

BPD Initial Officer Response Checklist to Missing Child

	Respond promptly to the scene of the report. Activate patrol video camera. DO NOT search the area first, let secondary units respond to the area for search.
	Interview the person who made the initial report. <u>Audio and Video recorded.</u>
	Confirm the child is in fact missing. Obtain and note permission to search home or building. Another check of the scene should be made and include places where children could be trapped, asleep, or hiding. Special attention should be paid to enclosures such as refrigerators, freezers, and the interior of parked vehicles where limited breathing air may place the child at even greater risk. A search of the home should be conducted even if the missing child was last seen elsewhere. Consider a search warrant in cases where foul play is indicative.
	Obtain a detailed description of the missing child including photo(s) and videos.
	Provide detailed descriptive information to communications for broadcast updates. As information becomes available regarding the missing child’s physical appearance, circumstances of the case, or description of the potential abductor, the initial officer should ensure other officers and agencies are provided with up-to-date facts.
	Identify the circumstances of the missing episode. Determine whether the circumstances are such that a heightened level of response is warranted. <i>Verify the child’s custody status.</i> Determine whether a dispute over the child’s custody might have played a role in the missing episode or might constitute a risk factor. Questions regarding whether the reporting party has legal custody, if the noncustodial parent has been contesting custody, or if the missing child expressed a desire to live with the other parent may help an officer gain important insight into the case.
	Determine when, where, and by whom the missing child was last seen. Interview family members, friends/associates of the child, and friends of the family to determine when each last saw the child, what they think happened to the child, and if the child had complained about being approached by anyone. Compare information gathered from all sources.
	Interview the individual(s) who last had contact with the missing child. While seeking information about the child’s appearance, demeanor, and actions, officers should also be alert to any contradictions made or evasiveness demonstrated by the witness, especially if these statements cannot be readily corroborated.
	Obtain a description of the suspected abductor(s) and other pertinent information. Officers need to immediately record witness information. If the abduction scene involves a business or other public place, officers may be able to supplement witness information with video from security cameras that might provide crucial information about the suspect, vehicles, and circumstances. In the case of a suspected family abduction, the reporting party may have photos of the abductor or other valuable information.
	Identify and separately interview everyone at the scene. The name, address, home and work phone numbers of everyone present at the scene, along with his or her relationship to the missing child should be recorded.
	Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the scene. With the assistance of additional personnel, a systematic, thorough search of the incident scene should be conducted. If appropriate, officers should obtain written permission to search houses, apartments, outbuildings, vehicles, and other property that might hold information about the child’s location. Officers are again reminded to

BEMIDJI POLICE DEPARTMENT
MISSING CHILD CHECK LIST

APPENDIX #O265.1

	<p>conduct a thorough, immediate search of the child’s home and property — even if the child was last seen at another location. Evaluate the contents and appearance of the child’s room/residence. When possible officers should also search a missing child’s school locker.</p>
	<p>Seal/protect scene, area of child’s home, and areas of interest as potential crime scenes. Patrol Officers must take control of the immediate area where the incident occurred and establish an appropriate perimeter to avoid destruction of vital evidence. Extend search to surrounding areas and vehicles, including those that are abandoned, and other places of concealment such as abandoned appliances, pools, wells, sheds, etc. In addition to external crime scenes, the missing child’s home, particularly his or her bedroom, should be secured and protected until evidence and identification material are collected.</p>
	<p>Inquire if the child has access to the Internet, cell phone, and/or other communications device. Before making an initial decision the child has run away, an officer should determine if the child may have left to meet someone he or she encountered while online. Since some offenders are known to use the Internet to identify vulnerable children, what appears at first to be a runaway case, may, in fact, be a child abducted or enticed to leave by someone the child first met online. Even if a child willingly decides to leave home to join someone first met online, the child should be considered at risk. Additionally, since many children have their own cell phones/other electronic communications devices and may have them while missing, an officer should note these devices during the information gathering process and consider involving the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to begin tracking the device due to exigency.</p>
	<p>Consider activation of the AMBER Alert system and/or other immediate community notification methods (CODE RED). If circumstances indicate the chances for the child’s safe recovery would be increased by immediate public awareness, a supervisor should promptly activate such efforts.</p>

***21 or UNDER? If yes, **IMMEDIATE NCIC ENTRY IS REQUIRED**