

PREPARING SOMEONE TO CALL THE POLICE

It is common for people to be unsure whether to call the police. There can be many reasons for this including:

- A lack of trust in the police
- Worry that calling the police will get the missing person in trouble with the law.
- Concerns that reporting a missing person will get the caller into trouble (for example: not reporting sooner, being involved in a criminal activity or violation of a court order at the time of the disappearance, or feelings of shame or guilt, as well as many other reasons).

You can offer ready reassurance:

- There is no legal obligation to report a crime in Canada, so you can't get in trouble for not reporting a crime (sooner or at all).
- That you understand their concerns and that you and the LOFEO team will support them and ensure that the police follow through.

LIMITS TO HELPING

If you think that the family member/friend is using you to find an adult person who is hiding from them, calling the police is ok as they will not disclose the location of a person who is choosing not to be found. It is often possible to reassure family members/ friends that their loved one is safe without disclosing their location. Be cautious, disclosing the location of a person could be dangerous to them.

It is more complicated when there is reason to think that a child under the age of 16 is choosing not to be found. If you suspect that this may be the case, contact a lawyer or legal member of the LOFEO team. Each situation is different, but it may be necessary to let the police know that returning the child to the parent may be unsafe.



This Helpline is part of the Looking Out For Each Other project managed by the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

To learn more:

<https://nbapc.org/programs-and-services/lofeo/>



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada

LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER



LOFEO HELPLINE

Missing and Murdered Indigenous
Families In Need of Direction

1-833-MMI-FIND
(1-833-664-3463)

IS IT AN EMERGENCY?

Should this be a 9-1-1 call or a call to a particular police detachment?

Ask:

- Is the person a young child?
- Does the person have a disability or medical condition that could/would make them unable to get help themselves and put them in immediate danger?
- Is the disappearance recent (minutes ago rather than hours, days or weeks)?
- Is there a reason to think that the person was a recent victim of crime (again, in the last few minutes)?
- Is there a reason to think that the person may be in imminent danger (serious risk of death)?
- If the answer to any of these questions is yes, 9-1-1 is the right call, the more “yes” answers, the more urgent. If the answer is “not sure” to any of these, don’t hesitate to call 9-1-1. The dispatcher (person who answers the phone) will tell the caller to hang up and call the non-emergency line if appropriate.

PREPARING SOMEONE TO CALL 9-1-1

- Tell them to make the call right away.
- If possible, stay with them while they make the call.
- Tell them to follow the instructions of the dispatcher and reassure them that action will be taken WHILE the call is ongoing, so talking to the dispatcher and answering all their questions will not delay the response.
- If you are on the phone with the family member/friend, tell them that you are available for them to call back AFTER the dispatcher tells them to hang up.
- If it’s not a 9-1-1 call, then a call to a non-emergency police number is appropriate, direct call to a RCMP detachment or municipal police force station.

It is important to debrief the caller after the 9-1-1 call has been made.

DEBRIEFING SOMEONE AFTER THE 9-1-1 CALL

- After the 9-1-1 call has been made, talk to the caller about what they’ve just experienced.
- They may be directed by the 9-1-1 dispatcher to call a municipal police station or RCMP detachment directly.
- There might be feelings of confusion about what they’ve been told.
- They may need help understanding what has happened and reassurance that this does not mean they will be left without help.
- It is important for them to know that this is just part of the process.

There is no cost for legal advice through the LOFEO Legal Team, via LA Henry, LLB, PhD at 506-455-5245 or law@la-henry.ca