Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation



Oklahoma Missing Persons Family Resource Guide

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Introduction

This resource guide is a tool, which can be used to better understand the actions family members and friends can take to assist law enforcement in finding their missing loved ones. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) has provided the following checklist that can be used as a guide. The additional sections provide a detailed description of the items in the checklist. A free resource section at the end of this document focuses on organizations that can be used to help locate and raise awareness for your missing loved one.

Checklist

Francine's Law passed on November 1, 2019 which removed all waiting periods and mandated Oklahoma Law Enforcement to act immediately and file a missing person report. A missing person is considered any person that is missing and unaccounted for from expected and normal activities. When contacting law enforcement stay calm so you can provide them with accurate details regarding your loved one. Use the checklist below as a general guide to help you through the missing person process.

- ☐ Contact local law enforcement to make a missing person report and have them entered into the NCIC national database. Make note of people you have spoken with responsible for the investigation.
- ☐ Determine the date, time, and location your loved one was last seen. Write a detailed list of your loved one's physical appearance, clothing they were wearing, date of birth, phone numbers, vehicle information, and any recent changes in your loved one's behaviors.
- ☐ Collect names and phone numbers of individuals who were with your loved one before they went missing.
- ☐ DO NOT disturb your loved one's bedroom including any electronic devices they may have until law enforcement can conduct a search. Do Not empty any trash cans that your loved one might have recently used.
- ☐ Write a list of your loved one's medical conditions and prescriptions. Gather all medical and dental records to provide to law enforcement; as well as names and office numbers of their doctors.
- ☐ Provide law enforcement with recent pictures or videos of your loved one from different angles showing there different mannerisms and personality.
- ☐ If your missing person is a child, contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) to make a report 1-800-843-5678.
- ☐ Develop flyers/posters for your missing loved one, reach out to your local news networks and utilize social media to spread your story.
- ☐ Enter your loved one into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs Missing Persons Database). Make a detailed list of blood relatives with contact information for the missing person.

Working with Law Enforcement

Helping law enforcement from the moment you recognize that your loved one is missing will assist them in gathering information that could lead to locating the missing person. Keep yourself available to assist law enforcement to assist with any questions they may have. The following are a few actions you can do to help the law enforcement agency.

Personal Affects/Living Area

Do your best to safeguard any areas the missing person may have been in (living room, bedroom, etc.). Law enforcement is trained to observe and analyze anything that could help determine why your loved one is missing, which may include clothing or bedding items, contents of trash cans, and the condition of your loved one's bedroom.

Identifying Marks/Mannerisms

Provide a detailed list and a picture to law enforcement of any personally identifying characteristic of your missing person to help identify them. This may include: birthmark(s), tattoo(s), scar(s), glasses, braces, or any other physically identifying feature. Provide pictures to law enforcement clearly displaying your loved one's face, pictures of their side profile, pictures of your loved one standing next to a familiar object like a car or doorway. Include videos if possible that shows how your loved one talks and the kinds of mannerisms they use. Don't forget to describe to law enforcement the clothing your missing person was last seen wearing.

Providing DNA

The following information can be used to provide law enforcement with your missing loved one's DNA. DNA can be used for identifying purposes. Refrain from cleaning any areas your loved one recently occupied. Items such as hairbrushes, toothbrushes, hair ties, hats, or bed sheets can contain samples of your loved one's DNA. Trash cans should not be emptied since they may contain items with your loved one's DNA (example: dental floss). If you have conducted a genealogy test, provide law enforcement with the company's contact information. Your loved one's DNA may be in the company's system.

Medical Records

Providing medical records to law enforcement will help them immediately address any special needs your loved one may have when they are located. This also provides law enforcement with a list of medications that your loved one is allergic to in case preventative or lifesaving medication needs to be administered. Dental records, X-rays of broken bones, or X-rays of metal screws and rods can also help law enforcement officials identify your loved one. Information concerning any heart issues, diabetes, and asthma are all items that are useful to law enforcement.

Fingerprints

If your loved one has been fingerprinted, if applicable, provide a copy of the fingerprints to law enforcement. If you do not have a copy of the fingerprints let the law enforcement official know where and when your loved one was fingerprinted so that they can follow up with the organization.

Working with the Media

Local News

Providing your loved one's story to the public increases the number of individuals looking for your loved one. Before talking to the local news networks, speak with the law enforcement official assigned to your loved one's case regarding the information you should and should not discuss.

To come across clearly and effectively, plan out what you want to say before doing any interviews with the media. Prepare a media presentation the news channels can show while you are sharing the details about your missing person. This can be done through a short video or a flyer.

To make the presentation relatable, talk about your loved one's hobbies and pastimes. Try to stay positive while sharing your loved one's descriptors and their last known location.

Social Media

One of the fastest ways to get your loved one's information out to the public is through social media platforms. Using social media such as Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube will allow your loved one's information to spread quickly. Ask a close family member or trusted friend to handle the majority of the social media accounts. This person can help filter information that is not important.

Flyers/Posters

For help with designing and distributing your online flyer contact the websites below for more information.

- NCMEC 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-843-5678
- NamUs 1-855-626-7600
- Morgan Nick Foundation 479-632-6382

Contact local businesses to see if they have a designated place for photos of missing persons and ask if they are willing to display the flyer of your loved one. Many Walmart locations have a missing person's wall. Ask local newspapers to publish your loved one's flyer. Common areas to place your flyers include rest stops, gas stations, grocery stores, pharmacies, churches, post offices, apartment office buildings, and hotels. Also contact airlines, airports, bus and taxi cab companies and Uber/Lyft share rides to see if they can share your posters.

Ask the law enforcement agency what phone numbers you should include on your flyer. It's important to have the most appropriate point of contact listed so that all relevant information gets to the correct person(s) promptly. Many departments will have a number that is manned 24 hours a day. It is best not to include your personal phone number on the flyer.

Working with Volunteer and Search Groups

Volunteer groups help alleviate the work load and stress that you and your family are already dealing with during this difficult time. Organizing your volunteers from the beginning will help you work through your checklist in a more effective manner. Volunteers can start up a phone tree that will notify a large group of people in a short amount of time. Volunteers can canvass your community, posting flyers and telling people about your loved one. Volunteers can help create social media sites and be assigned as administrators so that there are more people actively updating the site as well as monitoring any incoming tips.

Before a physical search for your missing person begins you should always include law enforcement to supervise and coordinate the event. Volunteer search groups including law enforcement have specialized training and are certified to conduct and manage search groups. The search coordinator will evaluate the terrain/climate keeping in mind your safety. They will also coordinate what you need to bring and what type of searches you will be conducting. Additional searches with tracking or trailing dogs could be used by law enforcement. In addition helicopters with infrared may be able to locate someone who is incapacitated.

Working with the National Missing Person Organizations

NCMEC

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children© (NCMEC), is an information clearinghouse and national resource center on issues related to victims, missing and exploited children. NCMEC partners with many Federal and State Agencies to provide resources, technical assistance, and prevention services to victims, families and the public, as well as support to law enforcement agencies at the federal, state, and local levels in cases involving missing and exploited children. NCMEC's 24-hour hotline is 800-THE-LOST© (1-800-843-5678). Additionally, NCMEC operates the CyberTipline© the nation's centralized reporting system for suspected child sexual exploitation.

NAMUS

NamUs is the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System and serves as an information clearinghouse and repository for meta and biometric data, and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons.

These services are used by law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, allied professionals, families and the public to search and identify missing and unidentified persons.

On November 1, 2019, Oklahoma House Bill 2640, also known as “Francine’s Law”, went into effect. This bill named after Francine Frost, who was identified 30 years later utilizing the NamUs database, mandates law enforcement agencies to enter missing persons into the NamUs database within 30 days. It also removed any waiting periods for filing missing person’s reports. For more information on Francine’s Law visit the resources section.

Working with State Law Enforcement

Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Amber Alert

The AMBER Alert was developed as an early warning system to help find abducted children. There are five recommended criteria that law enforcement uses as a guideline prior to issuing an AMBER Alert. These guidelines help create a plan that is consistent across the country. Your local law enforcement officer will work with Oklahoma DPS to determine if an AMBER Alert should be issued.

Silver Alert

The Silver Alert was developed as an early warning system to help find senior citizens who have a cognitive impairment. Similar to the Amber Alert your local law enforcement officer will work with Oklahoma DPS to determine if the criteria for a Silver Alert has been met and issue that alert.

Both of these alerts notify the public in different ways to help locate your missing loved one. Highway signs, cellphone alerts, social media posts, and media outlets are some of the most common ways that law enforcement reaches out to public for help in locating missing persons.

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI)

The OSBI serves as the Oklahoma Missing Person Clearinghouse, partnering with several state agencies, NamUs, and NCMEC to network with law enforcement, families, and social service workers to provide resources for missing persons, their families, and the professionals who serve them. The primary services provided by the Oklahoma Missing Person Clearinghouse is networking, information dissemination, training development and delivery, and data collection.

Due to statutory requirements, the OSBI must receive a formal request, for analytical and/or investigative assistance, from an appropriate law enforcement or other State official. All initial reporting of a missing person must go through the local jurisdiction.

Resources

Oklahoma State & Federal Agencies

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation
Oklahoma Missing Person Clearinghouse
https://osbi.ok.gov/pages/oklahoma-missing-persons-clearinghouse
Clearinghouse Coordinator-Jerry Huff
1-800-522-8017| okmissing@osbi.ok.gov

Oklahoma Department of Public Safety
Amber and Silver Alerts
https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/dps/docs/amberplan.pdf
https://oklahoma.gov/dps/amber-alert.html
Amber Alert Program-Major Ronnie Hampton
405-425-2231| ronnie.hampton@dps.ok.gov

Oklahoma Medical Examiner's Office
https://oklahoma.gov/ocme/missing-persons-and-unidentified-bodies.html
Forensic Anthropology/Unidentified-Angela Berg
918-295-3400| unidentifiedpersons@ocme.ok.gov

District Attorney Council
https://www.ok.gov/dac/Home/index.html
1-800-745-6098

Oklahoma Attorney General
https://www.oag.ok.gov/articles/attorney-general-missing persons
405-521-3921

United States Marshall Service (USMS)
405-231-4206| missingchildunit@usdoj.gov

US Department of Justice
Missing Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP)
https://operationladyjustice.usdoj.gov/fact-sheetsresources
MMIP Liaisons-James Mogren and Chris Witt
918-382-2700

Department of State/International Child Abduction
https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/International-Parental-Child-Abduction.html
1-888-407-4747

US Department of Justice/International Parental Kidnapping
https://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/international-parental-kidnapping
202-514-5780

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/missing-and-exploited-children

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Violent Criminal Apprehension Program
https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/vicap/missing-persons
https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/oklahomacity
405-290-7770

International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)
https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Notices/Yellow-Notices
202-514-2000

National Missing Person Organizations

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
https://www.missingkids.org/
1-800-THE-LOST

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System
https://www.namusinfo.org/
Oklahoma Representative-Michael Nance
918-527-0080|Michael.nance@unthsc.edu

Polly Klaas Foundation
http://www.pollyklaas.org/
1-800-587-4357

Morgan Nick Foundation
https://morgannickfoundation.com/
1-877-543-HOPE

National Runaway Safeline
https://www.1800runaway.org/
1-800-786-2929

National Child Protection Task Force
https://www.ncptf.org/

The Salvation Army
https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/use/missing-persons/
1-800-315-7699

A Child is Missing Inc
https://achildismissing.org/

International Centre for Missing @ Exploited Children
https://www.icmec.org/
703-837-6313

International Commission on Missing Persons
https://www.icmp.int/

The following non-profit and/or volunteer organizations provide different types of free services for missing persons and their families. These organizations are not affiliated with the OSBI and should be evaluated with references before utilizing there services. Contact local law enforcement before committing to a search and rescue team.

Search and Rescue

OKCM Search and Rescue (OKC)
https://www.okcmsar.org
405-595-1612|contact@okcmsar.or
Bridging the Gap Search Team (Tulsa)
918-951-2676|eaglebtg@gmail.com

K9 Search Oklahoma
http://www.k9searchok.com/
918-928-2998

Community United Effort (CUE)
https://ncmissingpersons.org/
910-232-1687|cuecenter@aol.com

Rapid Response Services Search & Rescue
https://christianaidministries.org/oklahoma-sar/
855-246-8649

Sites for posting missing person posters

https://www.missingkids.org/supportus/get-involved
https://www.facebook.com/OklahomaMissingPersons
https://www.facebook.com/OKCMSAR/
https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/facilities-management/security/missing-child-notice-program
https://www.facebook.com/TulsaPrivateEyesLLC/

Alzheimer/Dementia & Autism Resources

National Autism Association
https://nationalautismassociation.org/
1-877-622-2884|naa@nationalautism.org

AWAARE-Autism wandering and recovery
http://awaare.nationalautismassociation.org/

Alzheimer's Association
https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/wandering
1-800-272-3900
https://alz.org/media/Documents/alzheimers-dementia-wandering-behavior-ts.pdf

Family Support

Team Hope-NCMEC
https://www.missingkids.org/ourwork/support/teamhope
1-866-305-HOPE

OSBI Victim Services
Victims.support@osbi.ok.gov

Morgan Nick Foundation
https://morgannickfoundation.com/
479-632-6382