Thunder Bay
Police Service Board

# Thunder Bay Police Service Board

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| POLICY TITLE:<br>**Legislation & Regulations: Missing Persons** | POLICY NUMBER: **LEG-001** |
| DATE APPROVED: **19/12/2023** | |
| DATE(s) REVIEWED: **2026** | DATE TO BE REVIEWED: **2028** |
| DATE(s) AMENDED: **17/11/2026** | |
| LEGISLATION:<br>s. 1, 2 Ontario Regulation 394/23, *Community Safety and Policing Act* (2019)<br>s. 18, 24 Ontario Regulation 395/23, *Community Safety and Policing Act* (2019)<br>*Missing Persons Act* (2018) | |
| RELATED PROCEDURES/POLICY: | |

## POLICY STATEMENT

The Thunder Bay Police Service Board (Board) recognizes the seriousness of the issue of missing persons in our city and the negative impact on the family and loved ones of missing persons. It also recognizes that each missing person's absence is unique, but that racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, other forms of marginalization and the legacy of colonization are factors that may increase the risk of a person becoming a missing person. As such, the Board is committed to actively addressing the serious issue of missing persons including potential systemic bias within missing persons investigations and outcomes.

## PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Board that investigations conducted by the Thunder Bay Police Service (Service) into missing persons are undertaken and managed with sound investigative principles in place to provide investigations that are conducted in a manner that is timely, proactive, culturally safe, trauma-informed, and free from systemic bias, with particular considerations for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all missing person occurrences and investigations conducted by the Service as well as Chief of Police of the Service (Chief) who is responsible for establishing and maintaining the required procedures.

## POLICY

### a) Missing Persons Procedures

To support this policy, the Chief shall develop and maintain procedures and processes regarding missing persons that:

- Include ongoing engagements through the Indigenous Leadership Collaborative as part of the development, review, and updates of Service procedures.
- Provide direction to be implemented when investigating missing persons, giving special consideration to marginalized populations, Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGBTQI+, persons with medical and mental health conditions, children, youth, and the elderly.
- Give consideration to risk factors when determining whether a case is considered urgent as set out in the Ministry's designated *Ontario Major Case Management Manual*.
- Where foul play is suspected, ensure police officers comply with the procedures with set out in the Ministry's designated *Ontario Major Case Management Manual.*
- Give consideration to work with Indigenous partners, organizations, or other stakeholders to support investigations.
- Provide the required duty to notify, records management, and case management requirements for police officers in missing person occurrences under Ontario Regulation 395/23 and 394/23;
- The Service shall refer all missing children investigations that meet the applicable criteria to the Ontario Provincial Police for Amber Alert activation and that major case management procedures are implemented in accordance with Ontario Regulation 394/23 and 395/23;
- Provide that families are consulted and informed of investigative status on a regular and ongoing basis that includes:
    - Standard practices to provide timely, accessible, regular, and transparent communication to families with recognition of families as active partners in the investigative process.
    - That members of the Service consulting and informing families of Indigenous missing persons have trauma-informed and Indigenous cultural safety training.
    - That all families of Indigenous missing persons are offered an Indigenous liaison contact.
- Provide that there is investigative follow-up on all outstanding cases.

**b) Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) Reports**

The following relates to the Provincial ViCLAS Centre operated by the Ontario Provincial Police, and applies to a missing persons investigation if:

- There is a strong possibility that the missing person has been the victim of homicide, an assault causing serious bodily harm, abduction or kidnapping, or
- The person cannot be located or contacted by a member of the Service for 7 days after being reported missing.

In the circumstances noted above:

- Within 7 days of the start of a reportable investigation and immediately if there is a strong possibility that the missing person has been the victim of homicide, an assault causing serious bodily harm, abduction or kidnapping and otherwise, the investigating officer leading the investigation shall complete and submit one or more ViCLAS Crime Analysis Reports respecting the investigation to the Provincial ViCLAS Centre.
- Within 30 days of a material change or of acquiring information that is significant to a reportable investigation, the investigating officer leading the investigation shall update the ViCLAS Crime Analysis Report and resubmit it to the Provincial ViCLAS Centre.
- An investigating officer who receives a Potential Linkage Report respecting an investigation from the Provincial ViCLAS Centre shall:
    - Follow up the potential linkage with the investigation as soon as possible; and
    - Within 60 days of receiving the Potential Linkage Report, submit to the Provincial ViCLAS Centre a Potential Linkage Response Form reporting the results of the follow up.

**c) Reporting**

As required under section 8 of the *Missing Persons Act*, the Chief shall prepare a Missing Persons Report (Form 7) to be provided annually to the Board. The report shall contain:

- The total number of urgent demands made in that year and the number of missing persons investigations to which they related;
- A description of the types of records specified in the urgent demands made in that year; and
- Any other prescribed information.

After receiving the annual Missing Persons Report (Form 7), the Board shall:

- Provide a copy of the report to the Minister; and
- Make the report available to the public by ensuring it is posted on the Service’s website by June 1st in the format established by the Board.

A separate Missing Persons Report will be prepared by the Chief and provided semi-annually to the Board in accordance with BPCR-001: Information Sharing and include:

- The total number of missing persons investigations and their outcomes.
- Demographic statistics, when known, of total missing person reports including by age (youth, adults, seniors), gender, racialized groups, and Indigenous identity.
- Statistics of total missing person reports by harm indicators and vulnerability factors.
- The total number for the three categories above that were resolved within 30 days, resolved after 30 days, or that remain unresolved.
- The total number of missing person investigations where foul play was suspected.
- Trend analysis, that includes:
    - Identification of trends or patterns (e.g., demographic, geographic, or cause-related factors).
    - Comparative data with year-over-year analysis covering a 4-year period.

After receiving the separate semi-annual Missing Persons Report, the Board will:

- Review the report and may provide further direction to the Chief in response to the report.
- Work with the Chief to use the report to inform continuous improvements and address systemic gaps in missing persons investigations and outcomes.