**Purpose**

Missing Person Emergency describes the response for a missing person. The plan signals an immediate search for a patient/resident/client / visitor or staff. Being prepared is important for sites with memory care or dementia programs.

**Policy**

[Organization name] is committed to preparing for all types of foreseeable emergencies. All staff are required to follow the missing person emergency response to a missing person

**Definitions**

* **Adult** means a person aged 18 years or older.
* **Dependent Person** means a person of diminished mental or physical capacity.
* **Stage 1 Search** means an action by staff members of the initiating unit / department and Protective Services involving a search of the immediate area from which the patient or person at-risk was attending, the nearby stairwell, site common areas such as cafeterias, lounges and waiting areas.
* **Stage 2 Search** means an action by all Units / Departments which must report search results to the Initiating Unit / Department. A search of all-accessible rooms and areas across the site including roof, all stairwells and building perimeter including entire property grounds. Notification of all Units / Departments by overhead announcement or site-specific means will initiate searches of the assigned areas.
* **Stage 3 Search** means an action by all Units / Departments which must report search results to the Initiating Unit / Department. However, this stage involves a search of the complete site / facility including all locked, restricted and inaccessible areas, as well as areas previously searched during Stages 1 and 2.

**Responsibilities**

* Missing Person Emergency Response applies to all personnel.

**Procedure**

1. **ACTIVATION[[1]](#footnote-1)**

* Missing Person Emergency Response can be initiated by any member of staff who discovers a patient/resident/client is unaccountably missing.
* When it is recognized that an **Adult** **or Dependent Person** is missing a search will be initiated and notification will be conveyed by Site Specific means:

*“Missing person; Adult, (Male or Female), approximate age, any physical features / clothing, Unit / Department \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”*

1. **POST INCIDENT ACTIONS**

* For a facility impacted by an Emergency Response Code, Site Administration or Designate is to:
* Assess for injuries and facility damage
* Implement subsequent emergency response plans as appropriate
* In consideration of staff impacted by the incident, ensure the following are completed:
  + - Arrange for staff support as needed, Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) for employees.
    - Other site-specific support programs.
* Complete incident documentation as follows:
  + Reportable Incident Form
  + Other site or zone-specific documentation as appropriate.

**Forms/Appendixes**

APPENDIX A: MISSING PERSON IDENTIFICATION FORM

APPENDIX B: MENTAL HEALTH ACT

APPENDIX C: SEARCH STAGES

APPENDIX D: SITE SEARCH LOG

**References**

**Cross Reference:**

Lockdown Plan

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| **MISSING PERSON STAGE 1 ALGORITHM** | |
| **Initiating Unit / Department** | **Immediate Action by Initiating Unit / Department:**   * Determine if there is a **safety or clinical concern** for patients/residents/clients this includes those at high risk of wandering / elopement immediately go to **Stage 2.** * Check sign out / in book, health record, appointments and Emergency Contact Person * Notify Supervisor or Person In Charge * Organize and complete a search of the Unit / Department checking all unlocked and accessible areas * **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO APPROACH OR APPREHEND THE INDIVIDUAL IF THEY ARE DEEMED HIGH RISK PATIENT CONDITION (BEHAVIOURS**)   **If the whereabouts of the missing person is not determined:**   * Contact Supervisor or Person In Charge to have missing person paged to return to the Unit / Department * Complete the Missing Person Identification Form at **Appendix A.** * If missing person is certified under the Mental Health Act refer to **Appendix B.**   **A maximum of 15 minutes is to be spent on initial search.**  **If Patient not found escalate to Stage 2.**  Patient / Resident / Client / Visitor is unaccountably missing |
| **Supervisor or Person In Charge** | * Request missing person to return to the Unit / Department * Site specific variations to overhead announcements and internal activations * Obtain verbal description of missing person from initiating department. * Coordinate a search all areas near Unit / Department or area from which the person is missing (waiting rooms, quiet rooms, lounges, common areas, stairwells, etc.) * If missing person is certified under the Mental Health Act, refer to **Appendix B** (notification to police process) * Refer to **Appendix C** for **Stage 1** Response   If missing person not found then begin to:   * Expand search area, including building perimeter * **Move to Stage 2** |

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| **MISSING PERSON STAGE 2 ALGORITHM** | |
| **Supervisor or Person In Charge** | Assist and Direct Staff to:   * Complete a second search of Unit / Department * Conduct a complete site search of all unlocked and accessible areas including building perimeter, all floors and areas * Notify emergency contact of missing person * Ensure notification of Police, Site Specific Admin On-Call * Complete the Site Search Log at **Appendix D.** * Upon escalation to **Stage 2**, Announce **“Emergency / Description / Location”** ” (three times) * Send Missing Person Identification Form **Appendix A** to other Units / Departments and Protective Services (i.e. email, in-person, meeting * Notify Police at **911**   When directed by Site Specific designate, announce:   * **“Missing Person Emergency, All Clear**” (three times) inform other staff   **Maximum of 15-30 minutes to be spent on Stage 2**  **If Patient not found escalate to Stage 3.** |
| **All Other Units / Departments** | * **If patient is Located:** contact Supervisor or Person In Charge * Report back to Initiating Unit / Department * When notified of a Missing Person, report to your Supervisor or Person In Charge * Organize a search of Unit / Department * All Available Staff are to conduct search of all unlocked and accessible areas in their Unit / Department and designated areas. |

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| **MISSING PERSON STAGE 3 ALGORITHM** | |
| **All Units / Departments** | * **If patient is Located:** contact Supervisor or Person In Charge * Report back to Initiating Unit / Department   When advised of escalation to **Stage 3:**   * Conduct search of all previously searched areas and all locked, restricted and inaccessible areas in your Unit / Department * Refer to **Appendix C** for **Stage 3** Response * Notify Supervisor or Person In Charge if there are areas that could not be searched |
| **Supervisor or Person In Charge** | When directed by Site Specific Admin announce:   * **“Missing Person Emergency, All Clear”** (three times) * Escalate to a coordinated and complete site search of all previously searched areas (**Stage 2**) and all locked, restricted and inaccessible areas * Consult with Site Specific Administration   Upon receiving notification of a Missing Person, advise all staff:   * **“Emergency / Description / Location”** (three times) * Refer to **Appendix C** for **Stage 3** Response |
| **Site Administration /**  **Site Specific Leadership Role** | Ensure Reportable Incident form has been completed  Ensure all other incident documentation has been completed   * Consult with Supervisor to determine actions, based on risk * Determine need to establish Site Command Post to coordinate actions and communications to staff * In consultation with engaged parties determine when incident has resolved (e.g. person was seen to leave the site): * Advise Supervisor to announce **‘Missing Person Emergency, All Clear’** |

**APPENDIX A**

**MISSING PERSON IDENTIFICATION FORM**

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| **MISSING PERSON IDENTIFICATION FORM** |

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| **ENSURE ALL APPLICABLE SECTIONS ARE COMPLETED** | | | | |
| **MANDATORY FIELD** | **UNIT / DEPARTMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **PHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **FORM COMPLETED BY** (*PLEASE PRINT*):  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | *ADDRESSOGRAPH* | |
| **MISSING PATIENT / DEPENDENT / VISITOR**  **NAME:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (PREFERRED NAME / NICKNAME):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **AGE:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Dependant Adult** **Height**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Weight**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **MISSING FROM**  Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **LAST SEEN**  Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **OTHER DETAILS**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **BY WHOM**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Is the missing person certified under the Mental Health Act?**  Yes No | | | |
| **IMPORTANT: CHECK OFF ALL APPLICABLE BOXES IN ALL AREAS** | | | | |
| **Gender:**   * Male * Female * Unknown | | **Skin Colour:**   * Black * Brown * White * Yellow | | **Build:**   * Heavy * Medium * Light * Muscular |
| **Hair Colour:**   * Brown * Blonde * Red * Black * Grey * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | **Hair Length:**   * Balding * Short * Shoulder * Long * Straight * Curly | | **Language(s):**   * English * French * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| **IMPORTANT: CHECK OFF ALL APPLICABLE BOXES IN ALL AREAS** | |
| **Distinguishable Features:**   * Eye Glasses / Contacts * Moustache * Beard * Wheelchair / Walker / Cane / Limp * Hearing / Speech Impaired * Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   **Patient Condition:**   * Alert * Uncooperative * Confused * Potentially Violent * Depressed * Verbally / Physically Aggressive * Homicidal * Needs Medical Attention * Intoxicated * Needs Medication * Suicidal * Smoker * Frequent Wanderer | **Clothing Colour & Description:**   * Shirt / Blouse \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Shoes /Boots \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Dress / Skirt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Trouser / Pants \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Sweater \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Coat / Jacket \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Pajamas \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Robe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Hospital Gown \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Hat \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   **Patient belongings still in room?**   * Yes * No |
| **INSTRUCTIONS**  Indicate location (if known) of each applicable body marking. **Try to be as specific as possible.**     * A – Moles \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * B – Birthmarks \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * C – Scars \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * D – Pierced Ears / Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * E – Tattoos \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * F – Cast \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * G – Bandages \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * H – I.V. Site \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * I – Catheter & Bag \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * J – Amputated Body Part \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ * K – Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

**APPENDIX B: MENTAL HEALTH ACT**

If missing person is certified under the Mental Health Act then:

* Their attending psychiatrist is notified and conducts a risk assessment determining if there is a likelihood of the patient harming themselves or others.
* If attending psychiatrist is unavailable, then another psychiatrist should review the patient’s file and if able, consults with attending psychiatrist.
* With the recommendation from the psychiatrist, contact police **911**.
* If deemed appropriate based on the risk assessment the Psychiatrist / Physician will complete **“Order to Return a Formal Patient to a Facility”** (Form 3) – *Mental Health Act* Section 20(4) or 21(1)

Complete the **“Missing Person Identification Form”** (Appendix A) and send to police (i.e. email, fax) and confirm receipt. ***(Refer to “Disclosure of Health Information for Missing Persons” HIM-IV-06)***

**APPENDIX C: SEARCH STAGES**

Please note the recommended and identified locations for each search stage are not all inclusive. Site specific locations and areas will need to be considered.

**Stage 1**

Complete a **Missing Person Identification Form** (Appendix A) with the following information:

* Age & Gender
* Physical description including the clothing worn
* Site Specific Pre-Identification for High Risk Patients (i.e. colored wrist band or gown)
* Physical / Cognitive Impairment
* Habits (i.e. smoker)
* Prescribed medication
* Time and place last seen
* Time noted as missing
* A photograph of the patient (if available)
* Whether a voluntary or involuntary (certified under the Mental Health Act) patient
* Likelihood of harm to self or others

**Record:**

* Time notified
* Caller's name
* Start / finish time of Stage 1 search

**Search:**

* Immediate area near Unit / Department from which the person is missing.
* Check common areas, washroom, cafeterias, lounges, quiet rooms, nearby stairwells, smoking areas etc. where patients are likely to go
* Check video surveillance if site is equipped

**Stage 2**

If missing person is not located during Stage 1 and a maximum of 15 minutes has elapsed, then a site wide search will be conducted which will include searching all of the areas searched in Stage 1. May need to coordinate with Police if on site.

* All **unlocked and accessible** buildings, parkades, common areas, etc.
* Ensure search includes all stairwells
* Conduct perimeter search including all patios, shrubbery, and areas where a patient may have fallen and will be difficult to detect.
* Check any potentially accessible exterior ducts or other possible entry sites
* Search between and under vehicles, in and around outdoor mechanical equipment (power boxes, medical gas systems, etc.)
* Check inside and around garbage bins
* Check the roof of the building and then each floor from top to bottom
* Search **unlocked and accessible areas only** on each floor
* Request nursing staff to search patient care areas
* Request staff in specialty areas (Surgery, Diagnostic Imaging, Lab, etc.) to conduct a complete search of their area
* Ensure **Site Search Log for Stage 2** is completed **Appendix D**

**Stage 3**

If still missing then a search of all **locked, restricted, and inaccessible** areas on property will need to be completed. Coordinate with Police if on site.

* Ensure proper safety equipment and procedures are followed when accessing restricted areas
* When available, utilize trained or qualified staff and / or personnel
* Ensure **Site Search Log for Stage 3** is completed **Appendix D**

**APPENDIX D: SITE SEARCH LOG**

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| **Unit / Department** | **Level / Floor** | **Unit / Department Hours** | **Stage 2** | | | **Stage 3** | |
| **Search Completed** | | **Time** | **Search Completed** | **Time** |
| *i.e. Emergency* | *Main* | *24hrs* | *Name* | |  | *Name* |  |
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| **Stage 2 - Search Complete**  **Initiating Unit / Department - Designate**  **Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | | | | **Stage 3 - Search Complete**  **Initiating Unit / Department - Designate**  **Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | | | |

1. 1 Right to refuse dangerous work 31(1) Subject to this section and section 5, a worker may refuse to work or to do particular work at a work site if the worker believes on reasonable grounds that there is a dangerous condition at the work site or that the work constitutes a danger to the worker’s health and safety or to the health and safety of another worker or another person. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)