

Victoria Police Manual

The Victoria Police Manual is issued under the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Police in s.60, Victoria Police Act 2013. Non-compliance with or a departure from the Victoria Police Manual may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use VPM Professional and ethical standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Missing persons investigations

Context

Police have a responsibility to investigate all reports of missing persons. This policy provides direction to police officers so that the response is timely and appropriate having regard to the circumstances.

Police play a number of roles in relation to missing persons, including but not limited to:

- investigating whether a crime has been committed and, where applicable, charging offenders
- coordinating search and rescue efforts
- providing advice and referral information to families.

This policy includes:

- missing persons reporting criteria
- responsibilities of the investigating member, including:
 - initial action
 - actions at various stages of an investigation for high-risk and long-term missing persons
 - when a missing person is located
- emergency response considerations, such as notification of the Search and Rescue Squad and establishment of an Incident Command and Control System (ICCS) structure
- collection of ante mortem samples to assist in identification
- obtaining medical and dental records.

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Definitions

Ante mortem - having been inflicted or occurred before death.

High risk missing person - the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the missing person or the public is in danger.

Long-term missing person - a person that has not been located more than 30 days after they were last known to be safe.

Medium risk missing person - the missing person or the public is possibly facing some danger.

Unidentified human remains - any human remains that are found and not identified after three days.

Scope and application

This policy applies to all police officers involved in investigating reports of missing persons and their managers.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Reporting missing persons and initial action

1.1 Reporting criteria

- Any person reported to police is considered a missing person where both of the following apply:
 - their whereabouts are unknown, including a person missing from an institution (not including a prison or gaol, refer to **VPM Escapees and absconders** for those matters), and
 - there are fears for the safety or concern for the welfare of that person.
- Missing persons may be categorised as below.

Lost	Includes a person who: • is temporarily disoriented • due to physical or mental capacity is reliant on others for support or survival, such as infants or young children and people missing from care facilities • has been displaced due to an unexpected event such as a natural disaster
Voluntarily missing	Includes a person: • who has decided on a course of action to keep their whereabouts unknown to others • whose absence is not suspicious, however, there may be concerns for their welfare, i.e., despondent or suicidal
Involuntary missing	Includes a person who is missing against their will in suspicious and unusual circumstances, such as abductions or homicides
'On Hand' Unidentified living persons	When a person comes to the attention of police or another government agency and has not been identified

1.2 *Reporting member responsibilities*

- A missing person report must be taken in person, unless impracticable to do so, and entered into LEAP as soon as possible in accordance with **VPM Crime and event reporting and recording**.
- Complete a Missing Persons Risk Assessment report for all missing persons reported (regardless of the person's country or state of origin) via:
 - LEDR Mk2, or
 - Central Data Entry Bureau (CDEB) for recording on LEAP where LEDR Mk2 is unavailable.

Note: the risk assessment is dynamic and ongoing up until the resolution of the investigation. Any escalation or de-escalation of risk rating, or any new circumstances that affect the risk rating should be documented in the LEAP Case Progress Narrative.

- Ensure a supervisor is notified as soon as possible. The supervisor is responsible for notifying specialist units such as the Crime Investigation Unit (CIU), Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) and Search and Rescue Squad, as required. See section 1.3 of this policy for further information.
- Where the Missing Persons Risk Assessment report indicates High Risk and notification to the Search and Rescue Squad is required, a Search Urgency Assessment [Form 1087] must be completed to assist decision making.
- Police officers must immediately investigate any report of a missing person. The initial investigation should be conducted at a local level but may be referred to a specialist area depending on the circumstances.
- In suspicious circumstances, police officers should take into consideration any area that may be a potential crime scene.
- Where a police officer believes on reasonable grounds that there is a serious threat to the life or health of a person i.e., threat to kill or seriously injure or commit suicide, they can seek approval from an Inspector or above by submitting an Urgent Telecommunications Request [Form 1501] to the Police Shift Manager, Police Communications to access information held by a telecommunications service provider in accordance with s.287 *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cth).
- Consider whether the missing person is a member of a priority community which may require nuance in the investigation. For example, if the person identifies as Aboriginal, when engaging with the reporting person and/or broader community members should consider:
 - the person's connection to Country or any cultural considerations
 - how an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer may be used to provide culturally safe advice.
- Victoria Police's identified priority communities are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Gender Diverse, Intersex, Queer, Asexual) communities, people experiencing mental health issues, multicultural and multifaith communities, seniors, and young people. For more information about priority community engagement, refer to **VPM Community policing**. To access a listing of resources, contact points and liaison officers for specific priority communities that may assist with the

investigation, refer to the Priority and Safer Communities Division and the Community Support Hub within the Capability Department intranet site.

- Submit the following LEAP forms where applicable:
 - Personal Physical Description [Form L10].
 - Scars/Marks/Tatts-Alias/Nickname-Relationship [Form L11].
- Submit a Vehicle Whereabouts request electronically in the Whereabouts Application. Refer **VPMG Tagging of records to locate suspects or offenders** for further details.
- Refer to the Crime Investigative Guidelines, Missing Persons for more information.

1.3 *Specific cases of missing or unidentified persons – reporting member responsibilities*

In addition to the above, the following requirements apply to specific cases of missing or unidentified persons:

Circumstances	Investigating member responsibilities
Child under 10 years High risk due to mental or physical condition	• Consider notifying Police Communications • Notify the divisional patrol supervisor • Start an immediate search
Child or young person missing from Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) placement	• Check LEAP as to whether a Children's Court search warrant exists and notify SOCIT • Children and young people must be considered to be at a greater risk of sexual exploitation and there must be compliance with the Protecting Children Protocol between Department of Health and Human Services – Child Protection and Victoria Police 2023 (Appendix C). Note: it should never be assumed that a child who has had repeated episodes of absenteeism or being missing, but has always returned to placement, is at a decreased level of risk • Notify SOCIT once located • Ascertain places/people visited etc. in accordance with section 4.2 of this policy
Person believed to be in the protection of a women's refuge	• Contact Intelligence Collection and Liaison Unit (ICLU) for advice between 0800 – 1600 Monday to Friday; or Police Communications at any other time • The reporting person must only be told that the missing person is safe, no further details are to be disclosed
Person missing in suspicious circumstances	• Notify CIU immediately • CIU must notify Missing Persons Squad, Crime Command during business hours or Police Communications, at any other time, (Homicide Serious Crime Response Team (SCRT1)) • Notify divisional patrol supervisor

Person believed missing while interstate – reported to Victoria Police	• Conduct checks with the relevant jurisdiction • If checks confirm the missing person is likely to be interstate, the reporting member must forward all investigation information and reports to the relevant state or territory with completed and authorised Referral of Investigation to Interstate Law Enforcement Agency [Form 1418]. Once referred, a supervisor must change the LEAP Station Code to 'CRIMPS' (via ICT Portal request) and update the LEAP narrative to reflect referral to the relevant jurisdiction
Person reported missing near a state border town/location	• When a person is reported missing near a state border, an Inspector from each respective jurisdiction should be briefed and participate in all Incident Management Teams (IMTs) to ensure sufficient oversight and risk assessment within their respective jurisdictions • Refer to pages 19-21 of the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) – <i>Australia New Zealand Policy for Missing Persons Investigations 2025</i> for further information
Person believed missing while overseas – reported to Victoria Police	• If checks confirm the missing person is likely to be overseas, the reporting member must forward reports to: Interpol, Canberra. Refer to: - ICLU Intranet page for further information - ICLU – Missing Persons Intelligence PBEA (ICS-MISSING PERSONS INTELLIGENCE-OIC) for referral to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) • Ensure the reporting person is provided with the contact details for DFAT 24-hour contact number (Free call 1300 555 135 anywhere in the world on +61 6261 3055) • If the missing person is not an Australian citizen or resident, advise the reporting person to contact the respective consulate, embassy, or authorities in the country concerned • Coordinate any follow up enquiries arising from the overseas referral
Person in police care or custody cannot be identified ('On Hand' Missing Person)	• Complete Part 1 of Form L18A only • Contact the Media Unit, Media Communications and Engagement Department for advice regarding any media strategy (see section 2.2 of this policy)
Interstate or overseas inquiries regarding people who may be missing in Victoria	• Unless there are urgent circumstances: - advise the reporting person to direct their inquiries to their local police to initiate an investigation - advise the external law enforcement agency to direct their inquiries to the ICLU - Missing Persons Desk - ICLU will forward investigations from interstate or overseas jurisdictions to the relevant area for investigation and recording on LEAP
Mental health inpatients or disability clients reported missing	Refer to VPM Escapees and absconders

Unidentified body or body part found ('On Hand' Missing Person)	• Notify Missing Persons Squad, Crime Command and ICLU • Complete the Located Missing Person/Identified Person/On Hand Deceased [Form L18C] Part B • The status of the missing person record should remain active until the body or body part is identified • Where identification is not likely to be made within three days, notify the relevant CIU who will take over the investigation • Refer to section 4.4 of this policy for the process when a body or body part(s) is identified
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Refer to the ANZPAA Australia New Zealand Policy for Missing Persons Investigations 2025 via the ANZPAA website for more information.

1.4 *Supervisor responsibilities*

- Ensure the Missing Persons Risk Assessment report reflects the appropriate level of risk (high or medium). Based on the level of risk, the following actions must be followed:

If ...	then ...
High; based on risk factors selected in LEDR Mk2 or any risk indicator one to eight on Form L18A identified e.g., vulnerable due to age or infirmity	Immediate notification of the relevant CIU (in suspicious circumstances the CIU should notify the Serious Crime Response Team via Police Communications)
High; based on risk factors selected in LEDR Mk2 or any one or more risk indicators seven to 10 on Form L18A identified e.g., last seen in or near a body of water, or specialist search capacity/advice is required	• Immediate notification of the relevant CIU (in suspicious circumstances the CIU should notify the Serious Crime Response Team via Police Communications) • The Rescue Coordination Centre must be notified
Medium	Provide guidance to the assigned investigator in consultation with the relevant CIU if required

Note: Supervisors must ensure the Missing Persons Risk Assessment report is entered directly into LEDR Mk2. Where LEDR Mk2 is unavailable, ensure Form L18A is submitted to CDEB for recording on LEAP as supplementary information.

- Review Form 1087 (where applicable) to inform the level and urgency of response as follows:
 - **emergency response** - the most immediate response involving the coordinated use of local and specialist Victoria Police units and outside agencies i.e., State Emergency Service etc. to assist in locating the missing person (refer to section 3 of this policy for more information)
 - **measured response** - a less urgent response which allows for the planned deployment of resources
 - **evaluate and investigate** - a non-urgent response which allows for further information gathering and risk assessment before determining on a course of action.

Note: if any individual category is rated as one, regardless of its total, the search could require an emergency response.

- Ensure there is succession planning in place for protracted searches, including the ability to scale up or down (refer to section 3.2 of this policy for more information).
- Consider the use of Police Emergency and Event Command (PEEC) to manage missing person incidents (refer to PEEC Missing Person Incidents and section 3.2 of this policy for more information). Note: PEEC should not be used for investigations relating to family violence incidents, sexual assault matters or any incidents sensitive in nature.
- Ensure the assigned investigating member's station covers the response zone where either the missing person most recently resided or was the location of their last known whereabouts.
- Consider whether a Person Warning Flag [Form 292] should be initiated (refer to **VPM Reporting contacts and intelligence** for more information).
- Record case progress status as either 'Active' or 'Completed'. There is no 'Pending' status in relation to missing person investigations.

2. Conducting missing persons investigations

2.1 Overview

In accordance with the Accountability and Resource Model:

- the Missing Persons Squad, Crime Command has investigative primacy for Category 1 Missing persons in either of the following circumstances:
 - suspicious disappearance (possible homicide), or
 - unidentified remains (possible homicide).
- the Regions have investigative primacy for Category 2 Missing persons in the following circumstances:
 - other suspicious disappearances
 - long term missing persons (more than 30 days)
 - unidentified remains (CIU primacy if still unidentified after 3 days), or
 - non-suspicious disappearance where there is a high risk of harm to the missing person.

2.2 Investigating member responsibilities

- Undertake enquiries to locate the missing person. Refer to the Missing Person Initial Action Checklist and Crime Investigative Guidelines - Missing Persons for more information.
- Regularly liaise (at intervals agreed to) with the reporting person to confirm the missing person's status.
- Consider appointing a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) where required. For more information, refer to the **Family Liaison Officer Practice Guide**.
- If there is a need to obtain historic information from telecommunications service providers, police officers must comply with **VPMG Obtaining information from external organisations**.
- Where a search for a missing person is undertaken, consider spontaneous volunteer provisions where applicable. Refer to the **Spontaneous Volunteers Practice Guide** for more information.

- Establish the senior next of kin of the missing person and, where appropriate, keep them informed of police procedures and the investigation. For more information, refer to the Coroners Court of Victoria Practice Handbook.
- Contact the Media Unit, Media Communications and Engagement Department for advice regarding any media strategy dependent on individual circumstances. Complete an Authority for Media Release – Information or Image of Missing Person [Form 1410] and email: MEDIA UNIT prior to the release of information or images.
- Maintain the LEAP case progress narrative. In particular, ensure that the narrative:
 - reflects all relevant information and enquiries undertaken
 - is updated regularly, including a CIU updated risk assessment and level of risk after seven days.
- If the case requires PEEC, this will be managed by supervisors in accordance with section 3.2 of this policy.
- Risk assessments should take into account all the known circumstances surrounding the missing person and the environment, including but not limited to their vulnerability due to:
 - age
 - current residential situation
 - temporary or permanent illness/impairment
 - mental health, neurodiversity or psychological condition
 - risk of exploitation
 - likelihood of victimisation for crime
 - likelihood of engaging in at risk behaviours including criminal offending
 - being a member of a priority community, i.e., culture, LGBTIQ+ status.
- For information regarding lost person behaviour by groups refer to the **Searching for missing persons Practice Guide**.

Note: if the risk assessment reveals there is a reasonable probability that a missing person is deceased (e.g., a search fails to locate the missing person and their kayak washes up a number of days later which would indicate they may have drowned), police officers should consult the Coronial Support Unit (CSU) regarding the submission of a Police Report of Presumed Death to the Coroner [Form 83A].

2.3 *Work unit manager responsibilities*

Work unit managers must ensure that:

- a police officer is assigned to investigate a missing person report within the initial 24-hour period
- a supervisor is assigned to check all 'Active' missing person reports at intervals of three, seven, 14, and 30 days, and
- ICLU is notified:
 - of any unidentified human remains (ICLU must create an Interpose investigation shell and send it to the relevant Investigations and Response (I&R) Manager for allocation), or
 - when a person transitions to a long-term missing person.

2.4 *Long-term missing persons*

ICLU is responsible for the management of information and intelligence relating to long term missing persons. The following actions must occur throughout the investigation of long-term missing persons:

- **Not located after 30 days of report to police:**
 - ICLU must create an Interpose investigation shell and send it to the relevant I&R Manager for allocation
 - the relevant I&R unit must then assume primacy of the investigation.
- **Not located after 60 days of report to police:**
 - collection of ante mortem reference material must commence (see section 5 of this policy) and must be noted in Interpose
 - ICLU must then create an entry on the National Missing Persons and Victims System (NMPVS) to record addition of ante mortem data.
- **Not located after 120 days of report to police** - the investigator must commence a draft inquest brief, detailing all relevant inquiries undertaken and checks conducted which indicate the person is no longer alive (a copy of the brief must be saved in Interpose).
- **Not located after 180 days of report to police** - unless there are circumstances that suggest the person is alive and actively avoiding detection, the investigator must liaise with the PCSU regarding submission of a Form 83A (if not previously completed).

Note: interested parties can apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to administer the financial affairs of a missing person, under Part 5A, *Guardianship and Administration Act 1986*, subject to the following conditions:

- it is unknown if the missing person is alive
- reasonable efforts have been made to find them, and
- they have not contacted anyone who they would be likely to contact for at least 90 days.

2.5 *Investigation and Response Manager responsibilities*

I&R Managers must ensure that:

- Missing Persons Squad, Crime Command is notified of all suspicious missing persons and unidentified human remains cases
- an investigator is allocated for unidentified human remains cases (who will also be the assigned Coroner's Investigator)
- an updated risk assessment and level of risk is conducted for all missing persons after seven days
- all high-risk and long-term missing persons investigations are subject to ongoing risk assessments
- where there is a reasonable belief that a missing person is deceased, the circumstances are reported to the Coroner via Form 83A and an inquest brief is prepared.

2.6 *Divisional Intelligence Unit Manager responsibilities*

Divisional Intelligence Unit managers must ensure that the status of all high-risk and long-term missing persons are reported to the divisional Tasking and Coordination (T&C) committee at the following stages of an investigation:

- 30 days - transition to long-term missing person status
- 60 days - status of ante mortem collection/entry to NMPVS
- 120 days - compilation of draft coronial brief
- 180 days – Form 83A submitted to the Coroner (if not previously completed).

2.7 *Tasking and Coordination*

- At divisional T&C level, all long-term missing persons should be added to the Divisional Tasking Log for compliance with the requirements for each stage of an investigation.
- After 180 days, if each of the preceding investigative stages have been complied with, the case can be removed from the log. Note: although considered compliant, such cases remain 'Active' on LEAP until the person is located i.e., cross checks with unidentified human remains should continue.
- Divisional T&C managers should report all non-compliant long-term missing person investigations to Regional Operational Support Superintendents where:
 - ante mortem collection has not been completed
 - the details have not been entered on the NMPVS, or
 - a Form 83A has not been submitted to the Coroner.
- Regional T&C monitors compliance from each division and identifies opportunities for coordination of resources where required.

2.8 *Cross jurisdictional cooperation requests*

- Case transfers between jurisdictions should be guided by the underlying principle that investigative primacy will be assumed by the jurisdiction best positioned to achieve an outcome that minimises harm to the missing person.
- The nature of cross-jurisdictional cooperation required, along with thresholds for access, are determined by the following tiers:
 - Tier 1 – Awareness: the missing person's current whereabouts is unknown, although there is some indication they may be travelling interstate.
 - Tier 2 – Assistance: intelligence indicates the missing person is or has been identified in the receiving jurisdiction. Their current location is known or believed to be known, requiring investigative tasking to validate this information.
 - Tier 3 – Investigation Transfer: intelligence indicates the missing person was/is contemporaneously last known to be in the receiving jurisdiction, although a precise location may not be known, necessitating an active investigation within that jurisdiction to locate them.
 - Tier 4 – Response Transfer: an active emergency response is required within the receiving jurisdiction (e.g. a search operation), or the area of operations for an active search has shifted from the transferring jurisdiction into the receiving jurisdiction.

- The table below stipulates the responsibilities of the transferring and receiving jurisdictions, as determined by the level of cooperation required:

Level of Cooperation	Transferring Jurisdiction The transferring jurisdiction should:	Receiving Jurisdiction The receiving jurisdiction should:
Tier 1 – Awareness	- provide the full details of the missing person - provide the full details of the reporting person - provide a Synopsis of Circumstances report - provide a risk assessment, outlining the risks posed to the missing person, as well as by the missing person to the community and/or police (i.e. officer safety warnings): - any new or updated information, particularly regarding risks to others (community and/or police), should be promptly communicated through both written (e.g., email) and verbal (e.g., phone call) channels.	- add a local warning related to the missing person within the receiving jurisdiction's internal platform/systems. - create appropriate record/warning on the missing person, known vehicle of interest, known person(s) of interest missing person may be travelling with, and any officer safety warnings in place for the originating/receiving jurisdiction - if the missing person is located, ensure appropriate enquiries/records are made and communicated to the originating jurisdiction
Tier 2 – Assistance	- provide the full details of the missing person - provide the full details of the reporting person - provide a Synopsis of Circumstances report - provide a risk assessment, outlining the risks posed to the missing person as well as by the missing person to the community and/or police (i.e. officer safety warnings): - any new or updated information, particularly regarding risks to others (community and/or police), should be promptly communicated through both written (e.g., email) and verbal (e.g., phone call) channels. - share known risks of sites where local resources are being tasked.	- ensure a local risk assessment is conducted and that any warnings are communicated to police tasked to assist/to the originating/transferring jurisdiction - provide the transferring jurisdiction with a contact point in the local area for tasking (tasking may include collection of evidence such as CCTV, payment documents or attendance at sites where the missing person is believed to be) - report results from investigative taskings back to the originating jurisdiction
Tier 3 – Investigation Transfer	- provide the full details of the missing person - provide the full details of the reporting person	- take the investigative lead/ primacy - report results from investigative taskings back to the originating jurisdiction - manage the family liaison role

	• provide the full case file of the investigation to date, including statements and intelligence: ○ considerations should be made for exhibits on a case-by-case basis • provide a risk assessment, outlining the risks posed to the missing person as well as by the missing person to the community and/or police (i.e. officer safety warnings): ○ any new or updated information, particularly regarding risks to others (community and/or police), should be promptly communicated through both written (e.g., email) and verbal (e.g., phone call) channels. • ensure the originating jurisdiction (if different) is aware of the transfer: ○ both transferring and originating jurisdictions should ensure a liaison officer (point of contact) is available to share information with receiving jurisdiction	• report outcome to the originating jurisdiction
Tier 4 – Response Transfer	• provide the full details of the missing person • provide the full details of the reporting person • provide the full case file of the investigation to date, including statements and intelligence: ○ considerations should be made for exhibits on a case-by-case basis • provide a risk assessment, outlining the risks posed to the missing person as well as by the missing person to the community and/or police (i.e. officer safety warnings): ○ any new or updated information, particularly regarding risks to others (community and/or police), should be promptly communicated through both written (e.g., email) and verbal (e.g., phone call) channels. • provide a record of actions/decisions taken to date, including the search, search activity and rationale for transfer • maintain the liaison officer role between agencies in structure in the receiving jurisdiction:	• take the investigative lead/ primacy • take incident command, control and coordination primacy • manage the family liaison role • report outcome to the originating jurisdiction

	the originating jurisdiction must notify the receiving jurisdiction's Missing Persons Unit/Squad when contact occurs under urgent circumstances	
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3. Emergency response

3.1 *Notification of the Search and Rescue Squad*

Often a search for a missing person is time critical and so patrol supervisors, divisional supervisors and duty officers should be advised in the first instance. Where there are significant concerns and the matter is beyond the scope of general duties members, the search may need to be escalated. For Specialist Response Division assistance, the Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator at the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) should be consulted on ph: 9399 7500.

3.2 *Incident Command and Control System*

- For extensive or protracted searches, police officers must comply with **VPM Emergency management response**, this includes developing a 'statement of intent' (mission statement) and 'incident action plan' and the establishment of an ICCS structure to ensure that the Police Commander has effective control and sufficient resources. Refer to the **Searching for missing persons Practice Guide** for more information.
- As stated in the **Family Liaison Officer Practice Guide**, the Police Commander should consider appointing a FLO for missing person searches where it may enhance the effectiveness of the police response. The FLO should ideally be positioned within the Investigations or alternatively, the Operations functions of the ICCS structure.
- The Police Commander should consider appointing a Spontaneous Volunteer Manager to be positioned within the Operations function of the ICCS structure. Refer to the **Spontaneous Volunteer Practice Guide** for more information.
- For cross jurisdictional border searches, the Police Commander will be appointed from the jurisdiction where the primary search is being conducted. A liaison officer from the other jurisdiction should be appointed and included in the ICCS structure.
- Where primacy of the investigation is to be transferred, the liaison officer of the receiving jurisdiction should then become the Police Commander, and the Police Commander of the original jurisdiction should then become a liaison officer.

Note: allocation of the role of liaison officer to other jurisdictions should consider the member's capability to perform the Police Commander role in the event of investigation primacy transfer.

- PEEC should be used when there is a coordinated search underway that involves the use of specialist or external resources to locate the missing person. In circumstances where an Incident Police Operations Centre is established, PEEC must be used. Refer to PEEC Missing Person Incidents for more information. Note: As stated in **VPM Emergency management response**, when there is a PEEC outage, a manual log must be maintained and when the outage is resolved, these logs must be scanned and uploaded to PEEC.

4. Locating a missing person

4.1 *Classifying a missing person as located*

- A missing person should only be classified as 'located' after they have been sighted, spoken to and had their identity confirmed by a police member from any jurisdiction.
- A missing person may be classified as located in some cases where:
 - there is clear evidence that they are safe, such as CCTV footage, or
 - information is provided by a person in a position of authority, such as a customs officer, a medical professional or DFFH staff, that the person has been located and is safe. In such cases, police officers should notify ICLU where required.

4.2 *When a missing person is located - investigating member responsibilities*

- Obtain all relevant information relating to the person's absence and their subsequent location to assist in the investigation of future missing person reports.
- Only divulge a person's whereabouts with their consent, unless either of the following apply:
 - there is a serious and imminent threat to a person's life, health, safety or welfare
 - the person is unable to give consent due to age or impairment.
- When a person reported missing is an inpatient in a mental health or disability facility, police officers must comply with **VPM Escapees and absconders**.
- Complete the supplementary report, Missing Person Located in LEDR Mk 2 or Form L18C Part A where LEDR Mk 2 is unavailable and notify CDEB.
- Amend the LEAP case progress status to 'Completed'.

4.3 *Interstate missing person located in Victoria*

Where a Victoria Police member locates a person who has been reported missing interstate, the member must check LEAP (NCIS) to ascertain if any other states or territories have active missing person involvements for the person. The reporting member must:

- comply with the requirements at section 4.1 of this policy
- complete Form L18C Part A
- notify the interstate jurisdiction by phone and forward the Form L18C, together with Form 1418, to the relevant state or territory, and
- submit the supplementary report, Missing Person Located in LEDR Mk 2 or Form L18C to CDEB where LEDR Mk 2 is unavailable if there is an active missing person investigation in Victoria and amend the LEAP case progress status to 'Completed'.

4.4 *When a deceased body or body part(s) is identified - investigating member responsibilities*

- Complete Form L18C, Part A when a body has been identified or when either of the following identified body parts would be incompatible with life:
 - relevant body part e.g., a torso, or
 - a sufficient number of body parts.

When it is unclear whether the body parts would be incompatible with life, police officers should contact Coronial Admissions and Enquiries on Ph: 1300 008 436 (police only telephone number) for advice.

4.5 *When a deceased body or body part(s) cannot be identified - investigating member responsibilities*

Police officers must comply with **VPM Deceased persons**.

5. Exhibits, medical and dental records

- Ante mortem collection provides reference material for identification and includes DNA, medical, dental and fingerprint records.
- Ante mortem samples for all long-term missing persons cases must be collected by the investigating member. To assist in identification, the investigating member must:
 - liaise with the missing person's family members and complete the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Family Meeting Checklist (uploaded to the Interpose investigation shell by ICLU) to identify relevant samples for collection
 - contact Missing Persons Squad, Crime Command for advice on completing the checklist
 - refer to **VPMG Obtaining Information from external organisations**, regarding obtaining medical records from hospitals and health services providers, and
 - obtain medical and dental records and DNA samples as appropriate.
- For obtaining DNA samples outside of Victoria, consult DNA Management Unit, Forensic Services Department.
- The investigating member must keep all records, samples and other information as exhibits, until the person is located, and record them in Property and Logistics Management (PaLM) and on the corresponding Interpose investigation entry.

Related documents

- VPM Community policing
- VPM Crime and event reporting and recording
- VPM Deceased persons
- VPM Escapees and absconders
- VPMG Obtaining information from external organisations
- VPM Reporting contacts and intelligence
- Searching for missing persons Practice Guide
- Protecting Children Protocol between DHHS and Victoria Police (2023)
- Australia New Zealand Police Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) – Australia New Zealand Policy for Missing Persons Investigations 2025

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this policy, contact:

- a supervisor
- Missing Persons Squad, Crime Command

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
28/09/23	Published to; replace VPMG Missing persons investigations and to clarify I&R manager, DIU, and ICLU responsibilities, amendment to <i>Telecommunications Act</i> and inclusion of ANZPAA Missing Persons policy 2020	FF-144185 FF-120951 FF-220735
04/09/2024	Administrative amendment to include cross reference to Searching for missing persons Practice Guide	FF-229447
17/04/2025	Amendment to clarify a missing person investigation can be marked located in LEAP when identified body parts would be incompatible with life Advice regarding actions that must be followed for high risk missing persons including search urgency considerations Acquittal of NSW Coronial Recommendation following the finding of death with inquest of Darren Higgins	FF-248571 FF-229447 FF-243089
20/01/2026	Inclusion of ANZPAA cross jurisdictional policy on missing person investigations. Administrative amendment to update VPMP Reporting contacts and intelligence to VPM Reporting contacts and intelligence, update ANZPAA Missing Persons Investigations report date from 2020 to 2025. Updated guidance reflecting the introduction of the Whereabouts Application replacing the Vehicle Whereabouts Desired Form [VP Form L13].	FF-243089 FF-277114