Missing Persons in Saskatchewan: Police Policy and Practice

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following information was prepared by Dr. Jeffrey Pfeifer, Professor of Psychology and Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies at the University of Regina. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Saskatchewan Police Commission with information on the current provincial policing policies and practices relating to missing persons.

The report itself is divided into a number of sections. Section 2 (below) provides a summary of the background information regarding the issue of police practices and missing persons in Saskatchewan. Section 3 describes the overarching purpose of this report as well as defining a number of important concepts related to the project. Section 4 describes the methodology employed for this report and Section 5 describes the results of the information collected. Finally, Section 6 describes a number of important areas for consideration and provides suggestions for addressing these areas.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In November 2005, the Government of Saskatchewan announced that it would be supporting an initiative to examine the issue of missing persons. Recognizing the breadth of the issue, the Government put forward a comprehensive 3-part response that included:

- Additional funding for police officer support (including positions for the RCMP and both the Regina and Saskatoon Police Services),

- Examining the practicality of developing and implementing standardized police policies, protocols, and practices across the province (inclusive of the six municipal police services as well as the RCMP), and

- Establishing a provincial partnership committee to examine the issue of missing persons in Saskatchewan.

In December of 2005 a Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons was instituted with representation from a variety of organizations. According to the Interim Report of the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons, representation includes:

- RCMP
- Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation (SAWCC)
- Status of Women Office, department of Labour
- FSIN Women's Commission
- Child Find Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police (SACP)
- Metis Family and Community Justice Services of Saskatchewan Inc.
- STOPS to violence
- Saskatchewan Justice (including PP&E and Law Enforcement Branches)

- Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan
- Corrections and Public Safety Department – Emergency Management Branch
- Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers
- Saskatchewan Police Commission

This paper speaks directly to the second part of the Government initiative regarding missing persons. Specifically, it is the goal of this paper to provide information that may be used to assess the practicality developing and implementing standardized police policies, protocols, and practices across the province (inclusive of the six municipal police services as well as the RCMP).

3. DEFINING THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

As stated above, the overarching purpose of this report is to provide the Provincial Missing Persons Committee with an overview of the current issues and challenges relating to police services in Saskatchewan on the issue of missing persons. It must be noted, however, that although this paper seeks only to examine the role of police with regard to missing persons, it is clear that any effective response to the issue of missing persons must be accomplished through an integration of communities, agencies, organizations, and individuals. It is hoped that the following information may provide some useful insights into the establishment of over-arching initiatives.

In order to contextualize the issue and delineate the applicability of the information presented below, it is important to first provide a number of definitions related to the topic at hand.

- *Definition of Missing Person* – For the purposes of this report, a missing person is defined as someone who has been formally reported to a policing agency in the Province of Saskatchewan. It is important to highlight this definition for a number of reasons. First, there is clearly a significant amount of confusion over when an individual should be defined as missing. For example, is someone missing if they have purposefully left their family and are of the age of majority? Is someone missing if they are not reported as missing by anyone? Is someone missing if their family does not believe they are missing but others do? These questions represent just a sample of those related to the debate over when an individual is officially missing. It is clear that the Provincial Missing Persons Committee should discuss this issue and attempt to reach an informed decision over when a person is defined as missing. However, for the purposes of this report, it is most effective to define a person as missing from the point of a formal report to a police service due to the fact that this document is specifically examining policing practices and policies for missing persons.

- *Frontline vs. Cold Case Missing Persons* – As per agreement with the contracting agency, the following report emphasizes the examination of frontline policies and practices regarding missing persons rather than the policies and practices related to the investigation of persons missing for longer than 6 months

(generally defined as a cold case). This is not to suggest that cold case missing persons are any less important than other missing persons. Rather, it is simply that the specific mandate of this report is to investigate frontline missing person procedures. It should be noted, however, that there are important implications that can be drawn from this report that would directly relate to cold cases given that every cold case missing person began as a frontline report.

- *Policing Agencies* – This report provides information regarding the missing persons practices and policies for all six Saskatchewan Municipal Police Services (i.e., Estevan, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, and Weyburn) as well as the RCMP.

4. METHODOLOGY

In order to provide the Provincial Missing Persons Committee with an adequate amount of information to contribute to their decisions on issues related to missing persons in Saskatchewan, a number of interviews were conducted with key informants and statistical information was collected from all police services. Specifically, the methodology engaged in for this report involved three steps: interviews with police regarding current practices and policies, interviews with key informants regarding perceptions of policing practices, and police data on missing persons.

4.1 Police Interviews
Interviews were conducted with representatives from all six municipal services as well as the RCMP. Although there was no formal protocol for the interview, specific elements discussed included the following:

- Providing a description of the current missing persons procedures. Specifically, police were asked to walk through the steps that occur from the moment a call is received (or an individual comes to the front desk) reporting a missing person.

- Providing copies of any documentation related to the current missing persons practices.

- Providing copies of any formal policies relating to missing persons.

- Providing comments on challenges relating to the investigation of missing persons.

4.2 Key Informant Interviews
Interviews were also conducted with a number of individuals having specific interest in, and knowledge of, missing persons. Interviews involved asking each individual to comment on a number of areas including: (a) their knowledge of current policing policies, (b) identification of challenges regarding policing practices, and (c) suggestions for effective alteration of policing practices to better respond to the issue of missing

persons. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the following organizations:

- Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation
- Status of Women Office
- FSIN Women's Secretariat
- Child Find Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Police Commission
- Metis Family and Community Justice Services of Saskatchewan Inc.
- STOPS to Violence
- First Nations and Metis Relations
- Sask Justice – Law Enforcement Services
- Alzheimer's Society of Saskatchewan
- Sask Justice – Policy, Planning and Evaluation
- Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers

4.3 Police Data
In addition to the above interviews, each police service was also asked to provide data on missing persons for 2003, 2004 and 2005. Specifically, each service was asked to provide: (a) the number of reports they had received of missing persons for each of these years, (b) the number of actual persons reported missing for each of these years (it should be noted that this is different from the number of reports in that some individuals are reported as missing a number of times in any given year), (c) the number of CPIC entries made for missing persons for each of these years, and (d) the number of "cleared" cases for each of these years (it should be noted that the definition of cleared was a count of cases concluded in the same year that the report was filed).

It was felt that the police data described above was a vital component of this report due to the fact that there was no consistent or verifiable count of missing persons for the Province of Saskatchewan. Estimates varied wildly and there was an immense amount of confusion regarding the differentiation between *reports* of missing persons and *actual numbers* of missing persons. For example, if one individual were to run away from home 10 times in 2005 it would be recorded as 10 reports but in effect it is still only 1 individual that is missing for 2005. This is a very important distinction in that it helps to highlight challenges related to issues such as chronic runaways.

5. RESULTS

Both interviews, as well as the statistical data, provided a wealth of information regarding the issue of police practices and policies for missing persons. A summary of the information is provided below.

5.1 Police Interviews
As described above, each police service was asked to provide information regarding the current procedure for their service in missing persons cases. This information was recorded and a formal description was created by the author of this report for each police

service. Descriptions were then sent to each service to verify that it was an accurate representation of their practices. Verification of the description was provided by all services except Prince Albert. The descriptions may be found in Appendix 1 of this document. Analysis of the procedures and observations may be found in Section 6 below.

In addition to the above, each service also provided documentation relating to specific practices employed on missing persons cases (see Appendix 2) as well as any documentation reflecting their overarching missing persons policy (see Appendix 3). A summary of this information as well as observations regarding the content are discussed below in Section 6. Finally, police service representatives also provided information on the challenges they currently face regarding missing persons cases. These challenges included:

- The resource and personnel issues involved in dealing with chronic runaways.

- Frustration over not being able to provide more open communication with families of missing persons due to evidential concerns.

- Frustration over not having the resources to make every missing person case a high priority.

- Confusion over who should be informed regarding missing persons (i.e., the immediate family, extended family, community representatives).

- Concern regarding the length of time before an individual is reported as missing in some cases.

It is important to note that throughout the interview process all police service representatives indicated a continual and sincere commitment to improving their practices with regard to missing persons cases. In addition, throughout the entire interview process, there was no indication that any one police service was not committed to working with all other services in the province (and elsewhere) in order to solve missing persons cases. The communication level between services with regard to missing persons is exceptionally high and is perhaps best illustrated by the development and implementation of a Provincial Cold Case Committee that regularly meets to discuss cold cases in the province.

5.2 Key Informant Interviews
As with the police interviews, key informant interviews also yielded a number of important issues related to missing persons in Saskatchewan. These issues included:

- A concern over not knowing the current missing persons policies for police services.

- Frustration with issues related to communication between families and the police services.

- Challenges with attempting to implement cooperative programs with police services (e.g., Safely Home Program).

- Frustration with the number of missing persons reported each year in Saskatchewan.

- Concerns regarding the level of input from the community regarding missing persons case.

- Confusion over the role of search and rescue in missing persons cases.

- Confusion over the actual number of missing persons cases in Saskatchewan.

- Concern over gender and racial trends with regard to missing persons cases.

It is important to note that throughout the interviews, it was clear that all key informants perceived the police to be open to suggestions to change and did not indicate that any of the above issues were due to intentional bias on the part of the police service. In addition, it is worth noting that when asked how the above issues might be positively impacted by revising policing practices, most key informants were unable to provide concrete solutions.

5.3 Police Data
As stated above, police services were asked to provide specific missing persons data for 2003, 2004, and 2005. The data may be found in Appendix 4 and consists of the overall information regarding missing persons as well as gender, race and age distributions. Although data was collected for 2003, 2004, and 2005, it is important to note that the RCMP was only able to provide information for 2005 due to a change in their software system. As such, it is suggested that the 2005 data be employed as the most accurate illustration of missing persons data for Saskatchewan. An analysis of the 2005 data indicates a number of interesting points, including the following:

- During 2005, a total of 4496 missing persons *reports* were taken by police agencies in Saskatchewan. It is important to note, however, that the number of reports is significantly different from the actual number of persons missing in the province that year. That is to say, although there were 4496 reports filed, only 2956 people were reported missing in 2005. This differential is a direct result of some individuals missing a number of times during the year. These two numbers are a clear illustration of the challenges facing the police services with regard to chronic runaways.

- The data also reveal that although there is a small gender difference with regard to missing persons cases, for the most part there appears to be an equal distribution of males and females.

- The data also clearly indicates that the majority of missing persons are white or First Nation/Aboriginal. It is important to note however that there are an inordinate number of reports for which race is listed as unknown.

- The data indicates a clear trend with regard to age distributions with the bulk of missing persons falling between the ages of 9 and 18. This age group accounts for a significant majority of the missing persons in Saskatchewan. It is worth noting that the drop in numbers after the age of 18 is likely to indicate that the individual is now of the age of majority and therefore is less likely to be reported as missing if they leave home.

- The data indicate that only a limited number of missing persons reports are entered on CPIC. There may in fact be very legitimate reasons for this such as the fact that a child is reported as missing but then located within hours, or that in a situation of limited personnel a conscious choice is made to allocate officers to the search rather than to CPIC entries.

- There is an apparent anomaly with regard to the numbers reported by the Saskatoon Police Service. Demographically, it appears that the Saskatoon Police Service is similar to the Regina Police Service as well as the RCMP, yet the numbers reported are significantly lower for Saskatoon. It may of course simply be the case that the number of missing persons is in fact lower in Saskatoon; however, this anomaly is more likely a reflection of differential recording practices.

6. OBSERVATIONS

As stated above, the overarching purpose of this document is to provide decision makers with information related to the stated goals of the Government of Saskatchewan with regard to missing persons policing practices and specifically with regard to the practicality of developing standardized police practices and policies across the province. The following observations provide potential guidance with regard to this proposition. It is important to repeat that, although the following comments and suggestions are directed specifically at police practices and policies for frontline missing persons cases, there are important implications for cold cases as well as for any attempt at a broader more inclusive initiative to address the challenges of missing persons (such as the Provincial Missing Persons Committee).

6.1 Standardization of Practice – *The Standardized Component Model*
It is clear that one of the key questions to be answered regarding the current missing person's police policies and practices revolves around the concept of standardization. As stated above, examining the practicality of developing and implementing standardized

police policies, protocols, and practices across the province represents one of the three-prong initiatives announced by the Government of Saskatchewan in November 2005.

In response to this issue, it is suggested that the most effective approach to standardization lies not in a strict regimentation of consistent procedures across the province, but rather through instituting a ***standardized component model*** with regard to policing and missing persons. Although it may be argued that the standardization of police practices and policies would lead to an increased level of effectiveness, a review of the current situation suggests that this response might not be the most effective given the diverse geographic and demographic aspects of Saskatchewan. That is, although a review of the current practices and policies for each of the police services in Saskatchewan (including the RCMP) indicates a wide variation, there is an equal variation in the challenges faced by each service. Specifically, each service operates within a context that requires differential approaches and responses due to a variety of elements such as geographic locale, community size, and jurisdictional size. For example, the RCMP holds responsibility for a wide variety of geographic areas including remote and northern regions. The Saskatoon and Regina Police Services, in contrast, are responsible for fairly large urban areas containing a variety of distinct communities. The Estevan, Weyburn, and Moose Jaw Police Services are responsible for smaller urban areas with a somewhat more homogeneous population. Prince Albert Police Service, while similar to the Estevan, Weyburn and Moose Jaw Police Services in terms of jurisdictional size, also faces a number of additional challenges given the city's northern location as well as its cultural diversity.

Given the above, it may be argued that instituting a standardized and regimented set of missing persons policies and practices for all six police services in Saskatchewan would be tantamount to ignoring the individual challenges faced by each of the services. On the other hand, by not instituting standardization across the police services, there is a clear risk that individual services may not engage in the most effective responses to the issue of missing persons. The challenge, therefore, is to create a system whereby a level of standardization is instituted while continuing to allow each service to respond to the issue of missing persons most effectively given the differentials in jurisdictional composition and geographic challenges.

A partial response to this challenge may be found through an examination of the descriptions of the "Missing Persons Procedures" for each of the municipal police services in Saskatchewan as well as the RCMP (see Appendix 1). A review of these descriptions clearly indicates that there are an identifiable number of procedures that are currently being employed by services throughout the province. It is equally clear that not every service engages in each of these procedures and that there is a differential in the application of these procedures across the services that do engage in them. Simply put, when one reviews and analyzes the current missing persons procedures of police services in Saskatchewan (Appendix 1), seven (7) identifiable progressive components appear. These components are as follows:

1. ***Formal Policy*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service has a formal policy to guide practices relating to missing persons reports.

2. ***Designated Contact Person*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service has a designated individual/position who receives all reports regarding missing persons and is responsible for gathering initial information.

3. ***Specialized Preliminary Information Form*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service currently has a designated specialized information form that guides the initial gathering of facts when a person is reported as missing.

4. ***Specialized Investigation Information Form*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service has a designated specialized information form that guides the gathering of facts by the investigating officer.

5. ***Specified Priority Variables*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service has a formal list of specific variables that impact the priority given to a missing persons report (e.g., age of person missing, weather conditions, etc.).

6. ***Formal Prioritization of Investigation Across Missing Persons*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service has a formal policy for assessing the priority of missing persons reports.

7. ***Formal Prioritization of Missing Persons Investigations Across All Investigations*** – This component refers to whether or not the police service has a formal policy for evaluating the priority of a missing person investigation within the context of all investigations being carried out (e.g., homicide, assault, domestic violence, theft).

The following Table summarizes the 6 municipal services as well as the RCMP with regard to the above components.

Table 1: *Presence of Identified Components for Each Police Service*

Service	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7
Estevan	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Moose Jaw	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Prince Albert	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Regina	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
RCMP	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Saskatoon	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Weyburn	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

NOTE: Column numbers represent the 7 components described above.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that police services across Saskatchewan be encouraged to adopt a ***standardized component model*** regarding reports and investigations of missing persons. The standardization, however, should be limited to ensuring that each of the components described above are formally established and implemented for each service. The specifics of each component, however, should be left to the distinct needs of each service given their unique jurisdictional, geographic and/or demographic composition. Simply put, it is suggested that the implementation of a standardized component model would result in the standardization of a missing persons procedure across police services that includes seven (7) identifiable components, while recognizing that the specific practice developed for each step in the procedure need not be standardized across police services.

A decision regarding the acceptance of the standardized component model may be aided by a more detailed description of each of the components, especially in terms of describing specific examples currently employed by police services as well as delineating specific suggestions to guide the individual development of practices by each service for each component. This information follows.

6.1.1 Formal Policy – A review of Table 1 indicates that 5 of the 7 police services in Saskatchewan (i.e., Moose Jaw, Regina, RCMP, Saskatoon, and Weyburn) currently have formal policies regarding missing persons (see Appendix 3). Although both Estevan and Prince Albert Police Services both have informal policies regarding missing persons, no formal overarching policy is currently in place. It is important to note that although the majority of police services have formal policies regarding missing persons, there is a significant variation in the level to which these policies address specific concerns and challenges relating to the successful investigation of missing persons. In some cases, it appears that the formal policy simply delineates a number of factors that are considered to be of importance in missing persons cases (e.g., describes the elements for Amber Alert, or lists factors related to prioritization such as age or weather conditions). In other cases, the formal policy presents a more theoretical description of missing persons responses and, as such, provides very little direction with regard to the actual procedures to be employed.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that all police services in Saskatchewan develop a formal missing persons policy. Although it is recognized that each service will have some variation in their policy given jurisdictional, geographic and demographic differences, it is suggested that each policy be based on at least two guiding principle. First, it is essential that the policy represent an *overarching* vision regarding missing persons rather than providing specific guidance. This principle is based on the fact that the subsequent components described below will allow for specific illustration of the practices for each service and, as such, the formal policy would be a more effective document should it give an overview of the process rather than specifics. Second, it is important that the policy clearly reflect how the missing persons practices for each police service are reflective of the demographic, jurisdictional, and geographic needs of the community being

served. It is suggested, therefore, that each police service develop a formal overarching policy regarding missing persons and that this policy explains how the practices (i.e., below components), as a whole, effectively respond to the specific needs of the community being served.

6.1.2 Designated Contact Person – Currently only the Prince Albert Police Service provides a specific designated contact for missing persons reports. Specifically, any incoming calls regarding missing persons are transferred immediately from the Communication Officer to the CPIC Operator who is responsible for gathering preliminary information. Although the inclusion of this component is an effective practice for the Prince Albert Police Service, it is important to investigate what specific purpose this initiative provides before recommending its extension to other police services. It appears that one of the major benefits of having a specific designated contact for missing persons reports is that this individual is more likely to (a) glean additional specific information from the person reporting when compared to a Communications Officer who takes preliminary information about a variety of offences and situations, and (b) have a more comprehensive vision when evaluating a missing persons report due to the fact that they have a high level of knowledge regarding all missing persons in the jurisdiction. It is recognized, however, that it would be extremely difficult for police services with larger jurisdictions (i.e., RCMP, Regina, and Saskatoon) to implement a designated contact person for missing persons. As such, the designation of such a person is not necessary IF each police service institutes a specialized preliminary information form and ensures that prioritization decisions regarding action on a missing person are not made by a Communication Officer.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that any police service that is able to successfully implement a designated contact person for missing persons reports should do so but should also ensure that the individual employs a specialized preliminary information form. In addition, it should be clear what decision making responsibilities any such designated contact should have for prioritization of investigations and what training they require in order to most effectively make these decisions. If it is not feasible for a police service to implement a designated contact person for missing persons reports, then it is imperative that the Communication Officer (or anyone who does take the report) employ a specialized preliminary information form (see 6.1.3 below) and that the individual not be placed in a position where they are forced to make a decision or recommendation regarding the prioritization of the file/case.

6.1.3 Specialized Preliminary Investigation Form – As illustrated in Table 1, the Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon police services currently have specialized preliminary investigation forms (see Appendix 2 for sample forms). It is clear that the effective and timely resolution of a missing persons report is significantly aided by ensuring that certain important preliminary information is captured during the initial communication with the individual making the report. As such, it is clear that the more information that can be captured during the initial communication, the better an investigating officer is equipped to follow-up the report. The main challenge regarding

this situation, however, is twofold. First, it is important to begin an investigation as soon as possible in the case of a missing person and, as such, the Communication Officer (who is the most likely to be taking the report) will generally attempt to get as much information as possible but is also trying to pass that information on to the investigating officer as quickly as possible. In addition, Communication Officers are often very busy and as such are placed in a position where they are required to document the barest of information as quickly as possible so that they can continue on to the next call for assistance.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that each police service develop a specialized preliminary information form that is employed for all missing persons reports. The form should be employed regardless of who takes the report (e.g., Communication Officer, Sworn Officer) and should be developed through consultation with investigating officers who work missing persons cases. It is clear that each police service experiences different demands with regard to offence reports and as such must ensure that preliminary reports are designed to provide the most important information in the shortest amount of time. It is the responsibility of each service to decide what and how much information is required at the first contact in order to most effectively serve its community. It is suggested, however that this decision be guided by an informed evaluation of the type of preliminary information that is most pertinent for quickly and successfully resolving a missing persons report.

6.1.4 Specialized Investigation Information Form – Currently the Moose Jaw Police Service is the only agency that has a specialized investigation information form for missing persons (see Appendix 2). For the most part, once an officer is provided with the preliminary information about a missing person and is dispatched to follow-up on the report, he or she is provided with little or no specific investigative information guidance other than their "investigative experience". Although it is clear that most officers have a wealth of investigative experience and are very effective at successfully employing it, it is also clear that officers investigating a missing person report may be junior and have limited investigative experience. It is also important to note that the specific information gleaned by the investigating officer may prove invaluable should it turn out that the investigation is more serious in nature (i.e., abduction, homicide, etc).

❖ Given the above, it is suggested each police service develop a specialized investigation information form that is employed by the initial investigating officer. These forms should be concise and based on an informed analysis of what each police service deems to be pertinent information that must be collected during the initial investigation. It is recognized that the most important factor in the initial investigation is to engage in a brief search of the area to ensure the person is not there. However, it is also clear that during this initial investigation, officers acquire information about the missing person from the parties involved. Although it may seem obvious to most officers what information is the most pertinent, there is no consistency regarding the information gleaned. As with the specialized preliminary information form described above, it is suggested that the

investigation form contain a limited number of concise questions that are demonstrably related to the successful conclusion of a missing persons report.

6.1.5 Specified Priority Variables – All police services have either a formal or informal list of specified priority variables that impact decisions regarding the priority of a missing persons report. A review of documentation provided, as well as information gleaned from interviews, indicates that the list of specified priority variables includes:

- Indication of suspicious circumstances
- Age of the missing person
- Mental/physical ability of the missing person
- Weather conditions
- Terrain

In general, these variables are included as information that would flag an investigation as a higher priority due to the fact that they relate to the vulnerability of the reported missing person. A review of the various police policies (see Appendix 3), however, indicates that there is a significant disparity regarding the interpretation of many of the above variables. For example, in terms of age, the Regina Police Service Policy indicates that an investigation will commence immediately "in the case of a very young missing person", yet no specified age is listed. The Saskatoon Police Service indicates that reports of missing persons 12 years of age or younger, "a patrol unit will be dispatched to the scene to initiate patrol response." In addition, some policies explicitly indicate that the response prioritization is also impacted if the missing person is elderly while other policies do not refer to this variable.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that all police services provide an explicit description of specified priority variables that may impact the speed or level of response. In addition, it is suggested that these variables are defined consistently across police services. For example, discussions should be encouraged between police services, governmental and social agencies, community representatives, and others to define the age at which an individual will be gauged as a child and therefore meet the age vulnerability factor listed above. It is clear that a young person is by definition more vulnerable and therefore should trigger a priority status if missing, what is unclear is what that age should be defined as. Discussions should be encouraged and a set defined age should be implemented across all services. It is recognized that many aspects of policing involve a significant amount of discretion in order to promote effectiveness. The above suggestion regarding concrete definitions (across all police services) on priority variables is not meant to remove the use of discretion on the part of the police. Rather, it is suggested that adoption of this approach would serve to indicate to the public that there are clearly defined and consistently employed key markers that would activate a priority response to a missing person. This does not preclude the continual use of discretion on the part of any one police service. For example, if the agreed upon minimum age that would trigger a priority was 10,

this would not preclude any service from also prioritizing children aged 11, 12, 13 (etc.) as well (see Section 6.2 below).

6.1.6 Prioritization of Investigation Across Missing Persons – This component refers to whether or not a police service has a formal policy indicating how missing person cases are prioritized when there are a number of such cases. This component might be of more importance for police services, where there are a large number of missing persons cases on a consistent basis (i.e., Regina, Saskatoon and the RCMP). The specific issue here revolves around how a police service prioritizes any set of current missing persons cases it has. What specific aspects of the case or the persons involved dictate the priority of theses cases? Of all police services in Saskatchewan, only Moose Jaw has a formal stated policy regarding how missing person investigations are prioritized. It is important to note that information gleaned from interviews suggests that this issue is one that is of significant importance to a variety of social, special interest, and community groups.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that each service create a formal policy regarding how missing persons cases are prioritized (see Section 6.2 below).

6.1.7 Prioritization of Missing Persons Investigations Across All Investigations – Information provided during the interviews conducted for this report indicate that a significant number of key informants are confused about what priority missing persons cases have in comparison to other cases. In general, the confusion seems to revolve around the issue of how missing persons "fit" within the range of offences and issues facing a police service. For example, in general, is a missing person report a higher priority than a domestic violence report or an assault report. It is clear that this is a very difficult question for any police service, or indeed even for the community itself, to answer. In essence, police services are faced with a situation in which they must constantly prioritize a myriad of differential reports and decide where to invest their resources. There is a clear priority placed on reports of situations that are "in progress" such as a break and enter or assault in progress. Beyond that however, decisions appear to be made on an as needed basis and there appear to be very few formal guidelines for making these decisions.

❖ Given the above it is suggested that the current reality of policing does not allow for any single police service to formally state a policy indicating the overall priority of missing persons in comparison to other categories of offences and issues. Decisions at the policing level regarding this component are continually made on a daily basis and are a result of an analysis of resources available that day, level and types of other offences being committed that day, and personnel levels. It is clear, however that the public and community groups are interested and confused by this issue and, as such, it is suggested that this component be addressed at the government level. In essence it is suggested that the provincial government take on the responsibility of ensuring that the public and communities across the province are cognizant of the priority that missing persons cases have in comparison to other cases.

6.2 Prioritization of Cases and Response Times

It is clear from the results of interviews that one of the most contentious and confusing issues for the public is how any one missing persons case is prioritized – especially in terms of the speed and level of investigation it triggers. Interview information consistently indicates that there is a high level of confusion over how the response decision is made in each missing person report. At some level there is indeed a basis for this confusion when one examines the actual practices of police services regarding these reports, especially given the need for individual case analysis on the part of the police. In essence, it may be argued that the confusion and concern of the public may in part be due to the fact that there is a need on the part of community members to be provided with a clear description of how missing persons cases are prioritized in *general*, yet the police view each case on its *specific* aspects. Simply put, the public wishes to know how a generic missing persons case is prioritized and are somewhat frustrated by the police response that it depends on the specifics of each case. Given this situation, the question that remains is whether there is a compromise that allows for an acceptable response to the community that does not negatively impact the need of the police services to individually assess each case in order to respond appropriately.

❖ It is suggested that the above issue may be addressed through the development and consistent adherence to a ***risk assessment and triage response approach*** to missing persons reports. That is, it is suggested that police services, and the Government of Saskatchewan adopt a position that encourages the public to view missing persons reports within a risk assessment framework. It is clear that most institutions (e.g., health, education, corrections) that experience a demand that is higher than available resources employ a risk assessment analysis to evaluate each specific case. For example, if one were to examine the health care system in Saskatchewan (or any other province) it is clear that the demand outweighs available resources and, as such, each individual case is assessed based on level of risk to the individual. It may be argued that given the number of missing persons reports annually in this province (i.e., 4496 reports in 2005), combined with other reports of offences and infractions, there is a similar need to institute a risk assessment model and to ensure that the public understands its application to policing in the same way it understands its application to health. It is also clear that the development of a risk assessment model is a direct link to a formal triage approach. Again, with reference to the health system, when an individual arrives at an Emergency Room in a hospital, their level of risk is assessed by a trained individual and a triage approach is employed to prioritize when they will receive attention. Although it may be argued that the public does not like this approach and would prefer that everyone is attended to immediately, there is some indication that the public also recognizes the resource issues surrounding health and therefore accepts the approach. As such, it is suggested that the Government of Saskatchewan, community organizations and representatives, and the police services engage in an active program to aid the public in understanding that the policing response to missing persons must be viewed through a risk assessment and triage response approach. For their part, it is suggested that the police

services develop and consistently employ (across services) a standardized set of risk assessment factors that would aid in the triage of missing persons cases.

6.3 Identification of Decision Points and Decision Makers

It is clear from a review of the above observations, as well as the descriptions of the missing persons procedures for each police service (Appendix 1), that in every missing persons case, decisions must be made regarding the assessment of risk and prioritization of response. What is also clear is that these decisions, or parts thereof, are currently being made by a myriad of individuals. For example, in Saskatoon, decisions are being made by a Reader, while in the RCMP decisions are being made by Communications Officers as well as individual investigators. In other services, decisions are left to a Desk Sergeant. Although there does not appear to be a need for instituting a standardized practice for all police services regarding who makes each decision, there is a need to ensure that each service ensures that each decision is made in the most appropriate fashion. That is, this situation may be seen as potentially problematic especially in terms of identifying who should be making these decisions and how much training that person has to make the decision. It is also clear that each service differs in terms of their personnel numbers and resource levels and, as such a standardized practice regarding this issue would most likely not be possible.

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that each police service review its current practices and specifically identify who in their service makes a decision in a missing persons case and what type of decision they make. It is then imperative that each service ensure that these individuals are provided with the necessary training and specific guidelines to make these decisions.

6.4 Communication with Family of Missing Persons

It is clear that one significant concern for community representatives regarding missing persons cases revolves around the issue of communication with the family of the missing person. Most of the concern appears to revolve around the level of communication with the police in the early stages of an investigation and/or the level of feedback from the police as the case becomes more long-term. Before attempting to address this important concern, however, it is imperative that two factors be addressed. First, any communication strategy that is ultimately developed MUST be an overarching initiative that involves the collaboration of the police, community representatives and government officials. As such, any response to this challenge is best accomplished by the Provincial Missing Persons Committee (which includes police representation) rather than through a police only initiative. This is not to suggest that the police services cannot also play a significant role in addressing this issue through service initiatives (see suggestion below), but it is meant to indicate that this issue is one that extends beyond the police. Second, it is important to recognize that this issue is one of *communication* not *information*. That is to say, many of the concerns regarding the current state of communication between police services and the family of a missing person involve a need for communication about the case not simply relaying information. Communication, by definition, includes information but also includes elements such as a two-way dialogue as well as attention to

emotional state etc. In addition, it is important to recognize that communication is a two-way street and, as such, there is an obligation on the part of communities and families to also address this issue.

As stated above, despite these two caveats, there are potential responses that the police themselves might initiate. The main challenges for the police regarding this issue appear to be: (1) that they are sometimes unable to communicate certain aspects of a case because it is an ongoing investigation, (2) that in lengthy missing persons cases there is often very little "new" information to report and, as such, communication with family members often declines, and (3) that police services attempt to communicate with the family of a missing person but are often unsure of who they should be communicating with (e.g., immediate family, extended family, community leaders, interested non-family parties).

❖ Given the above, it is suggested that police services review their current communications policies and ensure that they are consistent and standardized. In addition, it is suggested that police services, as well as other agencies (including the Government of Saskatchewan) investigate the possibility of expanding the role of Victim Services to include responding to the needs of missing persons families. It is clear that Victim Services Programs are well-positioned and well-trained to deal with victims and their families through a variety of efforts including communication. As such, it is suggested that should the current vision of Victim Services be expanded to include the perception of families of missing persons as victims, there is a significant possibility that some concerns with communication would be alleviated.

6.5 Data on Missing Persons
As stated above, the 2005 missing persons data presented in Appendix 4 represents the most accurate indication of the missing persons situation in the Province of Saskatchewan. Although statistics and estimates abound with regard to this number, there was little empirical evidence that any of these estimates were reflective of actual numbers. This is no longer the case. The numbers reported in this document reflect an immense amount of effort on the part of each police service to provide the most accurate data possible. The collection of this data provides impetus for a number of comments.

- The difficulty encountered while trying to obtain this data clearly indicates a need for all police services to investigate the possibility of implementing a more systematic approach to collecting data on: (a) missing persons reports, (b) actual missing persons, (c) basic demographic information about missing persons (i.e., age, race and gender), and (d) CPIC entry information. It is important that police services examine this suggestion as it is clear that any analysis of the impact of initiatives aimed at missing persons will require continual access to data in order to verify whether the initiative is having an impact.

- It is also suggested that all police services collect the above data in a consistent manner in order to ensure that the numbers are reliable and valid.

- It is suggested that all police services refer to the numbers provided in Appendix 4 when discussing the issue of missing persons in order to avoid any confusion with the media or community organizations.

- It is important that police services across the province review the data provided and initiate discussions as to where they might be able to make an impact. For example, it may be argued that any initiative relating to increasing clearance rate percentages for frontline missing persons may not be the most effective approach given that clearance rates are inordinately high already. As such, it is suggested that police services, in conjunction with community representatives and the Government of Saskatchewan, discuss how they are most able to make an impact on the number of missing persons reports and/or the actual number of missing persons.

- It is suggested that police services discuss the issue of CPIC entries and attempt to develop a standard policy with regard to this issue. This suggestion is not predicated on any indication that the current variation in policies has caused a significant investigative problem. Rather, this suggestion is made in order to ensure that community representatives and organizations can be provided with a standard policy that better explains the CPIC entry system, thereby eliminating some confusion and concern over the issue.

6.6 Response Time

It is clear from the results of interviews that there is confusion and a certain level of concern with the "quickness" with which police services respond to a missing persons report. Perceptions include a belief that there is a standard 48 hour waiting period before an investigation begins and a belief that response times vary for cases involving chronic runaways. An analysis of the information gained from the interviews clearly indicates that there is no official 48 hour rule in place regarding investigations nor is there any official differentiation in policy for chronic runaway reports. In essence, it appears that the police take all reports of missing persons seriously but that each case is assessed and the subsequent response is based on the specific of the case (e.g., age of the person, weather conditions, chronicity) as well as the available resources and the other current calls for assistance. This approach may lead to a perception of differential responding based the factors described above. In addition, there is a clear indication that in cases of missing persons, family members tend to estimate the response time differently than the police. Specifically, a parent of a missing child is likely to estimate the child as missing from the moment he or she does not appear when they were supposed to. In contrast, the police service would tend to estimate the response time from the moment they were notified of the disappearance. As such, if a child goes missing at 4 pm but is not reported to the police until 9 pm, the parent will likely perceive the child to have been missing for 5 hours by 9 pm but the police will perceive the child to have been missing since the report. Given this discrepancy it is not uncommon for a parent (or others) to perceive a 5 hour response delay on the part of the police even if an investigation is launched immediately at 9 pm.

- Given the above, it is suggested that police services as well as community representatives ensure that the public understand that response times are in missing persons cases should be measured from the time of the formal report made to police.

- It is also suggested that police services consider adopting a measured response system for missing persons similar to that currently employed by the Moose Jaw Police Service (see Moose Jaw Description in Appendix 1). This system indicates three levels of response and clearly defines the factors that mitigate which level of response is selected. A system such as this would be helpful in communicating to the public what factors impact the response time for a missing persons report.

6.7 Knowledge of Policy

It is abundantly clear from the interviews with stakeholders that there is little knowledge regarding the current missing persons police policies. This is an important fact given that these stakeholders (and their organizations) are uniquely positioned to communicate information about police services to communities.

- ❖ Given the above, it is suggested that police services ensure that their policies on missing persons are transmitted and understood to stakeholder organizations.

6.8 Repeat Reports of Missing Persons

Even the briefest inspection of the police data on missing persons clearly indicates that there is a serious challenge with regard to individuals who are reported missing a number of times in any given year. For example, in 2005, although there were 4496 reports of missing persons in Saskatchewan, there were 2956 actual people missing. It is clear that the issue of repeat missing persons, especially chronic runaways, is a major challenge for police services. One might argue that if there were no repeat reports during 2005, then there would have only been a total of 2956 reports – almost a 35% reduction in cases. It is less clear, however, what role that police services can play in reducing the chronicity of some individuals with regard to missing persons reports.

- ❖ Given the above, it is suggested that police services proactively engage in discussions with communities as well as other governmental agencies to develop comprehensive programs to address this issue.

- ❖ It is also suggested that police services discuss the issue of what constitutes a "chronic" runaway. Currently there is no formal definition for how many times an individual must run away before they are labelled as chronic.

6.9 Search and Rescue

Information from interviews with the police as well as stakeholders indicates that the Search and Rescue program currently plays an important role in the missing persons situation. It is clear, however, that there are a number of confusing issues related to search and rescue, including: (a) when search and rescue is called, (b) participation in

search and rescue by local residents, and (c) liability issues related to search and rescue members if injured while engaged in a project.

❖ It is suggested that police services develop a consistent policy regarding issues related to the use and operation of search and rescue teams. It is further suggested that this police be developed in consultation with search and rescue organizations, governmental agencies, and communities (especially northern and remote communities).

6.10 Outside Agency Programs

There have been a number of programs developed by outside agencies that have a direct potential impact on issues related to policing and missing persons. Perhaps most noteworthy is the Safely Home Program developed by the Alzheimer's Society. In this program, individuals with Alzheimer's register and provide important information that can be communicated to the police should they go missing. Although this program, and others like it, may prove to be beneficial in terms of missing persons, there are a number of potential challenges. First, there is a need to ensure that police services actively participate in these programs. As such, it is important that the outside agency ensure that the program is developed in consultation with the police so that it is more readily able to be implemented. Second, it is important that police services encourage outside agencies to develop formal programs to assist special and/or vulnerable populations. Finally, it is important that all programs be developed in such a way that communication of information on a missing person is easily accessible for the police should they require it.

APPENDIX 1:
DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT MISSING PERSONS PROCEDURES

- ➢ **Estevan**
- ➢ **Moose Jaw**
- ➢ **Prince Albert**
- ➢ **Regina**
- ➢ **RCMP**
- ➢ **Saskatoon**
- ➢ **Weyburn**

Estevan Police Service

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1: Communication Officer (civilian) immediately assigns a Report Number (PROS - Police Report Management System) and a file is started. Preliminary information is taken - there is no specialized designated preliminary information form employed (CPIC information sheet used to be employed but is no longer used). The Communication Officer immediately informs the Sergeant in Charge.

Step 2: The Sergeant in Charge examines the initial information and decides on the "seriousness" of the file. If the file is determined to be serious or suspicious, an investigation is launched immediately and may include outside resources such as Search and Rescue and the media. Should the file be deemed to be less serious it is assigned to a police officer for follow-up. The prioritization of the file is determined informally by a number of factors including: age, history, mental and physical competence, weather, and suspicious circumstances.

Step 3: The assigned police officer follows-up on the file by contacting the complainant and gathering additional information – there is no specialized designated information form employed. The complainant is advised to call back if the person is located or heard from. Cursory searches are performed around the local area. If subject is not located within a short period of time the police officer presents the information to the Sergeant in Charge in order to determine a plan of action.

Step 4: CPIC entry is made if the case is determined to be a serious one or if there is any indication hat the subject may be outside the jurisdiction of the Estevan Police Service. Resolution of the file or continuation of investigation. Missing person files are reviewed at every shift change and any additional information is transmitted to officers coming on duty. In addition, the file is continually monitored by a senior officer and he or she may alter the priority according to subsequent information. May eventually be designated as a "cold-case" and assigned to a specified officer.

Moose Jaw Police Service

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1: Communication Officer (civilian) immediately assigns a Computer Aided Dispatch Number (CAD#) and a file is started on the computerized Records Management System (VERSATERM). Extensive preliminary information is taken based on a missing persons template and the Communication Officer assigns a police officer to contact and speak with the complainant or immediately informs the Sergeant in Charge if the complaint appears serious or suspicious.

Notes: The preliminary information gathered by the Communication Officer is guided by an extensive template. In terms of decision making, it appears that the Communication Officer may be placed in two situations where they would potentially have to make a significant decision. First, the Communication Officer decides whether to assign the file to a police officer for investigation or whether to report directly and immediately to the Sergeant in Charge. There is currently no formal policy to guide this decision. Second, if the file is determined by the Communication Officer to not be serious or suspicious enough inform the Sergeant in Charge immediately then the Communication Officer decides when to assign the file to a police officer for investigation. Although assignment is made quickly in most cases, if there are a number of calls pending, the Communication officer may be left in a position where he or she might have to decide on the priority of the file. There is currently no formal policy to guide this decision.

Step 2(a): If the file is deemed to be serious or suspicious (as per above), the Sergeant in Charge is informed and he or she initiates the appropriate response (i.e., Amber Alert, Investigative Response, Measured Response, Emergency Response (see below for descriptions of these responses). CPIC entry made if there is any indication that subject is outside the jurisdiction.

Step 2(b): If the file is not deemed to be suspicious or serious it is assigned to a police officer without consulting the Sergeant in Charge. The officer speaks with the complainant and gathers additional information regarding the missing person as well as a photograph. The officer employs a specified missing persons template that provides information to be employed in the subsequent decisions regarding priority. A cursory search of the area is then performed. The officer then reports to the Sergeant in Charge and together they decide which response to initiate including Amber Alert, Investigative Response, Measured Response, Emergency Response (see below for descriptions of these responses). This decision is guided by the "Moose Jaw Police Service Missing Persons Risk Assessment Form" as well as the information collected by the police officer. It should be noted that there are two other potential responses available at this stage. First, if the complainant does not believe that the subject is missing or in immediate danger, an "Assist to Locate" file is opened (which is a scaled-down version of a missing persons file). Second, if there is an indication that abduction occurred then an "Abduction" file is opened and responded to accordingly.

Investigative Response - Based on the Investigating Officer (in collaboration with the Sergeant in Charge) determining that harm is unlikely to result to the subject or the subject has a lengthy history of running away from home or is an adult. In this case the file remains open until the subject is found and the file is passed on to the subsequent shifts when the Investigating Officer is off duty. It should be noted that there is no formal definition for how many times a child must run away to be determined as chronic nor is there a formal definition of what age constitutes adulthood.

Measured Response - Based on the Investigating Officer (in collaboration with the Sergeant in Charge) determining that there is a need for increased action on file due to the fact that: (1) the subject does not have a history of going missing, (2) the subject is a child, elderly person, or a person with a disability, or (3) hazardous weather is occurring or possible. In this case the file remains open and is actively investigated until concluded. Moose Jaw Search and Rescue (as well as the media) may be called in order to assist.

Emergency Response - Based on the Investigating Officer (in collaboration with the Sergeant in Charge) determining that there is a need for immediate and sustained action due to the fact that: (1) the subject is a child, elderly person, or person with a disability, (2) there is evidence that the subject has fallen to harm, (3) the weather is hazardous or the subject is not properly dressed for the weather.

Step 3: CPIC entry if there is reason to believe the missing person may have left the city. Resolution of the file or continuation of investigation. Missing person files are reviewed at every shift change and any additional information is transmitted to officers coming on duty. In addition, the file is continually monitored by a senior officer and he or she may alter the priority according to subsequent information.

Prince Albert Police Service

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1: In the case of a missing person report by telephone, the call is immediately diverted to the CPIC Operator who immediately assigns a Dispatch Ticket Number (VERSATERM Computer Program) and enters the information on CPIC. Preliminary information is taken based employing a specified missing persons template.

Step 2: Information regarding the subject is broadcast immediately as a "Be On The Lookout For" (BOLF) and the case is transferred to the Sergeant in Charge for review and assessment.

Step 3(a): If the subject is 6 years of age or younger, or there are suspicious circumstances involved, a patrol car is immediately dispatched to gather additional information from the complainant.

Step 3(b): If the subject is over the age of 6, and there are no suspicious circumstances involved, Sergeant in Charge assesses the preliminary information and decides what priority the file receives. Prioritization of the file is based on investigative experience as well as a number of informal elements such as weather conditions, the mental and physical health of the subject and the history of the subject. Should the file be deemed serious enough to require investigation, a Case Number is assigned.

Step 4: A police officer is dispatched to gather additional information from the complainant. This information is relayed to the Sergeant in Charge.

Step 5: Resolution of the file or continuation of investigation. Missing person files are reviewed at every shift change and any additional information is transmitted to officers coming on duty. In addition, the Staff Sergeant continually monitors the file and may alter the priority according to subsequent information. May eventually be designated as a "cold-case" and assigned to a specified unit.

Regina Police Service

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1: Communication Officer (civilian) or front desk officer immediately assigns an Integrated Electronic Information System Number (IEIS#) and a file is started. Preliminary information is taken based employing the specified missing persons template on the Direct Entry Voice Report System (DEVRS).

Step 2(a): If the subject is 12 years of age or younger, a patrol car is immediately dispatched to gather additional information from the complainant. The file information is also immediately brought to the attention of the Watch Commander as well as being electronically assigned to the Missing Persons Coordinator. A CPIC entry is immediately made.

Step 2(b): If the subject is over the age of 12, the information is entered on CPIC and the Watch Commander is notified and provided with the preliminary information. The Watch Commander assesses the preliminary information and decides what priority the file receives. If deemed necessary, a patrol car is dispatched to gather additional information. The file is also sent electronically to Major Crimes and the Missing persons Coordinator for review. Prioritization of the file is based on investigative experience as well as a number of informal elements such as weather conditions, the mental and physical health of the subject and the history of the subject.

Step 3: Resolution of the file or continuation of investigation. May eventually be designated as a "cold-case" and assigned to a specified unit.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police
F Division

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1(a) Report Taken at Local Detachment: If the local detachment is open, the employee (normally a detachment clerk or regular member on duty) obtains the pertinent details - there is no specialized designated preliminary information form employed. This information would then be assessed by the appropriate regular member (this will normally be the regular member that receives the complaint but in some cases may be a more senior member). This assessment will determine the appropriate response (i.e., urgent vs. routine follow up). The file would at some point during this process be entered on the PROS system and transferred to a supervising NCO who also reviews the information and ensures the response is commensurate with the level of urgency indicated. Assessment is informally based on a number of factors including age, mental and physical condition, history, weather, and presence of suspicious circumstances. Should the file be designated as suspicious and/or urgent, assistance may be requested from support units such as Major Crimes, Forensic Identification, Police Dog Services, Search and Rescue, Media Relations, or any other support service deemed appropriate by the regular member in charge of the investigation or the supervising member. If an immediate CPIC entry is deemed necessary it will be entered forthwith by the investigating member or the detachment clerk; otherwise any CPIC entries will be made time permitting. Should the case be assessed as less urgent, an officer is dispatched to gather additional information as soon as practicable and a follow up investigation is conducted based on this information.

Step 1(b) Report Taken at Communication Centre: If local detachment is closed, the call is routed to the F Division Communication Centre in Regina. Pertinent information is taken by a civilian member Complaint Taker/Dispatcher – there is no specialized designated preliminary information form employed. The Communication Centre notifies the officer on duty in the area (in some cases this may only be 1 person). This officer then assesses the urgency of the situation and takes appropriate action. If further information is required the officer may either call or visit the complainant, or depending on the specific circumstances may ask the Complaint Taker to obtain additional information. The complaint taker will generate a file number and enter all information obtained to this point. The file is then electronically transferred to the dispatched member as well as the supervising member. If an immediate CPIC entry is necessary it can be entered by the investigating member or by the Dispatcher/ Complaint taker; otherwise any CPIC entries will be made time permitting. Should the file be designated as suspicious and/or urgent, assistance may be requested from support units such as Major Crimes, Forensic Identification, Police Dog Services, Search and Rescue, Media Relations, or any other support service deemed appropriate by the regular member in charge of the investigation. Should the case be assessed as less urgent, an officer is dispatched to gather additional information as soon as practicable and a follow up investigation is conducted based on this information.

Step 2: Ongoing files are re-tasked to new investigators at shift changes. The new supervising member is responsible for reviewing ongoing files to ensure continuity of investigative efforts and the recording of pertinent data. The supervising member may alter the priority according to subsequent investigation.

Step 3: Unresolved files may be reviewed and further investigated by the Historical Case Unit, should investigative efforts by the local detachment or Major Crimes Unit be unsuccessful.

Saskatoon Police Service

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1: Communication Officer (civilian) or front desk officer immediately assigns a File Number (Versaterm Computer Program). Preliminary information is taken based employing the specified missing persons template. Information is forwarded immediately to the Communications Dispatcher for broadcast to all patrol units.

Step 2(a): A patrol unit is immediately dispatched to the scene if: (1) the subject is 12 years of age or younger, (2) the subject is elderly, (3) the subject is mentally or physically challenged, or (4) foul play is suspected. The patrol officer conducts a search of the immediate area (e.g., residence and/or area the subject was last seen), as well as conducts interviews to gather further information. Information is then transmitted to the Patrol Staff Sergeant and, if there are any indications of suspicious circumstances, a request is made for a Major Crimes investigator to attend.

Step 2(b): If the subject does not meet any of the above criteria, the Communication Officer determines whether the situation warrants dispatching a police unit immediately. There is no indication of the basis for the Communication Officer making this decision other than that identified above. If it is deemed necessary to dispatch a unit to the scene, then the patrol officer conducts a search of the immediate area (e.g., residence and/or area the subject was last seen), as well as conducts interviews to gather further information. Information is then transmitted to the Patrol Staff Sergeant and, if there are any indications of suspicious circumstances, a request is made for a Major Crimes investigator to attend.

Step 2(c): If the Communication Officer deems it unnecessary to dispatch a patrol unit, the file is transmitted to a "Reader" who reviews the file and assigns it to the appropriate department and district.

Step 3: The file is actively investigated by the assigned unit for 12 days. After 12 days the file is re-assigned the General Investigations Area.

Step 4: Resolution of the file or continuation of investigation. May eventually be designated as a "cold-case" and assigned to a specified unit.

Weyburn Police Service

Missing person is reported (by telephone or front desk) to Communication Officer.

Step 1: Communication Officer (civilian) immediately assigns a Complaint Number (ACCESS Computer program) and a file is started. Preliminary information is taken - there is no specialized designated preliminary information form employed. The Communication Officer immediately assigns a police officer to contact and speak with the complainant.

Step 2: The assigned police officer follows-up on the file by contacting the complainant and gathering additional information – there is no specialized designated information form employed. Cursory searches are performed around the local area. If subject is not located within a short period of time the police officer presents the information to the Sergeant in Charge in order to determine a plan of action. It should be noted that should any information be collected that indicates suspicious activity relating to the missing person then the Sergeant in Charge is alerted immediately by either the Communication Officer or the investigating police officer.

Step 3: A Core Number is assigned should it be determined that the file is one requiring continuing investigation. The prioritization of the file is determined informally by a number of factors including: age, history, mental and physical competence, weather, suspicious circumstances.

Step 4: CPIC entry is made if the case is determined to be a serious one or if there is any indication that the subject may be outside the jurisdiction of the Weyburn Police Service. Resolution of the file or continuation of investigation. Missing person files are reviewed at every shift change and any additional information is transmitted to officers coming on duty. In addition, the file is continually monitored by a senior officer and he or she may alter the priority according to subsequent information. May eventually be designated as a "cold-case" and assigned to a specified officer.

APPENDIX 2:
SPECIFIC PRACTICES FOR MISSING PERSONS CASES

APPENDIX 3:
POLICE SERVICE POLICIES FOR MISSING PERSONS

APPENDIX 4:
POLICE DATA ON MISSING PERSONS

2003

2004

2005

MISSING PERSONS IN SASKATCHEWAN: 2003

Service	A	B	C	D	E
Estevan	54	42	0	54	100%
Moose Jaw	162	127	47	162	100%
Prince Albert	351	194	263	351	100%
*Regina	1592	963	●	1591	99.9%
**RCMP	●	●	●	●	●
Saskatoon	826	583	681	814	98.5%
Weyburn	64	54	4	64	100%
TOTAL	3049	1963	995	3036	99.6%

Column Descriptors:
A = Number of Reports
B = Number of Persons Missing
C = Number of CPIC Entries
D = Number of Cleared Cases
E = Percentage of Cleared Cases

*Note 1: The Regina Police Service did not provide this data.

**Note 2: The RCMP recently switched record systems and has transferred from the PIRS system to the PROS system. PIRS records are not able to be accessed to provide this data.

Distribution by Gender

Service	Male	Female	Unknown	TOTAL
Estevan	21	21	0	42
Moose Jaw	72	55	0	127
Prince Albert	86	108	0	194
Regina	483	480	0	963
*RCMP	●	●	●	●
Saskatoon	261	311	11	583
Weyburn	30	24	0	54
TOTAL	953	999	11	1963

Distribution by Race

Service	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Estevan	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moose Jaw	83	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
Prince Albert	19	117	0	0	0	0	0	0	58
Regina	247	422	10	6	3	0	9	2	264
*RCMP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Saskatoon	74	166	0	2	1	0	2	0	338
Weyburn	48	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	513	724	11	8	5	0	11	2	689

Column Descriptors:
A = Caucasian/White
B = Aboriginal/First Nation
C = Metis
D = Black/African
E = Asian/Oriental
F = East Indian
G = Non-White
H = Hispanic
I = Unknown

*Note: The RCMP recently switched record systems and has transferred from the PIRS system to the PROS system. PIRS records are not able to be accessed to provide this data.

Distribution by Age

Age	RCMP	Weyburn	Saskatoon	Prince Albert	Moose Jaw	Regina	Total
0			1			1	2
1		0				3	3
2		0	1		1	7	9
3		1	1		2	8	12
4		0	3		2	17	22
5		1	4	1	4	23	33
6		0	5		2	20	27
7		1	7	2	4	21	35
8		2	11	4	5	28	50
9		2	18	7	2	25	54
10		4	25	2	6	25	62
11		1	32	10	3	27	73
12		3	51	9	2	56	121
13		2	62	35	9	79	187
14		3	81	14	9	92	199
15		7	79	30	20	109	245
16		5	35	22	19	101	182

17	2	20	13	3	60	98
18	1	8	10	5	32	56
19	1	6	2		13	22
20	3	6	1	1	9	20
21	1	10	5	1	12	29
22	0	2			9	11
23	0	4		4	9	17
24	0	4			5	9
25	0	7	4	2	16	29
26	1	7	2		6	16
27	0	6		1	6	13
28	0	3	2		3	8
29	1	6	1	1	5	14
30	0	3		1	6	10
31	2	1	1		3	7
32	0	4			5	9
33		4			5	9
34	1	4		1	8	14
35	1	1	1		3	6
36	1	4		1	4	10
37	0	2	3		7	12
38		1			5	6
39	0	3			7	10
40		1			6	7
41	0	4	1		5	10
42		5	1	1	8	15
43	0	3	1	2	3	9
44	0	2			1	3
45	0	3		1	1	5
46		2			3	5
47	1	2	1		5	9
48	0	2	1		4	7
49	1					1
50	1	3		1	1	6
51	0	1		1	1	3
52		1			4	5
53			1		3	4
54		1			3	4
55	0	1				1
56		1			1	2
57		2			4	6
58		3			2	5
59				1		1
60	0	1				1
61						
62				1		1
63						
64					1	1
65						
66						

Age						
67		2			2	4
68				1		1
69					2	2
70				1	1	2
71					2	2
72	0	2	1			3
73					1	1
74	0	1				1
75				1		1
76		1		1		2
77		2				2
78	0		1	1	4	6
79		1			2	3
80	1				1	2
81		1			3	4
82	1				3	4
83	0			1		1
84	0	1		1	1	3
85	1			1	1	3
86						
87	0	1				1
88					2	2
89						
90						
91					1	1
92						
93						
94						
95	0					
96		1				1
97						
98						
99						
100						
101						
102					1	1
103			5			5
104						
105						
Unknown		1				1

*Note: Estevan Police Service records age by group rather than through individual categories. Data from Estevan for 2003:

- Child (under 12): 13
- Youth (12 to 17): 19
- Adult (18 and over): 10

MISSING PERSONS IN SASKATCHEWAN: 2004

Service	A	B	C	D	E
Estevan	50	38	2	49	98%
Moose Jaw	133	99	42	133	100%
Prince Albert	424	208	285	423	99.8%
*Regina	1598	917	●	1597	99.9%
**RCMP	●	●	●	●	●
Saskatoon	762	526	654	752	98.7%
Weyburn	62	55	3	62	100%
TOTAL	3029	1843	986	3016	99.6%

Column Descriptors:
A = Number of Reports
B = Number of Persons Missing
C = Number of CPIC Entries
D = Number of Cleared Cases
E = Percentage of Cleared Cases

*Note 1: The Regina Police Service did not provide this data.

**Note 2: The RCMP recently switched record systems and has transferred from the PIRS system to the PROS system. PIRS records are not able to be accessed to provide this data.

Distribution by Gender:

Service	Male	Female	Unknown	TOTAL
Estevan	17	21	0	38
Moose Jaw	52	47	0	99
Prince Albert	91	117	0	208
Regina	459	458	0	917
*RCMP	●	●	●	●
Saskatoon	249	273	4	526
Weyburn	31	24	0	55
TOTAL	899	940	4	1843

Distribution by Race:

Service	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Estevan	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moose Jaw	75	11	0	3	1	0	0	0	9
Prince Albert	19	132	0	1	0	0	0	0	56
Regina	252	378	17	3	5	0	12	1	249
*RCMP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Saskatoon	75	132	0	4	0	0	1	1	313
Weyburn	53	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	512	655	17	11	6	0	13	2	627

Column Descriptors:
A = Caucasian/White
B = Aboriginal/First Nation
C = Metis
D = Black/African
E = Asian/Oriental
F = East Indian
G = Non-White
H = Hispanic
I = Unknown

*Note: The RCMP recently switched record systems and have transferred from the PIRS system to the PROS system. PIRS records are not able to be accessed to provide this data.

Distribution by Age

Age	RCMP	Weyburn	Saskatoon	Prince Albert	Moose Jaw	Regina	Total
0			1			1	2
1		0	2			3	5
2		1	1		1		3
3		1	2		4	9	16
4		0	2		2	8	12
5		0	4			10	14
6		2	6		1	18	27
7		2	9	3	2	10	26
8		1	6	7	5	19	38
9		1	9	10	2	22	44
10		1	23	3	3	26	56
11		0	20	5	3	21	49
12		1	31	5	2	40	79
13		4	51	24	5	86	170
14		6	82	21	11	101	221
15		1	81	30	17	115	244
16		2	26	36	11	96	171

17	1	14	14	2	52	83
18	2	12	4	2	27	47
19	0	8	5	1	16	30
20	1	14	2	1	13	31
21	1	12	2	2	7	24
22	1	8	3	2	10	24
23	1	7	1		11	20
24	0	7		1	9	17
25	0	3	3		6	12
26	0	4	3	3	8	18
27	1	4	2		9	16
28	2	4	1	2	10	19
29	0	4			6	10
30	0	4	3	1	6	14
31	0	1	2		6	9
32	1	1	1	1	6	10
33		3			5	8
34	0				2	2
35	1	2			3	6
36	0	4	1		2	7
37	2	2	1		7	12
38		1	2	1	6	10
39	1	2		1	5	9
40			1		2	3
41	1	5	2		2	10
42		4	1	1	1	7
43	0	2	2	1	9	14
44	0	3	2	1	6	12
45	0	2			2	4
46					3	3
47	0	1	1	1	4	7
48	0	3			6	9
49	1	2			3	6
50	0	3	1		4	8
51	0	2			2	4
52		1			3	4
53		2			3	5
54		1			3	4
55	1	1	1			3
56		1	1		3	5
57					2	2
58					2	2
59		1			2	3
60	0	1				1
61		1			3	4
62					1	1
63					1	1
64		1			6	7
65			1	1	2	4
66					1	1

Age						
67		0	0	0	0	0
68		1			3	4
69				1	2	3
70					2	2
71		1				1
72	1	1				2
73		1			1	2
74	0	1		1		2
75		1			1	2
76		0	0	0	0	0
77		2			1	3
78	0	1			1	2
79					4	4
80	2			1		3
81						
82	0	1			1	2
83	0					
84	0				1	1
85	0	1			3	4
86				1	1	2
87	1			1		2
88						
89					2	2
90						
91						
92						
93						
94					1	1
95	1					1
96		1				1
97						
98						
99						
100						
101						
102						
103						
104			1			1
105						
Unknown	9					

*Note: Estevan Police Service records age by group rather than through individual categories. Data from Estevan for 2004:

- Child (under 12): 14
- Youth (12 to 17): 16
- Adult (18 and over): 8

MISSING PERSONS IN SASKATCHEWAN: 2005

Service	A	B	C	D	E
Estevan	42	34	7	42	100%
Moose Jaw	124	90	49	124	100%
Prince Albert	440	240	340	440	100%
*Regina	1665	925	●	1665	100%
**RCMP	1357	1105	353	1354	99.8%
Saskatoon	796	499	664	787	98.9%
Weyburn	72	63	3	72	100%
TOTAL	4496	2956	1416	4484	99.7%

Column Descriptors:
A = Number of Reports
B = Number of Persons Missing
C = Number of CPIC Entries
D = Number of Cleared Cases
E = Percentage of Cleared Cases

*Note: The Regina Police Service did not supply this data.

Distribution by Gender:

Service	Male	Female	Unknown	TOTAL
Estevan	18	16	0	34
Moose Jaw	38	52	0	90
Prince Albert	96	144	0	240
Regina	431	494	0	925
RCMP	512	538	55	1105
Saskatoon	217	271	11	499
Weyburn	36	27	0	63
TOTAL	1348	1542	66	2956

Distribution by Race:

Service	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Estevan	33	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moose Jaw	57	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
Prince Albert	24	157	0	1	0	0	0	0	58
Regina	245	361	14	10	5	0	18	1	271
RCMP	248	479	15	1	1	3	0	0	358
Saskatoon	49	118	0	0	1	0	1	0	330
Weyburn	59	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	715	1128	30	13	7	3	19	1	1040

Column Descriptors:
A = Caucasian/White
B = Aboriginal/First Nation
C = Metis
D = Black/African
E = Asian/Oriental
F = East Indian
G = Non-White
H = Hispanic
I = Unknown

Distribution by Age

Age	RCMP	Weyburn	Saskatoon	Prince Albert	Moose Jaw	Regina	Total
0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
1	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
2	6	1	1	0	0	6	14
3	13	1	5	0	0	7	26
4	7	2	1	0	1	14	25
5	12	1	6	1	2	13	35
6	14	0	3	1	1	14	33
7	27	0	7	2	5	22	63
8	16	1	3	2	2	7	31
9	11	0	11	3	7	18	50
10	23	1	18	6	1	16	65
11	33	2	29	10	1	32	107
12	45	2	49	4	1	25	126
13	77	7	59	12	4	71	230
14	111	5	74	37	22	90	339
15	111	5	62	36	9	130	353
16	69	3	28	41	7	99	247
17	50	2	23	10	3	57	145
18	21	1	6	10	2	37	77

19	15	1	13	3	2	16	50
20	23	1	3	4	1	14	46
21	11	1	4	0	3	11	30
22	13	0	3	1	0	12	29
23	17	1	6	5	2	6	37
24	11	1	1	1	1	8	23
25	7	1	3	2	1	10	24
26	14	0	5	2	1	10	32
27	10	0	1	2	0	9	22
28	5	1	5	2	0	8	21
29	13	0	3	2	0	14	32
30	9	1	2	2	0	8	22
31	7	0	2	1	0	6	16
32	8	1	1	4	0	7	21
33	9	0	1	1	0	9	20
34	6	1	4	2	3	3	19
35	8	0	4	1	0	3	16
36	5	0	2	1	0	2	10
37	1	0	1	2	0	3	7
38	8	0	1	0	0	6	15
39	11	2	3	2	0	4	22
40	4	0	2	0	0	5	11
41	11	0	2	2	1	3	19
42	7	0	4	1	0	5	17
43	4	2	3	3	0	10	22
44	5	1	3	1	0	5	15
45	6	2	2	1	0	5	16
46	4	0	2	0	1	2	9
47	3	1	2	0	1	2	9
48	1	1	1	1	0	2	6
49	5	0	2	1	0	1	9
50	4	1	0	1	0	4	10
51	4	1	3	1	1	4	14
52	5	0	1	0	2	4	12
53	3	0	2	0	0	2	7
54	2	0	2	0	0	1	5
55	1	0	1	0	1	3	6
56	3	0	1	1	0		5
57	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
58	3	0	0	0	0		3
59	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
60	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
61	4	0	0	0	0		4
62	4	0	0	1	0	2	7
63	3	0	1	0	0		4
64	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
65	3	0	0	0	0	2	5
66	4	0	0	1	0	1	6
67	0	0	2	0	0	2	4
68	2	0	0	0	0		2

Age							Total
69	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
70	3	0	0	0	0		3
71	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
72	1	1	1	0	0		3
73	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
74	4	2	0	0	0	2	8
75	2	0	0	0	0	3	5
76	2	0	0	0	0		2
77	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
78	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
79	2	0	0	0	0		2
80	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
81	2	0	1	0	0		3
82	4	0	0	2	0		6
83	2	1	0	1	0	1	5
84	0	0	1	0	0	3	4
85	1	0	0	0	0		1
86	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
87	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
88	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
89	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
90	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
91	1	0	0	0	1		2
92	0	0	0	0	0		0
93	1	0	0	0	0		1
94	0	0	0	0	0		0
95	0	0	1	0	0		1
96	0	0	0	0	0		0
97	0	0	0	0	0		0
98	0	0	0	0	0		0
99	0	0	0	0	0		0
100	0	0	0	0	0		0
101	0	0	0	0	0		0
102	0	0	0	0	0		0
103	0	0	0	0	0		0
104	0	0	0	0	0		0
105	0	0	0	3	0		3
Unknown	114	2	1	0	0		117

*Note: Estevan Police Service records age by group rather than through individual categories. Data from Estevan for 2005:

- Child (under 12): 5
- Youth (12 to 17): 15
- Adult (18 and over): 14