



Is someone missing right now?

This is scary. You don't have to read this guide yet. Do these three things.

1. Call police.

Call **911** if they could be in danger.

Otherwise, call your local police.

You don't have to wait 24 hours. You don't have to be family. [1] [2]

2. Tell police what you know.

Their name. When you last saw them. What they wore. Why you're worried.

3. Don't post anything yet.

Wait until police say what you can share.

That's it for now. Come back to this guide when you're ready.

When Someone Goes Missing in Canada

A simple guide for friends and family

By @Leif deriend

October 2026

Dedication

In memory of anyone who has been lost and needed finding.

What's in this guide

- **The 6 rules** (read these first)
- **The 10 steps** (from the first call to taking it all down)
- **Extras** (only if you want them)
- **Copy-and-paste posts**

You don't need AI, a website or tech skills.

Free tools:

- **Set up your appeal step by step:** wingnut.fyi/missing/start (answers a few questions, then gives you a filled-in poster, Facebook post and messages)
- Poster maker: wingnut.fyi/missing/poster
- Posts to copy: wingnut.fyi/missing
- Checklist, log and poster map: wingnut.fyi/missing/checklist

The examples use a made-up person: **Jordan Example**.

The 6 rules

Posting the wrong thing can hurt the search. Even if you mean well.

1. Only post what police made public.

Use their words, their photo and their phone number. Nothing else.

Why: Police may keep some details private to protect the investigation. [3] Wrong or old details can also send people looking in the wrong place.

2. Tips go to police. Not the comments.

Tell people to call police with anything they know.

Why: Tips in comments can reach police late, or never. They also spread rumours. [3]

3. Keep private stuff private.

No health details. No addresses. No family phone numbers. No private messages.

Why: The missing person deserves privacy. Scammers also target worried families. [3] [4]

4. Don't search on your own.

Don't follow leads. Don't go onto private property. Don't confront anyone. Don't post where people are searching.

Why: You could destroy evidence or get hurt. Police and Search and Rescue lead.

5. Wait for police before posting any news.

Don't post "found" or "safe" until police confirm it.

Don't assume someone is safe from a post or a message. "Located" or "found" doesn't always mean safe. Police need to confirm it. [3]

Why: A wrong update can make people stop looking.

6. Check before every post.

Look at the latest police post first. Fix or delete old posts fast.

Why: Old posts keep spreading after the facts change.

The 10 steps

Step 1: Call police.

Call **911** if:

- it's a child
- it's an elderly or vulnerable person
- they could be in danger or need medical help
- they could hurt themselves or someone else
- you think someone hurt them

These are examples. If you think they're in danger, call 911. [2]

Not an emergency? Call your local police, or go to a police station or RCMP detachment. You can report to any police service in Canada. They'll pass it on. [1] [3]

A Facebook post is **not** a police report.

2 Step 2: Tell police what you know.

Use this if it helps:

I'm worried that [name] is missing.
I last [saw / heard from] them at [time and place].
I'm worried because [reason].
They may be in danger because [reason, if any].
My name and number are [your details].

- Say what you saw yourself, and what someone told you.
- Not sure about something? Say so.
- You don't need every answer. You can call back later.
- For a young person, say they are missing. Tell police anything you know about where they may have gone.

Before you hang up, ask:

- Is the report recorded?
- Is there a file number?
- Who do I send new information to?

Police usually update one family contact. Not everyone gets updates. [3]

Keep messages and photos. Ask police how to give them over. If police ask for a phone, a device or a personal item, ask how it will be used and when you'll get it back. Giving DNA is your choice, and police will explain the consent form. [3]

3 Step 3: Don't post anything yet.

Wait until police say what you can share.

Not every report gets a public appeal. That's OK. [2]

4 Step 4: Find the official police post.

- Go to the police service's own website.
- Check the date. Look for updates.
- Don't trust screenshots or shares. Fake missing posts exist. [4]
- No police post? Ask police what you can share. Don't post until they say.

5 Step 5: Pick one contact person.

- One person talks to police and the family.
- Pick a backup too.
- Ask police before talking to the media. [3]

6 Step 6: Make one fact list.

Keep a private list of what police said. A simple spreadsheet works.

For each fact, write:

- the exact police wording
- the link and date
- if it's current or old
- when you last checked

Example:

Fact: Last seen
Police wording: "Jordan was last seen near the Riverbend bridge."
Source: Riverbend Police, October 3, 2026
Status: Current
Checked: October 3, 10:00 a.m.

- Only share the list with people who need it.
- No witness names, tips or private messages in it.
- Check the police post every day.

7 Step 7: Share on Facebook.

Sharing the police post is often enough.

If you make a Page:

- Name it simply: "Help Find Jordan Example."
- Use the police photo.
- Say it's run by volunteers, not police.
- Pin the appeal post (Template 1).
- Give full control to very few people. [5]
- Everyone uses their own account and two-factor login.

Watch the comments:

- Delete theories, accusations and private details.
- Save anything useful for police first.
- **Hiding a comment isn't enough.** The writer and their friends can still see it. [6]
- Reply with Template 4.

8 Step 8: Make a poster.

- Use the police poster if there is one.
- Or use the free poster maker: **wingnut.fyi/missing/poster**
- Only add details police made public.
- Before you print, ask police what details and phone number to use, and have them look at it. [3]
- Ask before you put posters up.
- Mark where each one went on the poster map: **wingnut.fyi/missing/checklist**

9 Step 9: Protect photos and privacy.

- Use the photo police released.
- It should be recent and show only the missing person. [3]
- Don't edit the person's face or body.
- **Don't use AI** on the photo. People need to recognize the real person.
- Don't take photos from strangers' social media.
- Having a photo doesn't always mean you can share it. Ask the person who took it, or who has the right to use it. [16]

Photos can hide GPS location data:

- **iPhone:** tap Share, then Options, then turn off Location. [14]
- **Other phones:** sharing settings aren't enough. Use a trusted app that removes the location from the photo file itself. [15]
- Check the background too: signs, house numbers, reflections.

10 Step 10: When it's over, take it all down.

Wait for police to confirm. Don't trust rumours. [3]

Then, right away:

1. Take down the appeal post.
2. Post a short update (Template 5).
3. Remove the photo and details everywhere you posted.
4. Ask others who shared it to take it down.
5. Collect the posters. The poster map shows where they all are.

Some police services remove their own photos and posts once a person is found, to protect their privacy. [17] Ask police what they want you to take down, and remove your own posts.

"Found safe"? Only post it if:

- police confirm the person is safe, **and**
- the family approves the exact words.

Keep it short. No photo, no location, no details (Template 6). Not approved yet? Post Template 5 for now.

If an adult is found and doesn't want contact, police may only say they're safe. Respect that. [3]

Don't turn the page into a memorial without permission.

Afterwards:

- Thank the people who helped. Ask before naming anyone.
- Police Victim Services can help people who are struggling. [3]

+ Extras (only if you want them)

You don't need any of these.

A website

A Facebook Page is usually enough.

Want one anyway? The free **website prompt maker** at wingnut.fyi/missing/website writes the instructions for an AI site builder.

The page should have:

- the police photo, name and description
- a big "Call police" button
- "In an emergency, call 911"
- the date it was last updated
- "Run by volunteers, not police"

The page should **not** have:

- comments or tip forms
- maps or theories
- donation links
- tracking tools

A web address

- Don't wait to buy one. Share the police link now.
- Ask before using the person's name in the address.
- **.ca** addresses have rules about who can buy one. Check CIRA's rules. [7] [8]
- Turn on two-factor login on the account.

Google

- It can take days or weeks to show up. It might never show up. [11]
- Sharing the police post works faster.
- Never make private pages searchable. [10]

A short video

- Only if the family is OK with it.
- 30 to 60 seconds.
- Use only police wording.
- Put the police number on screen at the end.
- No AI voices or fake scenes.

```
My name is [name]. I'm [relationship].  
According to [police service], [name] was last seen [police wording].  
If you have information, call [police service] at [number].  
In an emergency, call 911.  
Thank you for sharing.
```

AI tools

You don't need AI.

If you use it:

- Only give it what police made public.
- Never paste private details, tips or messages.
- Never ask it to change the person's photo or guess where they went.
- Always have a person check what it makes.

The "Optional - AI website tools" folder has more for people who build websites.

Copy-and-paste posts

These are also at wingnut.fyi/missing with copy buttons.

- Replace every [bracket].
- Leave out any line police didn't give you.
- Have a second person check it.

Template 1: Pinned post

MISSING: [name exactly as made public by police]
[Age and town only if authorized.]

According to [police service], [exact current public last-seen wording].

Description from police: [exact current public description].

If you have information, contact [police service]
at [official reporting number or other authorized route].
[Quote file number, if supplied.]
In an emergency, call 911.

Official appeal: [link]
Updated: [date, time, time zone]

This Page is run by [approved volunteer group name], not by police.
Please do not post sightings, theories or private details in comments
or messages. Send information directly to police.
[Current campaign website, if used.]

Template 2: Message to the family

Hi [name], [group name] is helping share the official public appeal,
with [agreed liaison] coordinating with [police service].

We will use only the current authorized public information.
Sightings and other tips should go directly to police at [reporting route].
In an emergency, call 911.

If a photo or detail concerns you, please contact [liaison/contact route].
We will respond promptly and check with the liaison and police about
what should be removed or changed. We will remove exposed private
information from channels we control while addressing the concern.

Template 3: Calling police with a tip

I'm calling about the missing-person appeal for [public name].
[File number, if supplied.]
My name is [caller's name], and my callback number is [number].

I have information: [what you directly saw or heard],
at [date/time, including time zone if relevant], at [place].
I [did / did not] see this myself.
[If second-hand, explain that without presenting it as direct observation.]

Please tell me how to provide any original messages, photos or other
material you need. Is there anything else you need from me?

Emergency? Call 911 instead.

Template 4: Reply to comments

Thank you for wanting to help. Please send any information directly to
[police service] at [official reporting route], not in the comments,
so it reaches the right people and doesn't spread rumours.
In an emergency, call 911.

Template 5: It's over (after police confirm)

UPDATE – THIS APPEAL IS NO LONGER ACTIVE

[Optional exact police-confirmed line, if appropriate for republication.]
Please stop sharing the earlier appeal and remove old posters and images.
Thank you to everyone who helped.

Updated: [date, time, time zone]
[Official update link, if it remains public and is appropriate to share.]

Template 6: Found safe (police confirmed + family approved)

FOUND SAFE

[Paste the entire exact approved short message.]

Sources and further reading

Checked October 16, 2026. These back up specific points. They don't endorse this guide. The rules in this guide are its own advice, not the law.

This guide is not legal advice. It doesn't replace police or Search and Rescue. No guide can promise someone will be found. Rules and police steps can differ by province, territory and case. Always follow the police service handling the case.

- [1] Canada's Missing — Reporting
<https://canadasmissing.ca/report-signale/index-eng.htm>
- [2] BC RCMP — Reporting a Missing Person in British Columbia
<https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/contact/report-missing-persons>
- [3] RCMP — Information for families of missing persons
<https://rcmp.ca/en/corporate-information/publications-and-manuals/information-families-missing-persons>
- [4] Lethbridge Police Service — Verify posts before sharing
<https://www.lethbridgepolice.ca/news/posts/police-advise-residents-to-verify-posts-before-sharing-on-social-media/>
- [5] Meta Help Center — About Facebook Page access
<https://www.facebook.com/help/289207354498410>
- [6] Meta Help Center — Hide a comment from a post on your Facebook Page
<https://www.facebook.com/help/297845860255949>
- [7] CIRA — Canadian Presence Requirements for Registrants
<https://www.cira.ca/en/resources/documents/domains/canadian-presence-requirements-registrants/>
- [8] CIRA — How to register your .CA name
<https://www.cira.ca/en/ca-domains/register-your-ca/>
- [9] The Markup — Blacklight website privacy inspector
<https://themarkup.org/blacklight>
- [10] Google Search Central — Introduction to robots.txt
<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/robots/intro>
- [11] Google Search Central — Ask Google to recrawl your URLs
<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/ask-google-to-recrawl>
- [12] Bing Webmaster Tools — Adding and verifying a site
<https://www.bing.com/webmasters/help/add-and-verify-site-12184f8b>
- [13] Google Search Central — AI features and your website
<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/ai-features>
- [14] Apple Personal Safety — Manage location metadata in Photos
<https://support.apple.com/guide/personal-safety/manage-location-metadata-in-photos-ips0d7a5df82/web>
- [15] Google Photos Help — Understand, find and edit your photos' locations
<https://support.google.com/photos/answer/6153599?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DAndroid>
- [16] Canadian Intellectual Property Office — A guide to copyright
<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canadian-intellectual-property-office/en/guide-copyright>
- [17] RCMP New Brunswick — Did you know? Missing persons
<https://rcmp.ca/en/nb/corporate-information/infographic-did-you-know-missing-persons>

Testing

Thanks to Forgotten Acre for testing this guide and its free tools.