

# WHEN A CHILD IS MISSING:

## DO's:

1. **Contact the Police IMMEDIATELY.**
2. **Keep everyone out of the area until the police can secure the area.**
3. **Close off the child's room - allow no one in.**
4. **Keep friends and neighbors away from the child's home and the point where the child was last seen (Point Last Seen or PLS).**
5. **Provide a central location, at LEAST 200 feet away from the scene, where friends and family can meet to obtain information.**
6. **Understand that SCENT IS EVIDENCE. Learn how to preserve it.**
7. **Secure all pets at and near the scene.**
8. **Keep traffic to a minimum.**
9. **Turn off all vehicle engines near the scene area.**

## DON'TS

1. **Don't - Contaminate the scene with your presence.**
2. **Don't - Handle anything!**
3. **Don't - Clean up or pick-up the house or child's room - leave things exactly the way they were. Don't pick up dirty clothes, sheets, etc. or allow anyone to touch them.**
4. **Don't Go out searching by yourself - WAIT for Police direction.**

*These procedures apply to ALL crime scenes!*

## Scent - the forgotten evidence.....

**Law enforcement should immediately contact a dog handler to evaluate the scene for scents and make scent pads if possible. Once the scene has been evaluated, a trailing dog should be brought in to work the area before foot searches are allowed. Evidence must be preserved!**

**If professional searchers are available - use them! Untrained, good intentioned people can contaminate an area, miss important evidence and can be uncontrollable if something is found thereby contaminating evidence or the crime scene.**

**Keep the number of searchers in an area to no more than are needed. Don't flood the area with people. Keep all other spectators, press and others out of the area.**

**Always keep in mind...**

1. **If a small child, search the home first and his/her immediate play area. Ask permission for a searcher to perform the search as parents often unintentionally give misinformation such as "he/she would never go there.."**
2. **When searching for small children - they usually will go up hill as evening nears because a) it is colder at lower elevations b) as they look up, they see brighter sky and go toward light.**

3. Searchers should be trained to **NOT** pick up or handle anything they find. Items should be left where they are found and the person in charge should be called immediately. If the item is confirmed as belonging to the missing person, you have a new PLS and a direction of travel can be established.
4. Searchers should be instructed not to drop or throw things in the search area.
5. If a body is found, do not approach it closer than 30'. All searchers should immediately leave the area single file to the nearest road.
6. A network of qualified dog handlers and dogs should be established and only a dog handler with impeccable integrity should be considered.
7. It must be determined if the person is missing or lost, as searches are different for each case.

## **GUIDE TO SEARCH FOR LOST PERSONS AND SET UP SEARCH PERIMETERS**

### **Adults: 15 - 50+ years**

<i>Time Person Has Been Gone</i>	<i>Distance Traveled in Straight Line</i>
1 hr.	4 miles
1/2 hr.	2 miles
15 minutes	1 mile
7-1/2 minutes	1/2 mile
3 minutes plus	1/4 mile

### **Persons 5 - 14 years**

1 hr.	2 miles
1/2 hr.	1 miles
15 minutes	1/2 mile
7-1/2 - 10 minutes	1/4 mile

### **Persons 2 - 4 years**

1 hr.	1 mile or less
1/2 hr.	1/2 mile or less
15 minutes	1/4 mile or less
7 - 10 minutes	1/8 mile or less

**Distance is measured from Point Last Scene (PLS)**