

Missing Persons - State of Alaska

Department of Public Safety

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Missing Persons: Reporting in Alaska

We would like to share:

1. Our data on missing persons (we will do this at the end of the presentation);
2. What specific information/items we need from a person reporting someone missing;
3. Our statutes that govern the missing persons reporting process in Alaska;
4. State and national resources available for family and friends of missing persons;
5. DNA and dental records (how family members can help); and
6. We would also like to save time to answer your questions. Our contact information is at the end of the presentation. Please contact us with any additional questions that were not answered.

Missing Persons - Reporting in Alaska

- ▶ A missing person must be reported as soon as possible to the local law enforcement agency where the person went missing from
 - ▶ Only a law enforcement officer can take a missing persons report.
 - ▶ If there is not law enforcement in your community, contact the nearest AST post
 - ▶ There is NOT a 24 hour waiting period before filing a missing persons report
 - ▶ Please share this information with your community, family and friends

Missing Persons - What Law Enforcement Needs to Know

- ▶ Name and DOB
- ▶ Why you believe they are missing? (circumstances)
- ▶ Is the behavior normal (absence or lack of contact)?
- ▶ Places frequented, hobbies, recent trips (local and state)
- ▶ Vulnerable adult/PTSD/Mental Health Issues
- ▶ Last seen wearing (clothes)
- ▶ Drug and alcohol abuse
- ▶ Scars, marks, tattoos, etc.
- ▶ Known associates, friends
- ▶ Place of employment
- ▶ Cell phone number
- ▶ Social media accounts
- ▶ Recent photo

A person does not have to know all of this information to report a missing person.

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

▶ **AS 18.65.610. Duties of Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse**

- ▶ (a) The missing persons information clearinghouse is established as a central repository of information regarding missing persons.
- ▶ (b) The clearinghouse shall
 - ▶ (1) establish within the state a system and appropriate procedures for communication of information regarding missing persons;
 - ▶ (2) collect, maintain, and disseminate accurate and complete information on missing persons for the purpose of identifying, locating, and returning them;
 - ▶ (3) provide for exchange of information on missing persons within the state;
 - ▶ (4) cooperate with private citizens, local law enforcement agencies, and other state and federal agencies in investigations concerning missing persons;
 - ▶ (5) provide training and assistance to law enforcement agencies to promote effective use of the clearinghouse.

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

- ▶ **18.65.620 – Duty of Law Enforcement Agencies**

- ▶ A local or state law enforcement agency shall submit to the clearinghouse all missing person reports received by the law enforcement agency that relate to a person who is not located within 48 hours after the first report concerning that person was filed.

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

▶ **AS 18.65.630. Medical and Dental Records of Missing Persons**

- ▶ (a) A family member of a missing person can sign a form authorizing the release of medical and dental records to the law enforcement agency.
- ▶ (b) If the person was reported missing by friends and no known family members can be located, law enforcement can execute a written declaration stating that an active investigation is being conducted and that medical and dental records are required for the exclusive purpose of furthering the investigation.
- ▶ (c) Medical and dental records obtained under this section shall be provided to the clearinghouse.

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

- ▶ **AS 18.65.640. Reports Upon Finding a Missing Person**

- ▶ A person who has filed a missing person report shall immediately notify the law enforcement agency when the location of the missing person is determined.

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

▶ Missing Persons Databases

- ▶ APSIN (Alaska Public Safety Information Network) – Department of Public Safety
- ▶ NCIC (National Crime Information Center) - FBI
- ▶ NamUs (National Missing and Unidentified Persons System) – Public users can enter missing persons into this database. All entries by public users are always vetted with law enforcement before being published – www.namus.gov.
 - ▶ Helpful FAQ's - www.namusinfo.org/faq
- ▶ DPS website lists all current missing persons across the state - dps.alaska.gov/AST/SAR/MissingPerson

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

▶ **Dental Records**

- ▶ Only need the name and location of dentist of missing person
- ▶ Once radiographs and treatment notes are received, they are sent to Forensic Odontologist for charting. Once charted, the records are entered into NamUs and NCIC.

Missing Persons Information Clearinghouse

▶ DNA Collection

- ▶ DNA can only be collected by a law enforcement officer. They can not be self – submitted. If there is not law enforcement in your community, contact the nearest AST post.
- ▶ DNA samples from next of kin are sent to the University of North Texas (UNT)
 - ▶ Process all DNA for missing persons across the country for uploading into CODIS which takes approximately 10 months
- ▶ DNA samples can also be sent to the FBI on a case by case basis
- ▶ The preferred order DNA samples is as follows:
 - ▶ Biological mother, father, and/or child of the missing person (Most useful)
 - ▶ Biological full sibling of the missing person (Useful)
 - ▶ Biological half-sibling (need to know which parent is shared)
 - ▶ Biological aunt/uncle, niece/nephew, grandparents of the missing person (Least useful). However if these relatives are the only ones living, need to know the exact relationship to the missing person.

Voluntary DNA From Family Members

- ▶ UNT is bound by federal and state laws **not** to use a volunteer sample for anything other than its express purpose.
- ▶ Authorization (waiver) is obtained from the volunteer (relative).
- ▶ Voluntarily submitted DNA samples from relatives will be uploaded into CODIS under the UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS category.
- ▶ The sample from the relatives will ONLY be searched against unidentified remains and will NOT be searched against the rest of CODIS.
 - ▶ To do otherwise could result in the Lab losing CODIS access and be stripped of the ability to use the database all together. This is not a matter of policy but of LAW.

Missing Persons

▶ **Recap**

- ▶ A missing person must be reported as soon as possible to the local law enforcement agency where the person went missing from
 - ▶ Only a law enforcement officer can take a missing persons report
 - ▶ There is **NOT** a 24 hour waiting period before filing a missing persons report
- ▶ Very important to get DNA and dental records on file as soon as possible
 - ▶ Voluntarily submitted DNA samples from relatives will only be searched against unidentified remains and will NOT be searched against the rest of the CODIS data base.

Missing Persons

Let's get on line and review our state resources:

dps.alaska.gov/AST/SAR/MissingPerson

- ▶ Website
- ▶ Bulletins
- ▶ Data (numbers)

Questions?

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