

Missouri Missing 501(c)(3)

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www.missourimissing.org | <https://www.facebook.com/MissouriMissing>



Missouri Missing has been asked by families of the missing to compile a list of what to do when a loved one goes missing. Advocates have asked for direction too. There are no protocols, no guides, no procedure manuals given to the families so we have developed a list of suggestions. Our cofounder and executive board members have all had or have someone missing so the below suggestions are a compilation of our wisdom, knowledge and training. One of our board members worked on an initial list that was created by www.facebook.com/FootprintsOfTheMissing but we are now expanding, with permission, on that list.

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Suggestions for what to do when your loved one is missing.

Page 1 of 2

Contact Law Enforcement and make a missing person report:

- Best to contact Law Enforcement of jurisdiction (where the person is missing from). If they will not take report any law enforcement agency in the country can take the report.
- Do not let anyone play gatekeeper, you have the right to make report and speak to a missing person detective or officer that will be handling the case.

Have the following information ready:

- Missing person's full name.
- Missing person's birthdate (only give to law enforcement)
- Missing person's approximate height and weight
- Missing person's color of hair and eyes.
- Recent photos of missing person. Not sexy, glamor shots but normal everyday photos. Try and find ones where they are smiling with teeth showing, and 2 profile photos (right and left).
- Missing person's medical and/or mental diagnosis
- Missing person's tattoos, piercings, markings (scars, etc.), physical abnormalities
- Date/Time and location where missing person was last seen or heard from.
- Mode of transportation: walking, biking, driving own car, in someone else's car—if possible give details, color, license plate #, make, model, etc.
- Description of clothing last seen wearing.
- Who (if any) was missing person last known to be with and description of that person.
- Missing person cell phone number (give only to law enforcement)
- Missing person's social media sites (give only to law enforcement)
- Missing person's place of employment (give only to law enforcement)
- Bank account and credit card numbers (give only to law enforcement)
- List of friends and their contact information (give only to law enforcement)
- List of places missing person frequents.

Obtain from Law Enforcement:

- The Law Enforcement Agency Missing Person's Report #
- The National Crime Information Center **NCIC#** — This is very important for 2 reasons. 1) If your missing loved one is found anywhere in the U.S. all law enforcement have access to the NCIC. 2) Ethical missing person non profit organizations cannot work with you unless you have the NCIC #.
- Detective (or officer) name, badge number and direct contact information

Next:

- Enter your loved one into the **National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs.gov)**. Families are highly encouraged to do this themselves as you will know the information needed to pack this file full over some stranger doing it for you. Once entered look under "Contacts" and locate the information for the NamUs Regional Administrator. Contact this person to get the UNT Family Reference Sample DNA Kit sent to law enforcement. The Regional Administrator can also help you get dental records and fingerprint records (if in existence). Let your law enforcement know that NamUs will be contacting them to verify the case.

Missouri Missing 501(c)(3) Suggestions for what to do when your loved one is missing.

Page 2 of 2

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Keep all things under your control!!!!

- This is the best advice we can give you “KEEP ALL THINGS UNDER YOUR CONTROL” You, the family of the missing person, owns your case and no one else! Flyers, social media, news media All these things you can control only if it is under your control to begin with.

Missing Person’s Flyer

- It is best to do your own flyer that way you can control information and revise as necessary.
- Although Missouri Missing does do a flyer up all our information is from the Missouri State Highway Patrol who manages the missing person’s clearinghouse. It is bare minimum and that is all that is needed. We do have a board member who will do a more personalized flyer for the family on her own at no charge that has absolutely no branding on it but this is only done if family requests it.

Include on flyer:

- As you design the flyer think of more photos and less words.
- Recent photos of missing person. Not sexy, glamor shots but normal everyday photos. Try and find one where they are smiling with teeth showing, and 2 profile photos (right and left). The photo should be what people notice first! Make it big!
- The word “Missing” or “Endangered Missing” should be large and at the top. We no longer use the word “Runaway” as we know the youth are endangered missing.
- Missing person’s name along with nickname. Robert (Bob) Doe.
- Missing from City, County and State
- Missing person’s approximate height and weight
- Missing person’s color of hair and eyes.
- Description of clothing last seen wearing.
- If the person has a tattoo include a photo of it or detailed description.
- Date/Time and location where missing person was last seen or heard from. The flyer does not need to go into all details surrounding the missing person’s disappearance. It has to be a fast read and not too wordy as people will not stop and read it.
- Mode of transportation: walking, biking, driving own car, in someone else’s car—if possible give details, color, license plate #, make, model, etc. Include photo or find photo of similar transportation mode but make sure you say that it is not the actual vehicle, bike, etc.
- Contact information for law enforcement and put “or call 911.” Do not put personal phone numbers or email addresses out in public.
- If you have created a website or social media site include that URL address (link).

Social Media: Do make use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Make a Facebook page up dedicated to finding your missing loved one but set it up yourself. If you give this control over to a stranger they can bump you off the page and you will not be able to delete hurtful comments and ban drama makers. If you do not know how to set up social media sites, Missouri Missing can assist you at your request.

Fundraising: Families will often get so busy and tied up doing fundraisers that should not be a top priority. Many think they have to have a reward fund, but please know that rarely do reward funds bring in tips normally it just attracts reward mongers who will waste your time and cause you further trauma. Sometimes the families are raising funds for fliers but do know that many print shops will copy the flyer for free or at very reduced rates. And, families please be aware that no professional, ethical, non profit organizations will ever ask you to throw fundraisers for them.

Non Profits / Organizations: Research out and make sure that a non profit can prove they are a non profit and verify that information. Look for organizations where the founder and/or board members have or have had a loved one missing. Look to see if any of their board members have training in the world of the missing. There should be no fees associated or pressure to fundraise placed on the families of the missing.

Media:

- In most cases family has to be the one to go to media and stay on media to run stories. Be aware many times they have to have law enforcement’s permission to run the story. Keep in mind media likes photo opportunities—candle vigils, searches something they can focus their cameras on. They also like time markers such as anniversary of missing date; birthdays, holidays or tie into other local stories.

Don’t Accept:

- If adult or teen you will often hear “They are voluntarily missing.” No one goes voluntarily missing as it is always something medical/mental, an accident or something criminal done to the person or by the person. Sane, healthy, non criminals do not vacate their lives. *Your loved one is missing — - people’s assumptions don’t count.*

Watch out for those that will prey on you:

- psychic scammers,
- people claiming they are law enforcement or past law enforcement and they are not;
- PI’s wanting to charge you big bucks ... most will do the missing for free or at very prorated costs;
- people calling themselves organizations or non profits and all they are is a page/group on social media site;
- so called crime boards as they are normally filled with people that only exist to cause more trauma to the families....it’s their form of sick entertainment;
- reward mongers;
- people who have “tip lines’ on their websites or social media — **all tips should go straight to law enforcement not to a stranger;**
- crazy blog pretend news sites that have bloggers that pretend they are reporters/writers