about the missing person, including:

- Full name, any other names they use (nicknames, aliases), age, and date of birth.
- **Any factors that give you concern for their welfare**, such as: recent changes in behaviour; relationship difficulties; conflict; risk due to age, disability, medical or mental health condition; suicidal intent or history; financial stressors; memory loss/dementia; injury; access to important medications; hazardous weather conditions.
- A detailed description of what they look like (height; build; hair style/colour; eye colour; complexion; distinguishing features such as tattoos, birthmarks, facial hair, scars, piercings, typical jewellery, clothing, or glasses).
- A recent, clear photograph.
- Contact details (home, work, school/university, and people they are likely to contact).
- Email and social network accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat).
- Medical details: medications, medical issues, treating professionals, missed appointments.
- Bank, credit card, Centrelink, Medicare, license and passport details.
- Vehicle type/registration, or other transport information e.g. transport card.
- Details of when they were last seen: time, place, clothing, who they were with, how and where they were travelling, any significant items they took with them or left behind (e.g. phone, wallet, travel card).
- Description of any times they have been missing before: how, where, and when they were found and places they might go (e.g. favourite places).

After making a report:

Keep a record of the:

- ✓ Event number and Police station
- ✓ Rank, name and contact details of the Officer in Charge (OIC).

What to expect from Police

You can expect to be provided regular updates throughout the investigation. The OIC is your first point of contact. Discuss with the OIC: when they will contact you, how you can contact them, who to speak to if they are unavailable.

Police may ask the next of kin to sign an '**Authority for Publicity**' form to permit a photo of the missing person and relevant details to be published in social media and news outlets. Consult the OIC if you have questions or concerns about media, or if you wish to add a missing person's details to the [Missing Persons Enquiry System](#)

What can you do?

It is critical to take immediate action, especially when a person is in danger. To assist the investigation, you can also:

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

It might help to keep a journal to record information, events (e.g. names, dates, places), and questions to discuss with police. It can be overwhelming to remember every conversation.

Always discuss with the OIC any plans to make your own enquiries or publicise the case (e.g. social media or posters). Discuss what to avoid, best approaches, and safety measures.

DNA preservation and collection

It is routine for Police to gather forensic evidence that might assist in the investigation. Police might ask you for the missing person's items (which can be returned to you later), including:

- ✓ clothing, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, computers.
- ✓ items that might contain their fingerprints or handwriting e.g. (letters, diaries).
- ✓ dental or medical records.

Sightings and locations

- ✓ Notify the OIC immediately if the missing person returns home or makes contact.
- ✓ The public can report sightings to Crime Stoppers: **1800 333 000** or www.crimestoppers.com.au
- ✓ A missing person must be sighted by an authorised person (e.g. NSW Police Force Officer; Customs Officer; Doctor; School Principal or Family and Community Services Officer) to be 'located' and removed from the missing persons list, for Police to stop searching for them.
- ✓ If a missing adult is located safe and well, Police cannot reveal their whereabouts without their permission, and in some cases may only be able to inform you that the person has been located safe and well. Police may involve social or health services if the located missing person is vulnerable or at risk due to age, or other health reasons.



Key Agencies and Links

NSW Police Force

Attend your local Police station to make a missing person's report. NSW Police Station Search: <https://bit.ly/2uPnwZA>

To find Police stations in other states or territories: [ACT](#) | [VIC](#) | [Qld](#) | [SA](#) | [WA](#) | [NT](#)

NSW Police Force Missing Persons Registry (MPR)

A unit that co-ordinates the NSWPF response to missing persons investigations and provides operational support to Police in the field.

Email: missingpersons@police.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.police.nsw.gov.au/can_you_help_us/missing_persons

Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit, Victims Services (FFMPU)

Provides information, support, referrals, and counselling to families and friends of missing people in NSW (does not search for people).

Phone: 1800 633 063

Email: ffmpu@justice.nsw.gov.au

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

Managing the financial affairs of a missing person:

For more information:

www.missingpersons.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/fs_managing-estate.pdf