

SOP 5.07 – Missing Persons

Section 5 – Emergency Procedures

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Effective Date – 1 September 2018

Review Date – 1 September 2020

Electronically Controlled Document

Purpose

To outline the correct procedures for when a missing person is reported.

Scope

All operational areas of Life Saving Victoria

Procedures

Definitions

A 'missing person' is when lifesaving personnel are alerted to the fact that a person is missing, either on land or in the water.

A 'located person' is when lifesaving personnel locate the missing person or are notified that the missing person has been located.

Once notified of a missing person, the police should be contacted without delay via LSVComms to ensure the best response to the situation.

Prioritising Information Gathering

Where possible, lifesavers should gather information on the incident before declaring the type of response required, and then follow a series of escalating procedures to handle lost and found persons. This process should be undertaken promptly and efficiently.

Consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Whether the person was last seen in the water or on land
- How long the person has been missing for

Information that should be gathered for all search incidents include:

- Initial Action - Commence Log and Ascertain Details:
 - Time/Date/Place:
 - Identity and location of informant or information sources:
 - Name:
 - Age:
 - Gender:
 - Clothing:
 - General Description: (size, weight, race)
 - Location last seen:
 - Nature of incident / activity:
 - likelihood of being in the water,

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- Swimming ability
- Floatation devices
- Send Lifesavers to site on the beach (where their clothes / possessions are)
- and/or to their car
- Friends/Family others with them
- Reassure parents or carer and where possible obtain additional details such as other possible search areas i.e. location of car, residence, etc.

Declaring an in-water Search

Incidents where persons are missing in the surf or believed to be missing in the surf require an immediate, coordinated and methodical response by lifesaving personnel.

An in-water search should be declared by the person in charge (Patrol Captain) under the following circumstances:

- Lifesaving personnel witnessed submersion – while under surveillance or in the process of rescuing.
- Public communicated missing person – last seen in water.
- Public communicated missing persons – believed to be in the water
- Public communicated missing infant / child (<8) – last seen near the water.
- Personnel missing (dangerous conditions) – last seen in water.

In-water search response

- Details collected and log continued
- Complainant retained
- Lifesaving personnel dispatched
- LSVComms informed
- Radio communications
- Observers from tower with binoculars (or elevated position)
- Shoreline search (foot and/or ATV/4WD)
- Water based search with power craft
- In water swimmer positioned at last known location
- Consider crowd control
- Emergency services support requested
- Additional lifesaving services requested (if required)

In-water Search Considerations

- • Consider current / drift direction
- Activate on-scene resources ASAP.
- Remember to maintain management of flagged area or close flagged area if it cannot be adequately maintained.
- Ensure all responding units/services have radio communications (excluding swimmers / board.

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