

Missing Person Urban Search Urgency Guidelines

Urgency consideration and analysis should be completed as soon as possible. The relative urgency can be described as low, medium or high. The recommended response depends on the agency protocols and available resources but should progressively include the following steps.

Low Urgency

- Runaway/sneak away adults.
- Runaway children 14 – 18 years old.
- Fugitives of non-violent crimes.
- A miscommunication incident.
- Missing person is late returning from an activity.
- Little information available on missing person or incident.

Medium Urgency

- Mild mental disability.
- Alcoholic, drug users.
- Elderly.
- Children 14 - 18 years old.

High Urgency (At Risk)

- Mild to severe Alzheimer's disease (dementia).
- Children under the age of 14.
- Moderate to severe mental disability.
- Abducted children (witness or suspected).
- Kidnapped people (witness or suspected).
- Despondent or suicidal.

Low Urgency

- Investigation of the incident including interview of appropriate persons.
- BOLO for law enforcement agencies.
- Hasty search of area around PLS and likely places the person might be.

Medium Urgency

- The above, plus activation of additional law enforcement and search teams.
- Expanded search effort with additional resources and search teams.
- Additional public notification, including media and electronic messaging.

High Urgency (At Risk)

- Full search effort using maximum available resources and tactics.
- Maximum public notification (AMBER, Missing Child, College Student or Vulnerable Adult Alert)
- Calling in mutual aid resources.

Increasing Urgency Factors

- Existing medical condition effecting ability to function.
- Lack of required medication.
- Insufficient clothing, food or shelter for the prevailing environmental conditions.
- Extreme environmental condition.
- Increased ability to travel, utilizing urban modes of transportation.
- Increasing time since missing, onset of night.
- Serious precipitating incident.
- Information or clues found pointing to higher urgency.

Decreasing Urgency Factors

- History of running away or erratic behavior.
- Two or more persons missing together.
- For suspected voluntary missing person, increasing time with no clues in search area.
- Information or clues pointing to lower urgency.