COPS

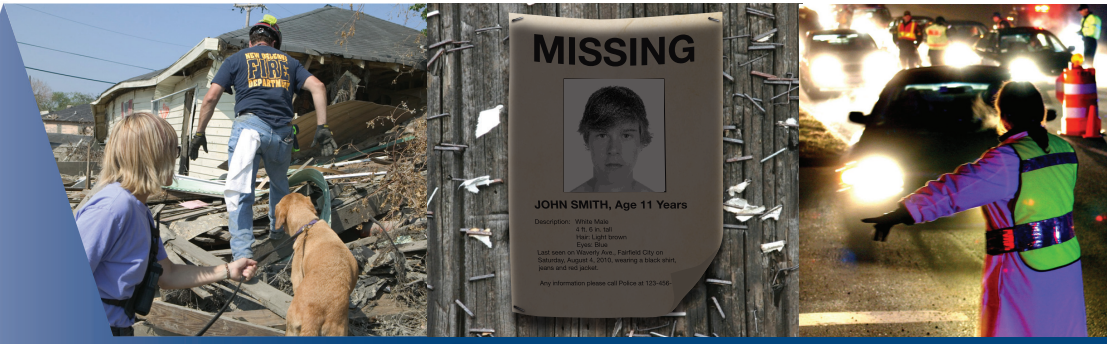
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Problem-Specific Guides Series
Problem-Oriented Guides for Police

No. 66

Missing Persons

Kenna Quinet



Center for
Problem-Oriented Policing

Cover photos:
Left: New Orleans, LA, 10/15/2005. New Orleans Firefighter, Autrey Plaisance, K9 Search and Rescue handler, Pat Tuholske and her yellow labrador retriever, Finn, search homes for missing people in the Lower 9th Ward following devastating hurricane Katrina. © FEMA photo/Andrea Booher

Center: © COPS Office

Right: © Larry St. Pierre/Shutterstock

Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Problem-Specific Guides Series
No. 66

Missing Persons

Kenna Quinet

This project was supported by cooperative agreement #2009-CK-WX-K002 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement of the product by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of this publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

© 2012 Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, Inc.
The U.S. Department of Justice reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and authorize others to use, this publication for Federal Government purposes.
This publication may be freely distributed and used for noncommercial and educational purposes.

www.cops.usdoj.gov

ISBN: 978-1-932582-20-8
October 2012

Contents

About the Problem-Specific Guides Series 1

Acknowledgments 4

The Problem of Missing Persons 5
- What This Guide Does and Does Not Cover 5
- General Description of and Factors Contributing to the Problem 6
  - Repeat Missing Persons 7
- Harms to and by Missing Persons 8
- Assessing Risks for Missing Persons 8
- Missing Juveniles 10
  - Children Missing From Care 13
  - Abductions of Children by Strangers (Stereotypical Child Kidnapping) 13
  - Nonfamily Abductions 14
  - Family Abductions 15
  - Children Missing Involuntarily, Lost, or Injured (MILI) or Missing Because of Benign Explanations (MBE) 16
- Missing Adults 16
  - Adults Missing Voluntarily 17
  - Disabled Adults and Walkaways from Care 17
  - Persons Missing in Disasters 18
- The Missing Missing 18
  - Prostitutes 18
  - Homeless Persons 19
  - Illegal Immigrants 19
  - Human Trafficking Victims 20

Understanding Your Local Problem 21
- Stakeholders 21
- Asking the Right Questions 22
  - Missing Persons 22
  - Reporters, Caregivers, and Custodians 23
  - Third Parties 23
  - Locations/Times 24
  - Current Responses 24
- Measuring Your Effectiveness 25

Responses to the Problem of Missing Persons 27
General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy 27
Specific Responses to Missing Persons 33
Responses with Limited Effectiveness 38
Appendix A: Summary of Responses to Missing Persons 39
Appendix B: Selected Federal Legislation Relating to Missing Persons 44
References 47
Endnotes 53
About the Author 57
Other Problem-Oriented Guides for Police 59

About the Problem-Specific Guides Series

The *Problem-Specific Guides* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to prevention and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. Neither do they cover all of the technical details about how to implement specific responses. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problem the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- **Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods.** The guides are not primers in problem-oriented policing. They deal only briefly with the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, methods to analyze the problem, and means to assess the results of a problem-oriented policing project. They are designed to help police decide how best to analyze and address a problem they have already identified. (A companion series of *Problem-Solving Tools* guides has been produced to aid in various aspects of problem analysis and assessment.)
- **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend perhaps weeks, or even months, analyzing and responding to it. Carefully studying a problem before responding helps you design the right strategy, one that is most likely to work in your community. You should not blindly adopt the responses others have used; you must decide whether they are appropriate to your local situation. What is true in one place may not be true elsewhere; what works in one place may not work everywhere.
- **Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business.** The guides describe responses that other police departments have used or that researchers have tested. While not all of these responses will be appropriate to your particular problem, they should help give a broader view of the kinds of things you could do. You may think you cannot implement some of these responses in your jurisdiction, but perhaps you can. In many places, when police have discovered a more effective response, they have succeeded in having laws and policies changed, improving the response to the problem. (A companion series of *Response Guides* has been produced to help you understand how commonly-used police responses work on a variety of problems.)

- **Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge.** For some types of problems, a lot of useful research is available to the police; for other problems, little is available. Accordingly, some guides in this series summarize existing research whereas other guides illustrate the need for more research on that particular problem. Regardless, research has not provided definitive answers to all the questions you might have about the problem. The research may help get you started in designing your own responses, but it cannot tell you exactly what to do. This will depend greatly on the particular nature of your local problem. In the interest of keeping the guides readable, not every piece of relevant research has been cited, nor has every point been attributed to its sources. To have done so would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily; they are not a complete bibliography of research on the subject.
- **Are willing to work with others to find effective solutions to the problem.** The police alone cannot implement many of the responses discussed in the guides. They must frequently implement them in partnership with other responsible private and public bodies including other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private businesses, public utilities, community groups, and individual citizens. An effective problem-solver must know how to forge genuine partnerships with others and be prepared to invest considerable effort in making these partnerships work. Each guide identifies particular individuals or groups in the community with whom police might work to improve the overall response to that problem. Thorough analysis of problems often reveals that individuals and groups other than the police are in a stronger position to address problems and that police ought to shift some greater responsibility to them to do so. Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems,* provides further discussion of this topic.

The COPS Office defines community policing as "a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime." These guides emphasize *problem-solving* and *police–community partnerships* in the context of addressing specific public safety problems. For the most part, the organizational strategies that can facilitate problem-solving and police-community partnerships vary considerably and discussion of them is beyond the scope of these guides.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs, and police practices vary from country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

Each guide is informed by a thorough review of the research literature and reported police practice, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive, and a researcher prior to publication. The review process is independently managed by the COPS Office, which solicits the reviews.

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org. This website offers free online access to:

- The *Problem-Specific Guides* series
- The companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series
- Special publications on crime analysis and on policing terrorism
- Instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics
- An interactive problem-oriented policing training exercise
- An interactive *Problem Analysis Module*
- Online access to important police research and practices
- Information about problem-oriented policing conferences and award programs

Acknowledgments

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* are produced by the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, whose officers are Michael S. Scott (Director), Ronald V. Clarke (Associate Director), and Graeme R. Newman (Associate Director). While each guide has a primary author, other project team members, COPS Office staff, and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to each guide by proposing text, recommending research, and offering suggestions on matters of format and style.

The project team that developed the guide series comprised Herman Goldstein (University of Wisconsin Law School), Ronald V. Clarke (Rutgers University), John E. Eck (University of Cincinnati), Michael S. Scott (University of Wisconsin Law School), Rana Sampson (Police Consultant), and Deborah Lamm Weisel (North Carolina State University).

Members of the San Diego; National City, California; and Savannah, Georgia, police departments provided feedback on the guides' format and style in the early stages of the project.

Kimberly Nath oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Phyllis Schultze conducted research for the guide at Rutgers University's Criminal Justice Library. Nancy Leach coordinated the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing's production process. Lee Titus Elliott edited this guide.

The Problem of Missing Persons

What This Guide Does and Does Not Cover

This guide begins by describing the problem of missing persons and reviewing factors that increase its risks. It then identifies a series of questions to help you analyze your local missing-persons problem. Finally, it reviews responses to the problem and what is known about these from evaluative research and police practice.

Police efforts to locate and return missing persons is but one aspect of the larger set of problems related to the reasons people go missing. This guide is limited to addressing the particular issues associated with missing persons. Related problems not directly addressed in this guide, each of which requires separate analysis, include the following:

- Abuse in care facilities
- Child abuse
- Child-custody abductions
- Child exploitation
- Child sexual abuse
- Child pornography
- Domestic violence
- Elder abuse
- Homelessness
- Homicide
- Human trafficking
- Illegal immigration and border crossing
- International abductions
- Juvenile runaways
- Kidnapping
- Life insurance fraud
- Natural disasters
- Outstanding warrants (e.g., for failure to appear in court)
- Persons lost in the wilderness
- Prostitution
- Sex offenders
- Unidentified dead
- Walkaways from assisted-living facilities

Some of these related problems are covered in other guides in this series, all of which are listed at the end of this guide. For the most up-to-date listing of current and future guides, see www.popcenter.org.

General Description of and Factors Contributing to the Problem†

Using the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to determine the extent of the missing-person problem and the different types of missing-person categories can present a national snapshot of the missing-person problem, but you will need to assess the extent of your local problem and the relative proportion of different categories to allocate resources appropriately.‡

For purposes of this guide, a missing person is defined as someone—either a child or an adult—who is missing, voluntarily or involuntarily.§ NCIC reported over 700,000 missing-person cases in 2009, with approximately 13 percent of those cases still active at the end of that year.[1]

For missing-person cases where circumstances were known (approximately 43 percent of all cases), 99 percent were classified as "juvenile runaway" (see below for further discussion of juvenile runaway cases).¶ The remaining known circumstances included approximately 2,500 cases of abductions by noncustodial parents and approximately 500 cases of "abductions by strangers" (involving both juvenile and adult victims).

Females account for 52 percent of missing persons, and males 48 percent, about the same as their representation in the general population. Whites account for 60 percent of missing persons, blacks 33 percent, and other races 7 percent. Because blacks account for approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population, they are clearly overrepresented as missing persons. However, whites—particularly attractive, young, white females—appear to receive the bulk of media attention in missing-person cases, with less or no media coverage for missing minorities, or those deemed less attractive or less sympathetic.[2]

---

† Unless otherwise noted, the data presented are for the United States.

‡ NCIC, because it is only one of the national sources of missing-person data, should be used cautiously to draw research conclusions, as it does not meet the requirements of a statistical/scientific database; rather, NCIC is an operational database. Data are entered by thousands of different people with varying levels of understanding about missing-person categories and definitions. Changes in certain categories over time may reflect greater understanding of appropriate assignment rather than real change in a category. For example, declines in the overall category of "juvenile" in NCIC may reflect a better assignment of cases of missing persons under age 18 to other more appropriate categories of "endangered," "involuntary," or "disabled" missing persons.

§ Different entities, such as the NCIC, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART), use various terms to identify the different subtypes of missing persons.

¶ Since NCIC cases must be entered by police within 2 hours of reporting them, it is likely that police eventually know much more about the circumstances of the disappearance at a later time when the case has been cleared with a successful return.

Some people are missing voluntarily and others involuntarily. Each of these categories includes several subtypes of missing persons with potentially different investigative strategies for police. NCIC categorizes the missing as "juvenile," "endangered," "disabled," "other," "involuntary," and "catastrophe." Some of these categories describe characteristics of missing persons, others describe their temporary condition, and others describe their willingness to be missing.† The most likely entry is juvenile (77 percent), followed by endangered (12 percent), disabled and other (4 percent of each), involuntary (3 percent), and catastrophe (less than 1 percent).[3] However, natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, and floods could add significant numbers to the catastrophe category in affected jurisdictions.

National, as well as local, counts of missing persons for any given year are constantly changing as cases are listed by the date they occurred (i.e., when the persons went missing or were last seen) and not by the date the cases were entered in the record system. Thus, persons who actually went missing in one year may not be reported as missing until years later. Because of the categorization scheme, the overlap among some categories—and the large gap in knowledge about the circumstances of many missing persons—the scope and nature of the missing-person problem is unclear. Your jurisdiction might have numbers of certain types of missing persons that differ from the national picture.

Repeat Missing Persons

One Australian study found that 34 percent of missing persons had gone missing previously.[4] Another study found that 35 percent of *missing persons* accounted for 73 percent of all missing-person *cases* and that most of these cases were repeat runaways.[5] As many as 4 percent of missing children experienced multiple missing episodes during the course of a year, the most likely combination being a runaway episode and an episode of whereabouts unknown to caregivers (but otherwise safe).[6] Cases of repeat runaways use a huge amount of police resources and may result in less attention being paid to the repeated disappearance of the same individual.[7] Repeat runaway cases may indicate family dysfunction, and social services intervention may reduce future missing person cases.

† The NCIC categorization scheme may not be of significant operational value for police; accordingly, police agencies are encouraged to develop their own categorization schemes that best reflect the nature of their missing-person cases.

Harms to and by Missing Persons

The harms that missing persons experience or that their missing status causes to others vary. At one end of the harm spectrum, some missing persons are murdered, raped, or otherwise assaulted. At the other end of the spectrum, some missing persons experience little or no harm: they were never in danger but only unaccounted for, or they wished to go missing to escape worse consequences. In the middle of the spectrum, some missing persons are injured or become ill because they did not have support or protection during the time they were missing. Others experience psychological trauma because they have been abducted, held captive, or experienced fear and anxiety from not knowing whether they would be found and rescued. People who care for missing persons—whether family, friends, guardians, caregivers, or coworkers—experience anxiety and stress from not knowing whether the missing person is safe. Finally, all citizens experience some, although difficult-to-quantify, elevated risk to their safety when public safety resources are consumed by searching for missing persons who are not, in fact, in any danger. A single missing-persons search can consume hundreds of hours by police, fire and emergency, helicopter, dive team, and canine-unit personnel.

Assessing Risks for Missing Persons

Missing-person cases are not conventional criminal investigations, and most do not involve a crime. But what originally seems a mere routine missing-person case sometimes entails a far more serious matter; so the ability to prioritize potentially high-risk cases is essential. Because missing-person cases can consume a significant amount of police resources, agencies can reap significant rewards by preventing missing-persons cases or responding in a more efficient manner.

The missing-person case least likely to be viewed as unusual or suspicious—the case of the missing adult prostitute with a warrant—may in fact be the case at the highest risk for foul play. Or what may appear to be a typical missing-child case may in fact have the police responding to a crime in progress—an abduction, a kidnapping, a molestation, a rape, or a murder. While the missing elderly person or autistic child may not be at significant risk for foul play, there may be significant risks for accidental deaths, including exposure deaths and drowning. Assessing risk, while difficult, is a critical component of missing-person investigations, and cases should not be assumed to be of low priority until the initial investigation can be conducted.

Cases involving child abduction that may present a danger to the child are eligible for the “Child Abduction” (CA) flag when entered into NCIC as involuntarily missing or endangered missing.[8]

Risk Factors for Missing Children

- The missing child is 13 years old or younger.
- The missing child is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- The missing child is mentally incapacitated.
- The missing child is drug dependent, having prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life threatening.
- The missing child has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to law enforcement.
- On the basis of available information, it is determined the missing child is in a life-threatening situation.
- On the basis of available information it is believed the missing child is in the company of an individual who could endanger his or her welfare.
- The absence is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior, and deviation cannot be readily explained.
- Other circumstances are involved in the disappearance, causing a reasonable person to conclude the child should be considered "at-risk."

Source: NCMEC (2006, 38).

In some missing-person cases, there will be obvious signs of foul play, such as evidence of a struggle or of a home or a car in disarray. But in cases originally suspected to be benign, additional information may suggest the missing person is at high risk. Family abduction cases also have varying levels of risk. Cases where a child is taken out of state, a family history of abuse, danger of sexual exploitation, and children with special medical needs may increase the risk in family child-abduction cases.[9] Thus, the risk or urgency in a particular case can change over time as you gather information.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Established in 1984, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a nonprofit, private organization which serves as a clearinghouse for information on missing and exploited children. NCMEC provides technical assistance and training to law enforcement and social-service professionals, distributes descriptions and photographs of missing children, and networks with other nonprofits and state clearinghouses for missing children.

Missing Juveniles

Broadly, a "missing child refers to any youth under the age of 18 whose whereabouts are unknown to his or her legal guardian."[10] The total annual number of missing children—both reported and unreported—is estimated to be around 1.3 million.[11] Of these missing children, nearly all were returned home alive or were located; only a fraction of one percent were not. Of those relatively few children who were still missing, the majority were runaways from institutional care.[12] The most common categories of missing children, from most frequent to least frequent, are as follows: "juvenile runaways," "family abductions," "lost and/or injured children," and "nonfamily abductions."[13]

Juveniles account for approximately half of active missing-persons cases.[14] Three-quarters of missing children are ages 12–17. Male and female children have a nearly equal likelihood of going missing. Of missing children about 55 percent are White, 20 percent are Black, and 20 percent are Hispanic.[15]

In child abduction murders there is a nearly equal likelihood that the perpetrator is a stranger or friend/acquaintance, and typical victims are 11 years of age. The typical offender is 27 years of age, unmarried, as likely to be unemployed as employed, and their initial contact with the victim occurred within three blocks of the victim's residence and, in many cases, within a half-block. In only about half of these cases were the victims reported as missing and in many cases, there was at least a 2-hour delay in reporting them to police.[16]

Most missing children (84 percent) are runaways or are missing for benign explanations. The most common categories of missing children are not necessarily those in which the child is at greatest risk. The least common missing-child case is the most dangerous—stranger abductions. However, initially, police may not know if the reason the child is missing is a brief runaway episode, a lost child, a miscommunication about the child's whereabouts, or a stranger abduction, which emphasizes the importance of the initial investigation.

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs)

There has long been a need for a national database of missing persons and unidentified dead that can be used by police, coroners and medical examiners, and the public, which cross-checks itself for matches between characteristics entered for missing persons and unidentified dead. There are as many as 40,000 sets of unidentified human remains in coroner and medical examiner offices across the United States and an additional 4,000 cases are added each year.[17] In existence since 2008, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) is sponsored by the National Institute of Justice in partnership with the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC). NamUs is a national clearinghouse for information and includes an online system with three databases, one for missing persons, one for unidentified dead, and a new database of unclaimed dead. The NamUs database can be searched/accessed by anyone—police, medical examiners/coroners, and families. Cases and updates to existing cases are vetted by NamUs experts before they are added, and police and coroners can keep sensitive case data away from public display. Only coroners and medical examiners are authorized to enter unidentified-dead (and unclaimed-dead) cases. These databases are linked, and searches can be performed by using a number of different identifiers, including scars, tattoos, clothing, jewelry, and DNA. NamUs cleared 18 cold cases in its first 18 months.

NamUs improves the efficiency with which dental records and other radiographs can be shared with experts; has extensive search capabilities; allows free access to expert anthropologists, odontologists, and fingerprint examiners; and provides free DNA testing. It allows for automatic searching of two of the databases to find similarities in missing-person and unidentified-dead cases. Unfortunately, most police agencies (as many as 93 percent) are not yet using NamUs.[18] NamUs can only help police and missing persons' families if police enter their missing-person cases into the system.

Source: NamUs website at www.namus.gov

© *Tomas Castelazo. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prostitute_tj.jpg*

Juvenile runaways are at an increased risk of being exploited for child prostitution.

Juvenile Runaways

Runaway and thrownaway juveniles (children forced from their home or abandoned) comprise the most significant portion of missing-person cases.† As many as 1.7 million children run away from home each year, with approximately 20 percent of those cases reported to police. Most runaway episodes last only a day or two (75 percent of such juveniles return home within a week), and most do not leave the local area.[19]

Although most runaway cases do not result in an arrest, there are approximately 100,000 juvenile runaway arrests each year.[20] NCIC statistics show a decline in the number of juvenile runaways over the past few years, and this decline may reflect improvements in child well-being, such as reductions in teenage pregnancy and alcohol use, as well as general declines in violence and victimization.[21] However, runaway cases still require a huge amount of police resources and may involve sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.

† Extensive research on missing children has been conducted by the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART) through the Office of Justice Programs (OJP).

Juvenile runaways are at an increased likelihood of physical, drug, and sexual abuse; suicide; and child prostitution.[22] A focus on high-risk victims can lead not only to reductions in repeat runaway behavior but can also help address child exploitation and trafficking, sexual assault, and organized crime.[23, †]

Children Missing From Care

Children missing from care can be missing from institutional facilities or from alternative in-home care, such as foster care. Children in care are afforded more confidentiality protections than those not in care; thus, getting necessary information about these missing children will present challenges. Of the nearly 600,000 foster children in the United States, as many as 20 percent are missing from care at any given time, and most of those (98 percent) are considered runaways. The remaining 2 percent are unaccounted for, and their status is unknown.[24] Some of these children have been taken by family members, and many have run away, but some proportion is at risk for homicide, suicide, or accidental deaths. Recent media reports have noted the increase in cases of teenage mothers, many who come from foster care, who run away with their infants to be with their child's father or other relatives.[25]

Abductions of Children by Strangers (Stereotypical Child Kidnapping)

Although abductions of children by strangers are rare, they are high-profile cases, require a huge amount of police resources, and often pose a significant risk to the child. An estimated 115 child abductions by strangers occurred during the most recent NISMART study year.[26] Teenagers and females were the most likely victims of abductions by strangers, and approximately half of the victims were sexually assaulted. These abductions were equally likely to have occurred during spring, summer, and fall. The fewer number of winter abduction cases likely mirrors other crime patterns that decline during winter months, when there is less opportunity for crime; in these cases, fewer children are outdoors without supervision. Males were the abductors in 93 percent of abductions by strangers, and persons in their 20s constituted about one-third of the abductors.[27] Of these cases, 40 percent resulted in the murder of the child, and an additional 32 percent of the abducted children were injured.[28]

---

† See Problem-Specific Guide No. 37, *Juvenile Runaways,* for further information.

Nonfamily Abductions

In addition to stereotypical child abductions/kidnappings by strangers, each year there are approximately 58,000 child victims of nonfamily abductions perpetrated by friends, acquaintances, and strangers in diverse situations.† Police data do not reflect nearly this number, as only about half of nonfamily abductions are reported to police; commonly because such abductions are not perceived to be dangerous situations, caretakers think the child will return, or caretakers do not know about the episode.[29] Nonfamily abductions, as opposed to typical kidnappings, typically involve less forced movement and detention (but may involve moving the child using physical force or threat, detaining the child for at least an hour, and/or luring a child 15 or younger for purposes of concealment or with intent to keep the child permanently). In only about one-fifth of nonfamily abductions were police initially contacted to help locate the abducted child. Teenagers are the most likely victims in nonfamily abductions (81 percent of nonfamily abduction victims were 12 or over); females account for 65 percent of victims; and in nearly half of the cases, victims were sexually assaulted.[30] Approximately one-third of the victims of nonfamily abductions are White and 42 percent are Black, although these estimates are not believed statistically reliable.[31] However, other sources also point to the disproportionate representation of Black children as missing children.[32]

About one-half of nonfamily abductions are perpetrated by someone known to the child, including friends, neighbors, caretakers, or other persons of authority.[33] Males are the abductors in three-fourths of nonfamily abductions, and persons in their 20s constitute nearly half of nonfamily abductions.

The most likely place of a nonfamily abduction is an open area, such as a street, a public place, or wooded area. Sexual assault is the primary motive in nonfamily abductions. Weapons are involved in less than half of nonfamily abductions. Nonfamily abductions occur most frequently in the spring (36 percent) and are least likely to occur in the winter (15 percent).[34]

---

† These abductions although sometimes involving strangers, differ from the stereotypical abductions/kidnappings by strangers discussed above (and defined by Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak 2002). The nonfamily abductions by friends and acquaintances (and sometimes strangers) in this category differ in terms of offender intent and other case characteristics and do not display the characteristics of stereotypical child abductions by strangers. Examples include a teenage girl forced into a car and detained for 4 hours by her ex-boyfriend, a 4-year-old boy taken on a joyride by a school bus driver, a babysitter who did not allow children to return home until she was paid for previous babysitting, a teenage girl detained by force while on a date and sexually assaulted, and a 10-year-old girl lured into a home and sexually assaulted by an 85-year old male acquaintance (Finkelhor et al. 2002).

There are relatively few cases of nonfamily infant abductions—only about 3–14 cases nationwide per year—and even that figure appears to be declining. Historically, they occurred primarily in health care facilities and were committed by women seeking a baby, often because of a faked pregnancy.[35] Most of these infants (92 percent) are successfully recovered, quick reporting to police being vital to recovery.[36] However, due to increased healthcare facility security, some of these still rare events cases now occur at the home of the mother and some of these cases involve violence (15 percent), and some cases have involved the killing of the mother (9 percent) and, more rarely, the killing of both parents. In many of the cases involving the death of the mother, the infant is abducted by cesarean section at the mother's or the offender's home.[37]

Family Abductions

Most abductions of children are perpetrated by noncustodial parents, sometimes referred to as "family abductions."† Over 200,000 children a year (and this number appears to be declining) are victims of family abductions, although only about one-quarter of them were reported to police. More than half of family abductions are perpetrated by the biological father, and an additional 25 percent are perpetrated by the biological mother.[38] Almost half of the family-abducted children are under the age of 6, and about half are missing for less than a week, with about one-fourth missing for less than a day. Male and female children are equally likely to be the victims in family abductions. The most likely place that abductions occur is their or someone else's home or yard; school/daycare abductions are relatively rare. The majority of the children abducted are with the abductor just before the abduction; typically, in these abductions, the children are not returned to the custodial parent after visits. Family abductions are more likely to occur in the summer. Most of the children are returned (91 percent).[39] Contributing factors to family abductions may include unresolved conflicts over child-custody issues that make abduction seem a last option.

Family-abduction cases may be prolonged and may sometimes involve international implications. There have been a number of legislative initiatives affecting family abductions (see Appendix B). These cases involve significant legal, civil, and liability issues regarding the enforcement of the most recent custody order.[40] According to NCMEC officials, about half of international cases of U.S. child abduction involve abductors who do or may flee to Mexico.[41]

† State laws on criminal custodial interference vary from state to state.

Children Missing Involuntarily, Lost, or Injured (MILI) or Missing Because of Benign Explanations (MBE)

Missing children that do not fall within any of the above categories are commonly missing because of miscommunication: they are too young to contact a caretaker; or they are lost, stranded, or injured and therefore unable to contact a caretaker. As many as 200,000 children a year are involuntarily missing from caretakers because they were lost, injured, or stranded. These children are most commonly White male teens who disappeared from wooded areas or parks. An additional nearly 350,000 children are missing for benign reasons; they are not actually lost, injured, abducted, victimized, or runaways. Rather, their cases were basically false alarms.[42] Most of those missing for benign explanations are teenagers who failed to return home when expected. The reasons for these types of cases (MILI and MBE) can include car trouble or car accidents, inclement weather, poor communication, helping a friend, riding the wrong bus, truancy, or sleeping in unknown places. Most of these children are teenagers, missing for fewer than six hours.[43] Although these categories of missing children account for far greater numbers than kidnapped or abducted children, less attention has been paid to preventing cases of MILI and MBE children, as opposed to cases of runaway and abducted children. As the popularity of adventures such as hiking, camping, boating, flying, rock climbing, and other outdoor activities increase, police may encounter more of these cases. Children missing for the reasons described here often come from families that are otherwise socially and economically stressed, a confluence of factors that leave such children more vulnerable to going missing.[44]

Missing Adults

Adult missing-person cases typically fall into the following categories: "adults missing involuntary," "endangered adults," "disabled adults," "adults missing in catastrophes," and "other."[45]

Just over half of all active missing-person cases are missing adults and thus, at any given time, there are over 50,000 active missing-adult cases in police files.[46, †] While adult males account for 58 percent of all (not just active) missing-adult cases, younger missing adults are disproportionately female.[47] About two-thirds of missing adults are White; about one-fourth are Black; and 6 percent are American Indian, Asian, or other races.[48] Blacks are again disproportionately represented as missing adults, although not quite at the level of missing children.

† In the past, when a missing child turned 18 years of age, some police agencies removed the missing-child cases from their records. However, the 2006 Adam Walsh Act mandates that these records be converted to missing-adult cases (NCMEC 2006).

NCIC Adult Missing-Persons Categories

1. A person of any age who is missing and who is under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting that person or others to personal and immediate danger.
2. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary.
3. A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that that person's physical safety may be in danger.
4. A person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.
5. A person who is missing and declared unemancipated as defined by the laws of the person's state of residence and does not meet any of the entry criteria set forth in 1–4 above.

Source: National Crime Information Center www.fas.org/irp/agency/doj/fbi/is/ncic.htm

Adults Missing Voluntarily

Unlike juveniles, adults can legally go missing, and often they do so out of a wish to escape relationship difficulties, financial problems, depression, or just to disappear. When police locate these persons, they cannot divulge their location to those who reported them missing, just that they were located and do not wish to be contacted. Although adults have the right to go missing and may in fact not be officially missing, police resources are consumed by following up on these missing-adult cases to determine the circumstances.

Disabled Adults and Walkaways from Care

This category of missing adults includes elderly persons as walkaways from home or care facilities, as well as other adults with autism, Down Syndrome, dementia, Alzheimer's, and other cognitive disabilities. As our population ages, those adults with some form of dementia, including, but not limited to, Alzheimer's, will become more common missing-person cases. At least 3 million persons with Alzheimer's disease are being cared for in their homes or the homes of family members, and the care is provided primarily by family members.[49] Dementia may be associated with wandering behavior.[50] As many as 6 in 10 people with Alzheimer's will engage in wandering behavior.[51]

Persons Missing in Disasters

Natural disasters and catastrophes can also cause people—adults and children—to go missing. Hurricane Katrina created hundreds of missing-persons cases: 5 years later, 135 cases were still open, and approximately 30 unidentified-dead cases remained unsolved. There may be many more missing-person cases, perhaps two times the known missing-persons total associated with Hurricane Katrina that were never officially counted as missing.[52]

The Missing Missing

Most missing persons are not reported as missing to police. Some proportions of these missing persons were victims of foul play and clearly were involuntarily missing and endangered.

Prostitutes

Prostitutes are a particularly vulnerable pool of victims of serial murder. In many cases, these victims are not part of police missing-person cases because no one reported them as missing or because they had outstanding warrants and departmental policy was not to accept missing-person cases for those with outstanding warrants.[53] Presumably, the logic behind this procedural rule was that those with outstanding warrants are considered more likely to be fugitives than missing. In the Green River prostitute serial-murder case, 11 of the 48 victims had no active missing-person case. An additional five victims were unidentified dead and were also likely to have been among the "missing missing," meaning that as many as one-third of the victims were not known to be missing before their deaths. Many other recent serial-murder cases have included "missing missing" victims.[54, †] Although some missing-persons risk assessments would categorize those with outstanding warrants for nonviolent crimes as low-urgency cases,[55] these cases can in fact be very high risk. Although from 1970 through 2009, 32 percent of serial-murder cases included female prostitute victims, more recently, from 2000 through 2009, the proportion of serial-murder cases involving female prostitute victims climbed to 69 percent of the total, and serial murderers who kill prostitutes kill for longer periods of time and amass more victims.[56] Rather than paying less attention to a missing prostitute who is assumed to live a transient lifestyle and perhaps to have outstanding warrants, you should treat the disappearance of prostitutes as high-risk cases.

---

† The Herbert Baumeister (Indianapolis), Robert Berdella (Kansas City), Jeffrey Dahmer (Milwaukee), John Wayne Gacy (Chicago), and Robert Lee Yates (Spokane, Washington) cases all included a significant proportion of missing missing victims (Quinet 2009).

Homeless Persons

Another group of missing persons not likely to be reported as missing is the homeless, especially those with mental illness. This population of missing persons may have become so estranged from family and friends that no missing-person report is filed, and if they are located by police and are over age 21, the police cannot disclose their location to those reporting them as missing, thus creating stress for families and friends and potential frustration with police.

Recent proposed changes to the Vancouver Police Department policy on missing persons modifies the previous definition of high-risk persons (those under age 12, the elderly, and those with physical and mental disabilities) to include marginalized persons such as the homeless, drug- or alcohol-addicted persons, persons with mental health disorders, prostitutes, and persons who may be subject to cultural bias (e.g., the aboriginal Canadian population).[57]

Illegal Immigrants

Illegal immigrants are also likely to be part of the "missing missing" population. Undocumented border crossers/illegal immigrants in Arizona constitute a large part of the unidentified-dead population.[58] These undocumented border crossers are technically not missing persons in the United States but may have missing-person reports in Mexico, thus requiring cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican governments and police. This issue is increasing in frequency, and a recent symposium on border crossing deaths finds that over a 6-year period, as many as 1,000 persons died trying to cross into Arizona.[59] In Mexico, families can enter information about their missing into a database that can then be checked by missing-victims' advocates in the United States, and in the event that unidentified remains are located in a U.S. medical examiner's office, fingerprints and DNA matching is bringing closure for some families.[60]

Human Trafficking Victims

In addition to those voluntarily crossing into the United States, others are brought here against their will.† Although the exact number of persons trafficked into the United States is not known, if they escape their traffickers, their disappearance may never be reported to police, and although they are missing persons, their eventual discovery may be a result of other criminal investigations or of unidentified remains.‡

† A recent FBI news release spotlighted the arrests of several persons involved in human trafficking of hundreds of Thai farm workers into forced labor on U.S. farms (FBI 2011).

‡ See Problem-Specific Guide No. 38, *Exploitation of Trafficked Women*, for additional information.

Understanding Your Local Problem

The information provided above is only a generalized description of missing-person problems. Analyzing your local problem carefully will help you design a more effective response strategy.

Stakeholders

In addition to criminal justice agencies, the following groups have an interest in the missing-person problem, and they should be considered for the contribution they might make to gathering information about the problem and responding to it:

- Local government agencies
  - Child protection agencies
  - Foster care providers
  - Coroner and medical examiner offices
  - State missing-person clearinghouses
  - Mental health centers
  - Veterans affairs departments
- Social service organizations
  - Runaway shelters and service providers
  - Guardian homes
  - Assisted-living facilities
  - Homeless shelters and service providers
  - Domestic violence shelters and service providers
  - Prostitute service providers
- Medical providers
- Employers
- Schools
- National centers with databases for missing persons and unidentified dead

Asking the Right Questions

The following are some critical questions you should ask in analyzing your particular problem of missing persons, even if the answers are not always readily available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you choose the most appropriate set of responses later on.

Missing Persons

- How many missing persons are there in your jurisdiction? Are these trends stable over time?
- How does the number of missing persons break down by the different categories of missing?
- Within each category, what are the likely reasons the person went missing? Relationship issues? Legal issues? Substance abuse? Mental illness?
- For each missing-person category, what is the age, race, gender, and socioeconomic breakdown of the missing in your jurisdiction?
- What percentage of missing-person cases are unfounded, and what is the nature of these cases (i.e., why were they reported missing, and why was the report later unfounded)?
- What is the average amount of time missing for each missing-person category, and what percentage of missing-person cases are still unresolved after 1 month, 6 months, a year? What is the nature of unresolved missing-person cases?
- For those who returned on their own, did they return to the place they had left? If not, what other places are return sites?
- Where did missing persons go while they were missing?
- What percentage of missing persons are repeats (i.e., have been reported missing before), and what is the nature of repeat-missing cases (e.g., runaways from care, elderly with dementia)?
- How long are the different types of missing persons missing? For each category of missing, what is the time lag until discovery, and what factors contribute to the time lag?
- What percentage of missing persons have orders of protection against another, and what percentage of missing persons have histories of domestic violence victimization?
- What percentage of missing persons have mental health issues? Suicide attempts or threats?
- What percentage of missing-person incidents involve some sort of arrest? What is the nature of those arrests?

- What is the nature of runaway cases? What is the average age and demographic profile of runaways?
- Are missing persons being victimized while they are missing?
- How often is foul play suspected in missing-person reports, and if these cases are handled differently, how are they handled differently?

Reporters, Caregivers, and Custodians

- What proportion of runaways run away from custodial care, assisted living, or foster care?
- Who makes missing-person reports (e.g., family, partners, friends, employers, schools), and how are these reports made (by phone, in person)?
- For those missing persons who did not return on their own and were discovered, where and by whom were they discovered? Police? Family? Others?
- What percentage of juvenile runaways are arrested and officially processed by the juvenile justice system, and what determines an arrest versus an informal response?
- How do missing-persons cases affect those who reported them as missing? What resources are available for the families and friends of the missing?
- Are there complaints from the community about how police handle missing-person cases?
- What advocacy groups in your community work with family and friends of the missing to provide additional resources or actual lists, photos, and descriptions of missing persons?

Third Parties

- What proportion of missing persons went missing with another person? Who are these other people?
- Does the agency have an up-to-date list of registered sex offenders in the area?
- What percentage of incidents involve crimes such as child molestation, kidnapping, rape, homicide, illegal immigration, human trafficking?
- Are there offenders in your area who have been linked to other cases of missing persons (e.g., child abductions, child molestation, violence against prostitutes)?
- For chronic runaways, are there parents and/or other guardians who should be investigated for abuse and neglect?

- Are missing persons engaging in criminal activity while missing? What types of crime do they commit? Are they repeat offenders?
- What proportion of found runaways are located while residing with someone who harbored them?
- What is known about harborers and their motives for harboring runaways?

Locations/Times

- Where do the different categories of missing persons go missing from? Schools? Home? Child custodial care facilities? Adult facilities (day centers, nursing homes, assisted-living facilities)?
- Are missing-person reports coming from certain places in your jurisdiction? Are there hot spots for missing-person reports?
- Are there locations where missing persons are commonly found? What is known about those places?
- Are missing-person reports seasonal? Do they occur more frequently after special events or on certain days of the week?

Current Responses

- What services have been used or could be used to remedy the chronic/repeat missing?
- Are cases removed from NCIC within 3 days of discovery?
- Are all local missing-person cases shared with the state clearinghouse for missing persons, NCMEC and NamUs?
- Does your agency have a family liaison for all missing-person cases?
- What is your agency's policy for accepting missing-persons reports for persons with outstanding warrants?
- What do police and other local agencies do to encourage missing-person reports and to follow up on their resolutions?
- What is the policy of the prosecutor's office regarding runaways and harboring runaways?
- What services exist in the community to prevent persons from going missing and to encourage their safe return?
- What percentage of missing persons use relevant services after their return (e.g., shelters, electronic tracking aids, counseling)?

- What is your agency's agreement with other entities for searches (e.g., internal search teams, search teams from other agencies, K-9 search)?
- What partnerships exist between your agency and domestic violence shelters?
- What cooperative agreements exist between your agency and schools, hospitals, runaway shelters, and child protective services, including foster children and other children in care, regarding the release of protected information needed in missing-person cases?
- Have fingerprints for the missing person been retrieved (e.g., from records systems or personal items) and entered into the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS)?
- Are dental records retrieved (or at least the name of the missing person's dentist) for persons missing longer than 30 days?
- Had DNA been collected from family members for a possible later match to unidentified dead?
- Has missing-person information been compared to local coroner and medical examiner unidentified dead?

Measuring Your Effectiveness

Measurement allows you to determine to what degree your efforts have succeeded and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing the intended results.

You should take measures of your problem *before* you implement responses, to determine how serious the problem is, and *after* you implement them, to determine whether they have been effective. If they are relevant, you should take all measures in both the target area and the surrounding area. For more detailed guidance on measuring effectiveness, including outcome/impact measures and process measures, see Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 1, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers* and Problem-Solving Tools Guide No. 10, *Analyzing Crime Displacement and Diffusion*.

The following are potentially useful *outcome* measures of the effectiveness of responses to missing persons and enable you to determine the *impact* of your strategies on the overall problem:

- Reduced number of missing persons
- Increased number and/or percentage of missing persons located and returned home safely
- Decreased length of time persons are missing
- Increased number of missing-persons reports (if there is reason to believe that a significant percentage of missing persons are not reported to police)
- Reduced harm occurring to missing persons while they are missing
- Reduced number of repeat/chronic missing

The following are potentially useful *process* evaluation measures for missing persons that will measure the extent to which your various strategies were implemented as planned:

- Increased number of missing persons using referral services
- Reduced amount of time between the time the person was last seen and the time when police were first contacted
- Reduced time and resources needed to search for and recover missing persons
- Improved early identification of high-risk cases most likely to involve endangered missing persons
- Increased satisfaction with police services for missing persons

Responses to the Problem of Missing Persons

Your analysis of your local missing-persons problem should give you a better understanding of the factors contributing to it. Once you have analyzed your local problem and established a baseline for measuring effectiveness, you should consider possible responses to address the problem.

The following response strategies provide a foundation of ideas for addressing your particular problem. These strategies are drawn from a variety of research studies and police reports. Several of these strategies may apply to your community's problem.

It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem.

Do not limit yourself to considering what police can do: rather, carefully consider whether others in your community share responsibility for the problem and can help police better respond to it. The responsibility of responding, in some cases, may need to be shifted toward those who have the capacity to implement more effective responses. (For more detailed information on shifting and sharing responsibility, see Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*.)

General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy

1. **Collaborating with other agencies.** Create formal partnerships with schools, hospitals, care facilities, and fire and rescue agencies to create prevention and intervention strategies. Consider establishing a missing-person advisory committee comprising representatives of all key agencies. Establish search protocols with fire, emergency, and other police personnel to coordinate search resources (e.g., canine, aviation, and dive resources).[61]

   A significant issue is the use of agency records to locate missing persons. Finding out if missing persons are in jail may be relatively easy for police, but finding out if they are in the hospital, in a domestic violence shelter or enrolled in a school in another state is more difficult.

To access school records, medical and dental care records†, child welfare records, domestic violence shelters, and runaway shelter records, you will have to negotiate a memoranda of understanding with a number of different agencies and will need parental consent in cases involving the release of juvenile records.[62] Time is lost during the critical early hours of a missing-person investigation if police are forced to get court orders to find out if a person has been admitted to or released from a hospital or a psychiatric facility or is present in a juvenile guardian home. Limited information may be available, and in the case of domestic violence shelters, confidentiality is required by federal statute, and police are not exempted from such restrictions.[63]

Even other government agencies may not release information that could help in missing-person cases. Recent media reports reveal that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will not release information about the location of persons filing tax returns, and in some cases, these persons may be fugitive parents who have abducted their children.[64] Studies suggest that the social security numbers of the abducted children and their abductors often appear on tax returns, along with their current location. However, privacy laws forbid the IRS to divulge this information unless the abduction is being investigated as a federal crime and a judge orders the release of the information. The IRS does include pictures of missing children, along with forms mailed to taxpayers, and there has been successful recovery of 80 children with this program.‡ But missing-person advocates commonly call for legislation that would permit the IRS to release tax information more readily to missing-person investigators.[65]

a. **Working with social service agencies.** Collaborating with social service agencies can reduce the amount of time police spend on cases and can especially contribute to a reduction of repeat runaways and/or repeat dementia wandering cases. Establish collaborations for sharing agencies' proprietary databases.[66] Collaboration with domestic violence shelters, juvenile guardian homes, assisted-living facilities, and family respite programs can prevent persons from going missing and can develop placement facilities and other options for at-risk persons.

---

† The 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) provides federal protections of privacy for personal health information.

‡ Picture Them Home, a NCMEC project, encourages corporate sponsorship of displays of pictures of missing children on police vehicles, semi-trucks, brochures, websites, posters, and screensavers; the project also promotes the distribution of photos of missing children.

Domestic violence shelters may be housing persons who have been reported as missing, and you will need to develop close working relationships to protect privacy but also resolve missing-person cases. Counseling centers and various advocacy groups can provide police with information about their client group.

Child protection agencies and foster care providers can provide data about placement numbers, high-risk persons, those missing from care, and detailed information after the return of missing children (e.g., the location of the child while missing and persons involved in the child going missing).

Share your police missing-person report form with child welfare agencies so they will know what sort of information police need in missing-person cases.

b. **Working with family court.** Work with family court to provide services in custody disputes and contentious divorces and in cases of domestic violence, including training and information about cross-cultural and/or international marriages. The Fresno Police Department developed a model program to reduce child custody disputes and provide controlled exchange environments for parents with no contact between the exchanging parties. A safe exchange program, involving formal authorities, for parents sharing custody of children may help to reduce the temptation to abduct children.[67]

c. **Working with the prosecutor's office.** Prosecutors can provide information about orders of protection and child custody status and about the status of laws regarding police access to information (e.g., active cell phone records and "pings"). In family abductions, police will have to verify the most recent custody orders and work with the custodial parent to retrieve information and authorizations for information from schools and medical facilities. Significant federal legislation exists that affects child abduction cases, but you should also become familiar with legislation in your state and consider regular training sessions with prosecutors' offices.[68]

d. **Working with social service and nonprofits that serve homeless, mentally ill, or prostitute populations.** Partnerships with local homeless service providers, mental health centers, and groups that provide services for prostitutes have found success in lowering the number of these types of missing-person cases.[69] A nonprofit group, Project Jason, sponsors a program known as Come Home, which focuses on the homeless as missing persons and places missing-person posters in homeless shelters, food kitchens, and other locations where homeless persons gather. Project Jason also organizes 18-Wheel Angels, another program that enlists long-haul truckers in helping to locate and distribute posters of missing persons.[70]

Mental health centers and veterans' services, including hospitals, may be able to provide information to help locate missing persons. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) provides a guide for families of the homeless or mentally ill.[71] Families of missing mentally ill adults may need to consider involuntary commitment options, guardianship and conservatorship laws in their state, and other options for community mental health treatment.

Model strategies exist for identification programs for prostitutes in the event that they are suspected victims of foul play.[72] Agencies that work closely with prostitutes may be able to enlist prostitutes to help locate missing prostitutes.

e. **Working with coroner and medical examiners.** Coroners and medical examiners can work with police agencies to provide DNA, fingerprint, X-ray, and dental information on unidentified dead for uploading into the NamUs unidentified-dead system for a national search and a possible match to missing persons across the country. The Doe Network, a volunteer organization in existence since 2000, also provides another resource for information on missing-person and unidentified-dead open cases.

f. **Working with schools.** Obtaining parents' or other guardians' written consent to release school records may be necessary. Developing joint protocols and record-sharing agreements between schools and police can reduce the amount of time police spend gathering necessary information. Schools can also serve as primary places for prevention by educating teachers and staff about the warning signs of runaway or abduction and by providing information on social services available. San Diego police developed a model worksheet as part of a school-based program for educating children and parents about what to do when parents do not arrive to pick their children up, about their children's routes to and from school, and about the names and phone numbers of their children's friends. This information was kept at the school, and as a result, police may not even be contacted about a missing child because the child is more easily discovered by parents and/or school officials.[73] Connecting the families of schoolchildren who go missing for benign reasons with social service resources can help to prevent repeat events.

g. **Working with medical providers.** Medical providers can work with police to identify patients in health care facilities who have been reported as missing. You should seek to develop joint protocols and record sharing agreements that allow for parental consent for medical records of juveniles or of those under other guardianship (e.g., for use with Silver Alerts in cases where medical issues are necessary for alert).

h. **Working with foster care and children's guardian homes.** Educate child welfare providers to assure they have recent photographs of all children in their care. Ensure that police have access to child welfare representatives 24 hours a day. Establish policies for what to do when a missing child is located, including a child in another jurisdiction. Enhance collaboration and cooperation—e.g., by creating joint protocols for handling missing-from-care cases. Engage in joint training. Children's guardian homes should immediately notify police when a child is missing from care and provide recent photographs and other information (e.g., family and friends, previous missing episodes, substance use).

i. **Working with high-risk facilities.** At facilities from which clients frequently go missing, such as child guardian homes, assisted-living facilities, nursing homes, mental health institutions, etc., develop reliable and dignified identification systems for persons who might not have the mental capacity to report their identity or residence, if located.

   Assisted-living facilities can also provide information, including recent photographs of residents, their previous missing episodes, and their possible destinations.

j. **Working with state-level missing-person clearinghouses and NCMEC.** State missing-person clearinghouses can provide information about nonprofits, private agencies, and other entities that can provide assistance. For those cases where a child is thought to be in jeopardy, Team Adam provides police with extensive resources, including search-and-rescue, computer forensics, equipment, and family advocacy for cases involving missing and abducted children as well as sexually exploited children. Team Adam members include retired police professionals who provide free assistance at the site through a program run by NCMEC.[74]

   Entities such as NamUs can provide information about the characteristics of the unidentified dead across the United States for possible matches to missing persons and can publicize details of active missing-person cases. The Doe Network also contains information on thousands of unidentified-dead and missing-person cases and their volunteers have successfully brought case closure to many families.[75]

k. **Working with local media.** Media can be a critical resource for distributing information to the local community and for encouraging citizens to share information with police. In recent years the media have been criticized for giving greater coverage to cases in which young, White, physically attractive females are missing than to other cases;[76] whatever criteria media use to determine coverage, you shouldn't take for granted that all cases will receive the coverage you desire.

l. **Working with employers.** Employers may be able to provide information about a missing person's last whereabouts, as well as fingerprint and other contact information.

2. **Training police and other emergency response personnel.** Training increases understanding of the different categories of missing persons, improving both the search and the post-recovery responses. All police officers handling missing-person cases should also be trained in legislation, liability, orders of protection and orders of custody, case management, search issues, and working with families. Dispatchers should also be trained as the first point of contact regarding how to calm reporting persons and to get accurate and necessary information. Police may also need training for reunification—how to manage the return of the child and to offer additional resources—as well as when to seek physical exams, how to interview recovered missing persons, and when to use referral services such as mental health professionals.† Police, fire and emergency-rescue personnel, and volunteers might also benefit from some aspects of missing-persons response training, particularly for cases involving search-and-rescue.[77]

3. **Educating the public.**‡ Encourage families and caregivers to keep up-to-date pictures of children and others at risk of going missing. Encourage people to call the police immediately when someone is missing and to let the police know when the missing person has returned or when their whereabouts are known. Increasing public awareness of the importance of prompt reports to police is critical because delayed reporting hampers searches and investigations.[78]

   Encourage reporting of the missing missing. Implement programs that allow prostitutes and homeless persons to share information about possible missing persons with police in nonpunitive ways. Programs such as the Arlington, Texas, citizen notification and CrimeWeb program provide a ZIP Code- and Internet-based e-mail-alert system for public safety issues, including missing persons.[79]

---

† Training opportunities exist through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. "Responding to Missing and Abducted Children" and other training courses exist through the NCMEC, including the implementation of model policies developed by NCMEC and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for response to, investigation of, and recovery of missing children and missing adults.

‡ See Response Guide No. 5, *Crime Prevention Publicity Campaigns,* for further information.

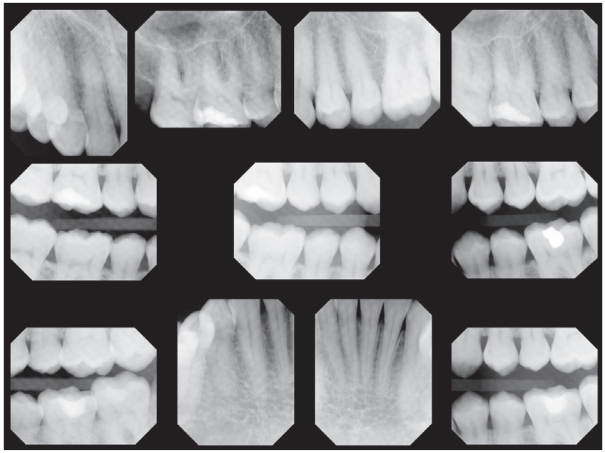
Even though the effectiveness of many child awareness/education programs is unknown, logic suggests that you should not limit prevention messages to the relatively rare abductions by strangers ("stranger danger"). Prevention messages should also cover abductions by acquaintances, including teaching children rules about going places, even with someone they know.

Specific Responses to Missing Persons

4. **Enhancing case files.** The identification of missing persons can be facilitated with additional information from dental records, DNA, and fingerprints. Many states' laws require that dental records be requested and retrieved for all missing persons after some period (typically 30–60 days). One study found that dental records had been obtained for only 4 percent of missing persons.[80] It is critical to at least have the name of the missing person's dentist on file if remains are found at some point.[81] Although dental records, DNA, and fingerprints are most likely to be used to match remains with known identities, this evidence can also be used to identify living located missing persons in cases of amnesia and other cognitive dysfunctions, as well as to identify infants or children who had been abducted but who may be recovered years later.

   Legally accepted methods of identifying the dead include visual identification by next of kin, fingerprints and footprints, dental records, and DNA. The National Dental Image/Information Repository (NDIR) allows storage of dental information for missing, unidentified, and wanted persons—information which is more than what can be entered into NCIC. NamUs also stores and shares dental information.

   DNA can be the critical connection for matching the unidentified dead to missing-person cases. DNA can be submitted to the National Missing Person DNA Database managed by the FBI, and DNA profiles of family members can also be included in the NamUs files for missing and unidentified persons. Recent media coverage suggests that the FBI Laboratory gives low priority to missing-person cases and that as much as 40 percent of the FBI DNA backlog consists of missing-person cases, some waiting more than 2 years to be processed.[82] Clearly, DNA backlogs interfere with a local police agency's ability to successfully and timely resolve missing-persons cases. The NamUs system includes access to a DNA laboratory that is available free to police working on missing-person and unidentified-dead cases and it is also assisting with the overall DNA backlog in these cases.[83]



Dental records can be used to match the unidentified dead with missing persons across the country.

Fingerprints, when available, can also be collected and added to missing-person case reports. The U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology program (US-VISIT) fingerprints most non-U.S. citizens who enter the United States. Although the primary goal of this program is the identification of suspected terrorists, persons with criminal histories, and illegal immigrants, in the event that these persons later became missing persons, authorities should remember that their fingerprints are likely on file with US-VISIT.[84] Similar programs exist in other countries, and these could serve as information sources in cases of international abductions.

5. **Promoting the use of endangered-missing advisories.** The AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert system allows the media to generate public service announcements in cases of abducted children that meet specific criteria[†] and thereby generate a short-term intense focus on that missing child. Initially, AMBER Alerts were intended for cases of abductions by strangers, but they have been expanded to include abductions by others, including family members. Once it has been established that an abduction has occurred, that the case has been entered into NCIC, that the child (age 17 or younger) is in danger, and that information exists to allow for a description of the victim and suspect, police can provide the information to the media, which can then broadcast alerts.[85] Facebook and the NCMEC have

† AMBER Alert was part of the 2003 Congressional PROTECT Act (Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today).

© Bob Bobster/Creative Commons
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amber_Alert.jpg

The AMBER Alert system allows the media to generate public service announcements in cases of abducted children that meet specific criteria and thereby generate a short-term intense focus on that missing child.

recently launched a partnership to make AMBER Alerts available to Facebook users who live in the geographic area of the AMBER Alert.[86] In addition, a new national alert plan, the Personal Localized Alerting Network (PLAN), will alert the public to geographically targeted emergencies, including AMBER Alerts and other missing-person alerts via text messages to cell phones.[87] Participating wireless carriers will be able to distribute these alerts to persons with cell phones containing special chips and software. There were 1,356 AMBER Alerts involving 1,689 children issued across the United States from 2004 through 2009, with 510 reported successful recoveries.[88]

Some jurisdictions have found innovative ways to bring longer term attention to cold-case missing children. The Washington State Patrol's Homeward Bound Project worked with trucking companies and other interested parties to place large pictures of missing children on the sides of commercial trailers to create rolling billboards that would be seen by many more people over a wider area. One of their selected missing children was recovered as a result of the publicity.[89]

Silver Alerts® were originally intended to facilitate searches for older adults with mental impairments, but most state adoptions of the Silver Alert program extend the coverage to all mentally impaired persons 18 and over.[90] As of March 2010, Silver Alert systems had been adopted by 18 states, and an additional 14 states had pending legislation.[91]

The U.S. Department of Justice has published a guide for developing an Endangered Missing Advisory (EMA) for notification of the public regarding missing-person cases that do not meet AMBER Alert and Silver Alert criteria (e.g., children who have not been abducted and missing adults with no cognitive impairment).[92]

6. **Promoting the use of search and information technology.** Technological innovations can aid in searches for missing persons. Project Lifesaver is a nonprofit organization that uses GPS tracking devices to find persons with Alzheimer's, autism, and Down syndrome. Such devices can shorten searches considerably. Even tracking the location of a missing person's cell phone or other electronic device can be helpful in locating the person.

   Databases containing information about persons known to be at high risk for going missing can also facilitate returning the person home if and when they are found. Irvine, California, police developed a model program for gathering biographical information, previous wandering patterns, current photographs (in digital format for ease of distribution), and cognitive information for at-risk persons with cognitive disorders.[93] The FBI has developed a mobile app, known as "Child ID," for parents to store information about their children (e.g., height, weight, photos) on their cell phones, to be shared with police if the child goes missing.[94]

7. **Enlisting volunteers to support missing-person searches, investigations, and prevention.** Many jurisdictions have implemented volunteer programs to assist police with programs relating to missing persons. Volunteers help in activities such as verifying addresses in sex offender registries, replacing batteries in electronic tracking devices, and assisting in active investigations by canvassing door to door, providing perimeter controls, providing relief services to police and other volunteers, helping with searches, answering phones, and maintaining missing-person files. There are model protocols for the recruitment, training, and coordination of civilian volunteers.[95]

8. **Providing families with information and support.** Information on the status of a missing-person investigation should be shared with family and friends, as allowed by law and as the investigation warrants. Families need to understand what to expect as investigations progress. For example, families need to know that if adults are voluntarily missing, police will not divulge their location when it is discovered if the missing persons request privacy. Families should also be apprised of counseling resources. Team HOPE offers support resources for families with missing and exploited children and can assist families in dealing with the psychological impacts of missing-child cases. The Doe Network also provides support and assistance to the families of missing persons. A model program for family support exists at the Australia Federal Police's National Missing Persons Coordination Centre; its website offers resources for dealing with ambiguous loss, common mental health issues for families of missing persons, continued support after the location of the missing person, and support services for the families of the long-term missing.[96]

9. **Facilitating at-risk persons' return home.** For missing persons found far from their home, returning them home can be a challenge. The Greyhound bus company provides free bus transportation home for recovered abducted and runaway children, in collaboration with NCMEC and the National Runaway Switchboard, respectively.[97] Many communities have emergency shelters operated by nonprofit organizations for runaways and at-risk children.[98]

10. **Ensuring proper cancellation of resolved cases.** Remove recovered missing-persons alerts from NCIC within 3 days of their recovery. Follow up regularly with family members and other reporting parties to determine whether the missing person has returned. Reporters often neglect to notify police if the missing person is located without police assistance.

11. **Focusing on repeat missing persons.** Link missing persons to appropriate social services when they return to prevent repeat occurrences and to improve future police responses. NCMEC coordinates the Runaway Relapse and Prevention Group that focuses on preventing repeat runaways through counseling, training, crisis intervention, and other support services.[99, †] The Lancashire (United Kingdom) Constabulary developed a model program for working with runaways and other missing children with a thorough post-return interview by persons with whom juveniles will feel comfortable sharing their experiences. This project focused on identifying children who had been subject to child sexual exploitation and who may not have even recognized it themselves.[100]

---

† See Problem-Specific Guide No. 37, *Juvenile Runaways,* for further details on responses to runaway problems.

12. **Planning for disasters and catastrophes.** Conduct case scenario and tabletop exercises to prepare to effectively manage a large volume of missing-person cases after a tornado, flood, fire, hurricane, explosion, or other natural disaster. The International Committee of the Red Cross aids in finding missing persons after large-scale disasters through its "Family Links" website.[101, †]

13. **Promoting legislation that allows police access to information.** Support legislation that allows police immediate access to cell phone records and computer activity for finding missing persons believed to be in imminent danger.[‡]

Responses with Limited Effectiveness

14. **Handling cases over the telephone.** Although the initial contact may be made over the telephone and police should make it easy for citizens to file a missing-person report (by telephone, fax, or e-mail), a missing-persons detective or uniformed officer should be dispatched to the reporting person's location and to the location the missing person was last seen as soon as possible after the initial report is made to canvass for information, to search the area where the missing person was last seen, and to talk to potential witnesses or others with information.

15. **Rejecting cases for missing persons with outstanding warrants.** If an NCIC record already exists for an individual because he or she has an outstanding warrant, the NCIC record should be modified to note that the person is also missing and may be endangered.

16. **Arresting juveniles for running away from home.** A punitive response to runaways may decrease the likelihood of reporting by parents and other custodians and may make it less likely that runaways will offer police information about their whereabouts when missing, and about criminal and sexual victimization.

17. **Forcing runaway juveniles to return home.** Children may be fleeing abusive relatives and/or may be thrownaway and abandoned/deserted children.

---

† The Family Links website allows people to register the name of the missing person and contact details in the language spoken in the area affected.

‡ The Kelsey Smith Act, H.R. 847, was referred to the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security in April 2011 for federal approval. Several states have already passed a version of this law that allows police to request and obtain call information from providers of mobile services when the case involves emergency situations that involve death or risk of physical harm and that are not necessarily yet criminal investigations. H.R. 847 also provides for training for police to collect and use call-location information in emergencies.

Appendix A: Summary of Responses to Missing Persons

The table below summarizes the responses to missing persons, the mechanism by which they are intended to work, the conditions under which they ought to work best, and some factors you should consider before implementing a particular response. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem.

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy					
1	27	Collaborating with other agencies	Facilitates searches for, recoveries of, and prevention of missing persons	…confidentiality issues are addressed in memoranda of understanding; participants meet regularly and share information and concerns; case information is shared with NCIC, NCMEC, NamUs; custody order and protective orders are shared among involved agencies	Some collaborations will be for services, training, or information exchange; need to assess agencies' capacity for new referrals; collaborations cannot violate information privacy regulations; avoid interagency conflicts through transparency and shared missions
2	32	Training police and other emergency response personnel	Increases understanding of types of missing persons and improves searches, investigations, recoveries, and prevention	…training is relevant to all personnel and covers diversity of missing-population issues	Training will need to be updated and repeated

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
3	32	Educating the public	Promotes prompt reporting, improves information to aid search, and improves prevention	…target audience includes high-risk groups such as schoolchildren, prostitutes and homeless; message extends beyond stranger abductions	Too much information may saturate the public and either cause less attention to be paid to missing persons or an overestimated view of the likelihood of rare types of missing-person cases
Specific Responses to Missing Persons					
4	33	Enhancing case files	Increases likelihood of identifying located missing persons	…includes missing-person report data (e.g., age, race, gender, location) as well as length of time missing; dental, DNA, fingerprint information is collected when case is active and shared with NCIC and NamUs	Creating detailed reports and proactive plans is labor intensive; may need to consult with forensic anthropologists, dentists, medical examiners, and family doctors
5	34	Promoting the use of endangered-missing advisories	Increases likelihood of finding recently missing person by widening and intensifying search	…there exist agreements between police and broadcasters for media alerts; alerts are localized	Too many alerts may reduce citizens' vigilance

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
6	36	Promoting the use of search and information technology	Increases likelihood of finding missing person and reduces search time; increases likelihood of returning located person home	…electronic tracking devices are properly maintained; information databases are updated	Missing person can become separated from electronic tracking devices; widespread use of technology can be costly
7	36	Enlisting volunteers to support missing-person searches, investigations and prevention	Increases likelihood of finding, recovering and preventing missing persons by enhancing resources	…volunteer programs are established in advance and include background checks, training, and proper management of volunteers	Requires some additional expenditure to properly manage volunteer programs
8	37	Providing families with information and support	Alleviates some of families' anxiety	…a designated liaison trained in emotional and legal issues of missing persons is assigned to the family; other social services are available	Police may not be able to meet all of families' needs and desires
9	37	Facilitating at-risk persons' return home	Increases likelihood located missing person will be returned home safely and quickly	…financial assistance is available for immediate and safe transportation	Most relevant to cases in which missing person is located far from home

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
10	37	Ensuring proper cancellation of resolved cases	Prevents wasting resources searching for missing persons who have already been located	…family liaison or lead detective makes regular contact with family/reporter to update status; persons who report missing are strongly encouraged to report updates to police	Requires expenditure of some resources to confirm that missing person has actually been discovered/returned
11	37	Focusing on repeat missing persons	Increases likelihood of preventing repeat instances of disappearing; conserves police resources	…cases are referred to family court and social services and chronically missing persons and their families take advantage of services	Social services can be costly and not always effective
12	38	Planning for disasters and catastrophes	Facilitates large-scale search and recovery operations	…training for large-scale missing incidents occurs before the incident	Resources may be expended planning for unlikely or rare catastrophic events
13	38	Promoting legislation that allows police access to information	Increases likelihood of timely locating missing persons	…state-level legislation authorizes information sharing and efficient protocols are established and followed	Voluntary information-sharing agreements might be executed even if mandatory legislation is not enacted

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
Responses With Limited Effectiveness					
14	38	Handling cases over the telephone			Telephone may be appropriate in limited cases or for initial contact only
15	38	Rejecting cases for missing persons with outstanding warrants			May add to missing-person caseload and may necessitate change in standard case management for missing persons
16	38	Arresting juveniles for running away from home			Adjudication is unlikely for runaways, so arrest is inefficient and can deter reporting of runaway juveniles
17	38	Forcing juvenile runaways to return home			Could return juvenile to an unsafe environment and discourage them from obtaining assistance

Appendix B: Selected Federal Legislation Relating to Missing Persons

The following Congressional Acts over the past 30 years are among those that have improved the tools available to police in missing-person cases. You should also consult local legal counsel to determine specific state or local laws governing missing-persons cases.

1980. Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act, 28 U.S.C. §1738(a). Extends federal investigation resources to local authorities, allows abductors to be charged under the Fleeing Felon Act, 18 U.S.C. §1073 (1961), and allows for the Federal Parent Locator Service, 42 USC §663 (1988), to be used in cases of child abduction.

1982. Missing Children Act of 1982, 28 U.S.C. §534. Encourages investigation of all missing-child cases and entry of those cases into the NCIC Missing Person File and includes FBI resources in missing-child cases.

1983. Creation of FBI's unidentified-person file. Allows comparison of missing-child cases to information about unidentified bodies.

1984. Missing Children's Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §5771. Requires periodic studies by Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention to determine the number of missing and recovered children each year (see NISMART-1 and NISMART-2 studies) and creates the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NSMEC).

1988. International Child Abduction Remedies Act, 42 U.S.C. §§11601-11610. Includes funding for the Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth and enforcement of the Hague Convention rules for cases of internationally abducted children.

1990. National Child Search Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§5779-80. Requires immediate entry of juvenile missing-person cases into NCIC, abolishes waiting periods for missing-person and unidentified-dead reports, and requires annual statistical summaries of the number and nature of missing children.

1993. International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act, 18 U.S.C. §1204. Makes it a federal crime to remove a child from the United States and to interfere with custodial/parental rights.

1994. Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, 42 U.S.C. 136. Includes Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act (Megan's Law) (42 U.S.C. §14071). Requires a 10-year registration requirement for offenders convicted of sexually violent offenses or criminal offenses against a victim who is a minor. Sexually violent predators have additional registration requirements, and the Child Safety Act establishes supervised visitation centers for visits between children and family members.

1994. Nations Missing Children Organization, Inc. (NMCO)

1997. Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, 9(1A) U.L.A. 657. Codifies practices to reduce interstate conflict in child abduction cases and creates uniform practices in each state.

1998. The Protection of Children from Sexual Predators Act, 18 U.S.C. §1. Provides protection for children from child pornography, increases penalties for repeat offenders in child-related crimes, and clarifies that there is no 24-hour rule before initiating a federal investigation in kidnappings of children.

1999. Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. §5601. Funds the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NSMEC).

2000. Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act (Jennifer's Law), 42 U.S.C. §3711. Encourages the compilation of all information about deceased, unidentified individuals into NCIC.

2000. Kristen's Act, 42 U.S.C. §14661. Establishes the National Center for Missing Adults and provides grants for the assistance of organizations to find missing adults.

2002. Executive Order 13257. Designed to combat trafficking in persons and to enable prosecution of abductors.

2003. Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today Act, 18 U.S.C. §2252 and Suzanne's Law, 42 U.S.C. §5779(c). Changes the age of mandatory missing-person case entry into NCIC from under 18 to 21 years of age, includes enhanced AMBER Alert provisions, enhances sentencing for kidnapping, establishes a Code ADAM program for children missing within a building, and changes the statute of limitations for child abductions.

2004. Justice for All Act of 2004, 42 U.S.C. §13701. Establishes funding for DNA initiatives, including the identification of missing persons and the report *Identifying the Missing: Model State Legislation*.

2006. Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, 42 U.S.C. §16901. Amends the National Child Search Assistance Act to include a mandate that missing-children cases are entered into NCIC within 2 hours of receipt of the report.

2008. The Suzanne Lyall Campus Safety Act. Requires colleges to specify roles for campus, local, and state police in investigating violent crimes on campus, including those involving missing students.

2010. Help Find the Missing Act (Billy's Law). Establishes funding for NamUs and for incentive grants for reporting missing persons and unidentified dead to NCIC, NamUs, and the National DNA Index System.

There is additional pending relevant legislation in each state. For example, Minnesota has pending legislation that would require cell phone companies to make records and activity (e.g., ping records) immediately available to police in missing-person cases in which such persons are believed to be in imminent danger. Other states, including Kansas and Nebraska, already have similar legislation. The state of New York allows relatives of missing persons the opportunity to bank their DNA for future possible links to missing persons and unidentified dead.

Go to www.Namus.gov and click on "resources" to find legislation by state for missing persons.

References

Allender, David M. 2007. "Child Abductions." *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* 76:7.

AMBER Advocate. 2009. *The AMBER Advocate* 3(3).

AMBER Alert Program. 2010. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Anderson, Bruce E. 2008. "Identifying the Dead: Methods Utilized by the Pima County (Arizona) Office of the Medical Examiner for Undocumented Border Crossers: 2001–2006." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 53(1): 8–15.

Anderson, Bruce E., and Bruce O. Parks. 2008. "Symposium on Border Crossing Deaths: Introduction." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 53(1): 6–7.

Arlington (Texas) Police Department. 2007. "Citizen Notification Service and CrimeWeb." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Associated Press. 2005. "Media Under Fire for Missing Persons Coverage." June 15.

Associated Press. 2010. "US-Mexico Project IDs Border-Crossing Victims." November 26.

Baker, Timothy, Ann W. Burgess, John B. Rabun, Jr., and Cathy Nahirny. 2002. "Abductor Violence in Nonfamily Infant Kidnapping." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 17(53): 1218–1233.

Barton, Robin L. 2011. "The Missing White Woman Syndrome." The Crime Report. August 22.

Brown, Katherine M., Robert D. Keppel, Joseph G. Weis, and Marvin E. Skeen. 2006. *Investigative Case Management for Missing Children Homicides: Report II*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Burgess, Ann Wolbert, and Kenneth V. Lanning, eds. 2003. *An Analysis of Infant Abductions, 2nd Edition*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. 2003. "The McLeod Center Partnership." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Chen, Te-Ping. 2010. "93% of Law Enforcement Ignores Missing Persons Database." Change.org, March 8.

Chiancone, Janet. 2001. *Parental Abduction: A Review of the Literature*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Daniels, Stacy, and M.A. Brennan. 2006. *Missing Children: Kidnapped and Abducted Children and Resources Available to Parents and the Community and Missing Children: Incidences and Characteristics of Runaway Children and Resources Available to Them*. University of Florida IFAS Extension.

Fassett, Byron. n.d. *Investigative/System Response to High Risk Victims*. Training presentation on the Dallas Police Department Child Exploitation Squad. Retrieved from Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Help Desk website.

FBI. 2011. *Human Traffickers Indicted*. FBI Press Release. January 28.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2011. *Personal Localized Alerting Network*. Release date, May 10.

Finkelhor, David, Nancy Asdigian, and Gerald Hotaling. 1996. "New Categories of Missing Children: Injured, Lost, Delinquent, and Victims of Caregiver Mix-ups." *Child Welfare* 75(4): 291–310.

Finkelhor, David, Heather Hammer, and Andrea J. Sedlak. 2002. *Nonfamily Abducted Children: National Estimates and Characteristics*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, NISMART.

Fresno Police Department. 1999. "Child Custody Disputes & Court Order Violations." Submission to the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Gardiner, Sean. 2008. "NYPD Inaction Over a Missing Black Woman Found Dead Sparks a Historic Racial-Bias Lawsuit." *Village Voice,* May 6.

Geberer, Raanan. 2009. "Missing Persons: From Runaways to Homeless Vets." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle.*

Greyhound.com. "In the Community" web page.

Guerette, Rob T., and Ronald V. Clarke. 2005. "Border Enforcement, Organized Crime, and Deaths of Smuggled Migrants on the United States – Mexico Border." *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 11(2): 159–174.

Hammer, Heather, David Finkelhor, Andrea J. Sedlak, and Lorraine E. Porcellini. 2004. *National Estimates of Missing Children: Selected Trends, 1988–1999*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, NISMART.

Hammer, Heather, David Finkelhor, and Andrea J. Sedlak. 2002a. *Runaway/Thrownaway Children: National Estimates and Characteristics.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

————. 2002b. *Children Abducted by Family Members: National Estimates and Characteristics. National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

Hargrove, Thomas. 2006. "FBI Issues Statistics on Missing Children." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* March 10.

Henderson, Monika, Peter Henderson, and Carol Kiernan. 2000. *Missing Persons: Incidence, Issues and Impacts.* Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice No. 144. Canberra, Australia: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Howell, Mike. 2011. "Vancouver Cops May Amend Missing Persons Policy." *The Vancouver Courier,* November 14.

International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. 2011. *Missing Persons: Volunteers Supporting Law Enforcement*. Washington, D.C.: International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

International Committee of the Red Cross. 2011. *Missing Persons and the ICRC Family Links Website-Questions and Answers*.

Irvine Police Department. 2009. "Return Home Registry." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Kamb, Lewis. 2003. "Experts List Ways to Improve System." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* February 26.

Kocieniewski, David. 2010. "I.R.S. Sits on Data Pointing to Missing Children." *New York Times,* November 12.

Kravets, David. 2010. "FBI Lab Gives Short Shrift to Missing Persons Cases." *Wired.com.* August 9.

Lancashire Constabulary. 2009. "Engage: Child Sexual Exploitation." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Lowery, Robert G. 2010. "Team Adam: Providing Missing Child Search Support for Police Agencies." *The Police Chief* 77 (December): 88–91.

Milian, Mark. 2011. "FBI's First App Helps Parents Report Missing Children." CNN.com, August 5.

Miskelly, Frank. 2005. "Electronic Tracking of Patients with Dementia and Wandering Using Mobile Phone Technology." *Age and Aging* 34:497–528.

National Alliance on Mental Illness. 2011. *Persons With Mental Illness Who Are Homeless or Missing: A Guide for Families*. National Alliance on Mental Illness. www.nami.org.

National Missing Persons Coordination Center. n.d. "An Emotional Resource for the Families and Friends of Missing Persons." National Missing Persons Coordination Centre. www.missingpersons.gov.au.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. 2008. *Annual Report*. Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

————. 2006. *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management, 3rd Edition*. Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

————. n.d. *FAQ: Missing Children*. www.missingkids.com.

NCIC. 2009. *Missing Person and Unidentified Person Statistics*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. www.fbi.gov.

Newiss, Geoff. 1999. *Missing Presumed…? The Police Response to Missing Persons.* Police Research Series, Paper 114. London: Home Office.

New Westminster Police Service. 2002. "The Forensic Identification Registry for Sex Trade Workers." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2011. *Guide for Implementing or Enhancing an Endangered Missing Advisory*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

————. 2005. *Federal Resources on Missing and Exploited Children, A Directory for Law Enforcement and Other Public and Private Agencies, 5th Edition*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

————. 1996. *Using Agency Records to Find Missing Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Olsen, Lise. 2010. "5 Years after Katrina, Storm's Death Toll Remains a Mystery: Who Died in Hurricane Katrina?" *The Houston Chronicle,* August 29.

Peterson, Kavan. 2002. "State Agencies Search for Foster Kids." *The Pew Charitable Trusts: News Room,* November 1.

Project Jason. 2010. *Assistance for Families of the Missing. Come Home Program*. www.projectjason.org.

Puzzanchera, Charles. 2009. *Juvenile Arrests 2008*. Juvenile Justice Bulletin (December). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Quinet, Kenna. 2011. "Prostitutes as Victims of Serial Homicide: Trends and Case Characteristics from 1970–2009." *Homicide Studies* 15(1): 74–100.

————. 2009. *"Serial Murder Victims: Does Time to Detection Vary by Victim Type?* The Missing Missing, Part 2." Paper presented at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, 2009.

————. 2007. "The Missing Missing: Towards a Quantification of Serial Murder Victimization in the United States." *Homicide Studies* 11(4): 319–339.

Ritter, Nancy. 2007. "Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains: The Nation's Silent Mass Disaster." *National Institute of Justice Journal* Issue No. 256.

Robinson, Eugene. 2005. "(White) Women We Love." *Washington Post*, June 10.

San Diego Police Department. 1997. "Start Smart." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Schulz, Richard, and Lynn M. Martire. 2004. "Family Caregiving of Persons With Dementia: Prevalence, Health Effects, and Support Strategies." *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 12(3): 240–249.

Seaman, Andrew. 2011. "Facebook Teams with Agencies for AMBER Alert Pages." *USA Today,* January 12.

Sedlak, Andrea J., David Finkelhor, and Heather Hammer. 2005. *National Estimates of Children Missing Involuntarily or for Benign Reasons*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, NISMART.

Sedlak, Andrea J., David Finkelhor, Heather Hammer, and Dana J. Schultz. 2002. *National Estimates of Missing Children: An Overview.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, NISMART.

Smith, Thomas B., Kenneth Buniak, Lee Condon, and Lee Reed. 2005. *Children Missing from Care: The Law-Enforcement Response*. Alexandria, Virginia: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

University of North Texas Health Science Center. 2011. "UNT Health Science Center to Manage NamUs." News release, November 11.

Vangilder L. 2010. *Silver Alert Initiatives in the States*. Washington, D.C.: National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities.

Washington State Patrol. 2007. "Homeward Bound Project." Submission for the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing.

Young, Christopher S., and John Wehbring. 2007. *Urban Search: Managing Missing Person Searches in the Urban Environment.* Charlottesville, Virginia: DBS Productions.

Zachariah, Holly. 2011. "Families of Missing Can Find Answers Through Online Networks." *Columbus Dispatch*, March 21.

Endnotes

1. NCIC (2009).
2. Associated Press (2005); Robinson (2005); Gardiner (2008); Barton (2011).
3. NCIC (2009).
4. Henderson, Henderson, and Kiernan (2000).
5. Abrahams and Mungall as cited in Newiss (1999).
6. Sedlak et al. (2002).
7. Newiss (1999).
8. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2006).
9. Chiancone (2001).
10. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2005).
11. Hammer, Finkelhor, and Sedlak (2002a).
12. Sedlak et al. (2002).
13. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (n.d.).
14. NCIC (2009).
15. Sedlak et al. (2002).
16. Brown et al. (2006).
17. Ritter (2007).
18. Chen (2010).
19. Dedel (2006); Finkelhor et al. (2002).
20. Puzzanchera (2009).
21. Hammer et al. (2004).
22. Fassett (n.d.).
23. Fassett (n.d.).
24. Peterson (2002).
25. Geberer (2009).
26. Sedlak et al. (2002).

27. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
28. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
29. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
30. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
31. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
32. Hargrove (2006).
33. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
34. Finkelhor, Hammer, and Sedlak (2002).
35. Burgess and Lanning (2003).
36. Burgess and Lanning (2003); Hammer, Finkelhor, and Sedlak (2002b).
37. Baker et al. (2002).
38. Sedlak, Finkelhor, and Hammer (2005).
39. Sedlak, Finkelhor, and Hammer (2005).
40. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2006).
41. AMBER Advocate (2009).
42. Sedlak, Finkelhor, and Hammer (2005).
43. Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996).
44. Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996).
45. NCIC (2009).
46. NCIC (2009).
47. NCIC (2004); Quinet (2007).
48. NCIC (2009).
49. Schulz and Martire (2004).
50. Miskelly (2005).
51. Vangilder (2010).
52. Olsen (2010).
53. Quinet (2007).

54. Quinet (2009).
55. Young and Wehbring (2007).
56. Quinet (2011).
57. Howell (2011).
58. Anderson (2008).
59. Anderson and Parks (2008); see also Guerette and Clarke (2005).
60. Associated Press (2010).
61. Young and Wehbring (2007).
62. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1996).
63. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention,(1996).
64. Kocieniewski (2010).
65. Kocieniewski (2010).
66. Smith et al. (2005).
67. Fresno Police Department (1999).
68. Allender (2007).
69. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (2003).
70. Project Jason (2010).
71. National Alliance on Mental Illness (2011).
72. New Westminster Police Service (2002).
73. San Diego Police Department (1997).
74. Lowery (2010).
75. Zachariah (2011).
76. Associated Press (2005).
77. International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2011).
78. Brown et al. (2006).
79. Arlington Police Department (2007).

80. Kamb (2003).
81. Kamb (2003).
82. Kravets (2010).
83. University of North Texas Health Science Center (2011).
84. Associated Press (2010).
85. Allender (2007); AMBER Advocate (2010).
86. Seaman (2011).
87. Federal Emergency Management Agency (2011).
88. AMBER Alert Program (2010).
89. Washington State Patrol (2007).
90. Vangilder (2010).
91. Vangilder (2010).
92. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2011).
93. Irvine Police Department (2009).
94. Milian (2011).
95. International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2011).
96. National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (n.d).
97. Greyhound.com.
98. Daniels and Brennan (2006).
99. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2008).
100. Lancashire Constabulary (2009).
101. International Committee of the Red Cross (2011).

About the Author

Kenna Quinet

Kenna Quinet is associate professor of criminal justice, law, and public safety in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and a faculty fellow at the Center for Criminal Justice Research at the Indiana University Public Policy Institute. She has worked with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department on a series of surveys to support community- and problem-oriented policing strategies and has evaluated the impact of police interventions for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and Indiana State Police. She is the author of "The Missing Missing: Toward a Quantification of Serial Murder in the United States" and "Prostitutes as Victims of Serial Homicide: Trends and Case Characteristics, 1970–2009," (both in the journal *Homicide Studies*) and coauthor of *The Will to Kill: Making Sense of Senseless Murder* (with James Fox and Jack Levin). She serves as the Indiana victim's advocate for NamUs, the National Missing Persons and Unidentified Dead System, is a member of the Indiana Violent Crime and Homicide Investigator's Association and was recently appointed by the Mayor of Indianapolis to the Indianapolis-Marion County Forensic Services Agency. Her research interests focus on homicide, missing persons, unidentified dead, and unclaimed dead. Quinet holds a doctorate in sociology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Other Problem-Oriented Guides for Police

Problem-Specific Guides Series:

1. **Assaults in and Around Bars, 2nd Edition.** Michael S. Scott and Kelly Dedel. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-00-2
2. **Street Prostitution, 2nd Edition.** Michael S. Scott and Kelly Dedel. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-01-0
3. **Speeding in Residential Areas, 2nd Edition.** Michael S. Scott with David K. Maddox. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-02-7
4. **Drug Dealing in Privately Owned Apartment Complexes.** Rana Sampson. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-03-7
5. **False Burglar Alarms, 2nd Edition.** Rana Sampson. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-04-5
6. **Disorderly Youth in Public Places.** Michael S. Scott. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-05-3
7. **Loud Car Stereos.** Michael S. Scott. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-06-1
8. **Robbery at Automated Teller Machines.** Michael S. Scott. 2001. ISBN: 1-932582-07-X
9. **Graffiti.** Deborah Lamm Weisel. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-08-8
10. **Thefts of and From Cars in Parking Facilities.** Ronald V. Clarke. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-09-6
11. **Shoplifting.** Ronald V. Clarke. 2003. ISBN: 1-932582-10-X
12. **Bullying in Schools.** Rana Sampson. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-11-8
13. **Panhandling.** Michael S. Scott. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-12-6
14. **Rave Parties.** Michael S. Scott. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-13-4
15. **Burglary of Retail Establishments.** Ronald V. Clarke. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-14-2
16. **Clandestine Methamphetamine Labs, 2nd Edition.** Michael S. Scott and Kelly Dedel. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-15-0
17. **Acquaintance Rape of College Students.** Rana Sampson. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-16-9
18. **Burglary of Single-Family Houses.** Deborah Lamm Weisel. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-17-7
19. **Misuse and Abuse of 911.** Rana Sampson. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-18-5
20. **Financial Crimes Against the Elderly.** Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2003. ISBN: 1-932582-22-3
21. **Check and Card Fraud.** Graeme R. Newman. 2003. ISBN: 1-932582-27-4
22. **Stalking.** The National Center for Victims of Crime. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-30-4
23. **Gun Violence Among Serious Young Offenders.** Anthony A. Braga. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-31-2
24. **Prescription Drug Fraud and Misuse, 2nd Edition.** Julie Wartell and Nancy G. La Vigne. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-33-9

25. **Identity Theft.** Graeme R. Newman. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-35-3
26. **Crimes Against Tourists.** Ronald W. Glensor and Kenneth J. Peak. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-36-3
27. **Underage Drinking.** Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-39-8
28. **Street Racing.** Kenneth J. Peak and Ronald W. Glensor. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-42-8
29. **Cruising.** Kenneth J. Peak and Ronald W. Glensor. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-43-6
30. **Disorder at Budget Motels.** Karin Schmerler. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-41-X
31. **Drug Dealing in Open-Air Markets.** Alex Harocopos and Mike Hough. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-45-2
32. **Bomb Threats in Schools.** Graeme R. Newman. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-46-0
33. **Illicit Sexual Activity in Public Places.** Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-47-9
34. **Robbery of Taxi Drivers.** Martha J. Smith. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-50-9
35. **School Vandalism and Break-Ins.** Kelly Dedel Johnson. 2005. ISBN: 1-9325802-51-7
36. **Drunk Driving.** Michael S. Scott, Nina J. Emerson, Louis B. Antonacci, and Joel B. Plant. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-57-6
37. **Juvenile Runaways.** Kelly Dedel. 2006. ISBN: 1932582-56-8
38. **The Exploitation of Trafficked Women.** Graeme R. Newman. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-59-2
39. **Student Party Riots.** Tamara D. Madensen and John E. Eck. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-60-6
40. **People with Mental Illness.** Gary Cordner. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-63-0
41. **Child Pornography on the Internet.** Richard Wortley and Stephen Smallbone. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-65-7
42. **Witness Intimidation.** Kelly Dedel. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-67-3
43. **Burglary at Single-Family House Construction Sites.** Rachel Boba and Roberto Santos. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-00-2
44. **Disorder at Day Laborer Sites.** Rob T. Guerette. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-72-X
45. **Domestic Violence.** Rana Sampson. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-74-6
46. **Thefts of and from Cars on Residential Streets and Driveways.** Todd Keister. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-76-2
47. **Drive-By Shootings.** Kelly Dedel. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-77-0
48. **Bank Robbery.** Deborah Lamm Weisel. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-78-9
49. **Robbery of Convenience Stores.** Alicia Altizio and Diana York. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-79-7
50. **Traffic Congestion Around Schools.** Nancy G. La Vigne. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-82-7
51. **Pedestrian Injuries and Fatalities.** Justin A. Heinonen and John E. Eck. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-83-5

52. **Bicycle Theft.** Shane D. Johnson, Aiden Sidebottom, and Adam Thorpe. 2008. ISBN: 1-932582-87-8
53. **Abandoned Vehicles.** Michael G. Maxfield. 2008. ISBN: 1-932582-88-6
54. **Spectator Violence in Stadiums.** Tamara D. Madensen and John E. Eck. 2008. ISBN: 1-932582-89-4
55. **Child Abuse and Neglect in the Home.** Kelly Dedel. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-00-3
56. **Homeless Encampments.** Sharon Chamard. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-01-0
57. **Stolen Goods Markets.** Michael Sutton. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-09-6
58. **Theft of Scrap Metal.** Brandon R. Kooi. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-12-6
59. **Street Robbery.** Khadija M. Monk, Justin A. Heinonen, and John E. Eck. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-13-3
60. **Theft of Customers' Personal Property in Cafés and Bars.** Shane D. Johnson, Kate J. Bowers, Lorraine Gamman, Loreen Mamerow, and Anna Warne. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-15-7
61. **Aggressive Driving.** Colleen Laing. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-18-8
62. **Sexual Assault of Women by Strangers.** Kelly Dedel. 2011. ISBN: 978-1-935676-43-0
63. **Export of Stolen Vehicles Across Land Borders.** Gohar Petrossian and Ronald V. Clarke. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-935676-59-1
64. **Abandoned Buildings and Lots.** Jon M. Shane. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-01-7
65. **Animal Cruelty.** Kelly Dedel. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-05-5
66. **Missing Persons.** Kenna Quinet. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-20-8
67. **Gasoline Drive-Offs.** Bruno Meini and Ronald V. Clarke. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-15-4
68. **Chronic Public Inebriation.** Matthew Pate. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-07-9
69. **Drug-Impaired Driving.** Joe Kuhns. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-08-6
70. **Home Invasion Robbery.** Justin A. Heinonen and John E. Eck. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-16-1

Response Guides Series:

1. **The Benefits and Consequences of Police Crackdowns.** Michael S. Scott. 2003. ISBN: 1-932582-24-X
2. **Closing Streets and Alleys to Reduce Crime: Should You Go Down This Road?** Ronald V. Clarke. 2004. ISBN: 1-932582-41-X
3. **Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems.** Michael S. Scott and Herman Goldstein. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-55-X
4. **Video Surveillance of Public Places.** Jerry Ratcliffe. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-58-4
5. **Crime Prevention Publicity Campaigns.** Emmanuel Barthe. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-66-5

6. **Sting Operations.** Graeme R. Newman with assistance of Kelly Socia. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-84-3
7. **Asset Forfeiture.** John L. Worall. 2008. ISBN: 1-932582-90-8
8. **Improving Street Lighting to Reduce Crime in Residential Areas.** Ronald V. Clarke. 2008. ISBN: 1-932582-91-6
9. **Dealing With Crime and Disorder in Urban Parks.** Jim Hilborn. 2009. ISBN: 1-932582-92-4
10. **Assigning Police Officers to Schools.** Barbara Raymond. 2010. ISBN: 978-1-935676-14-0

Problem-Solving Tools Series:

1. **Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers.** John E. Eck. 2002. ISBN: 1-932582-19-3
2. **Researching a Problem.** Ronald V. Clarke and Phyllis A. Schultze. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-48-7
3. **Using Offender Interviews to Inform Police Problem-Solving.** Scott H. Decker. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-49-5
4. **Analyzing Repeat Victimization.** Deborah Lamm Weisel. 2005. ISBN: 1-932582-54-1
5. **Partnering with Businesses to Address Public Safety Problems.** Sharon Chamard. 2006. ISBN: 1-932582-62-2
6. **Understanding Risky Facilities.** Ronald V. Clarke and John E. Eck. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-75-4
7. **Implementing Responses to Problems.** Rick Brown and Michael S. Scott. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-80-0
8. **Using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Problem-Solving.** Diane Zahm. 2007. ISBN: 1-932582-81-9
9. **Enhancing the Problem-Solving Capacity of Crime Analysis Units.** Matthew B. White. 2008. ISBN: 1-932582-85-1
10. **Analyzing Crime Displacement and Diffusion.** Rob T. Guerette. 2009. ISBN: 1-932582-93-2

Special Publications:

Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers in 60 Small Steps. Ronald V. Clarke and John E. Eck. 2005. ISBN:1-932582-52-5

Policing Terrorism: An Executive's Guide. Graeme R. Newman and Ronald V. Clarke. 2008.

Effective Policing and Crime Prevention: A Problem-Oriented Guide for Mayors, City Managers, and County Executives. Joel B. Plant and Michael S. Scott. 2009.

Implementing POP: Leading, Structuring, and Managing a Problem-Oriented Police Agency. Michael S. Scott and Stuart Kirby. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-932582-61-1

Upcoming Problem-Oriented Guides for Police

Problem-Specific Guides
Physical and Emotional Abuse of the Elderly
Insurance Fraud by Arson
Hate Crimes
Robbery of Pharmacies

Problem-Solving Tools
Understanding Repeat Offending
Understanding Hot Products
Identifying and Defining Policing Problems

Response Guides
Monitoring Offenders on Conditional Release
Using Civil Actions Against Property to Control Crime Problems

Special Publications
Intelligence Analysis and Problem-Solving

For a complete and up-to-date listing of all available POP Guides, see the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing website at www.popcenter.org.

For more information about the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* series and other COPS Office publications, call the COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770, via e-mail at AskCopsRC@usdoj.gov, or visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

Center for Problem-Oriented Policing

Got a problem? We've got answers!

Log onto the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing website at www.popcenter.org for a wealth of information to help you deal more effectively with crime and disorder in your community, including:

- Recommended readings in problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention
- A complete listing of other POP Guides
- A listing of forthcoming POP Guides

Designed for police and those who work with them to address community problems, www.popcenter.org is a great resource for problem-oriented policing.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).

Center for
Problem-Oriented Policing

Missing Persons describes the problem of missing persons and reviews factors that increase the risks. A series of questions are identified to help you analyze your local missing-persons problem. Finally, a review of responses to the problem is presented, combined with what is known from evaluative research and police practice. The focus is to describe the nature and scope of the problem and identify strategies to locate and recover missing persons.

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details on COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770.

Visit COPS Online at **www.cops.usdoj.gov**.

October 2012
ISBN: 978-1-932582-20-8 e041224466

Scan this QR code with your smartphone for more information about the POP Guides Series, or visit www.popcenter.org.