

Chapter 14. Conclusion

The goal of this book is to provide a basic knowledge for those who will be or are involved in the search for missing persons in an urban environment. While 90% or more of missing persons cases are resolved within a short period of time by good investigative skills and looking in the obvious locations, there are times when more in-depth and thorough skills are required.

Take time to understand the urban environment and develop a pre-plan accordingly.

- ✓ Look at the history of missing persons in your area.
- ✓ What are the more common locations in which they are found?
- ✓ Develop a cache of maps and equipment.
- ✓ Develop lists of personnel and resources that can be tapped at a moment's notice.

Be extremely thorough in the investigation and interviewing.

- ✓ Develop trained personnel who can conduct in-depth interviews.
- ✓ Use and/or develop lists of questions to be better prepared to gather the necessary information.
- ✓ Determine the missing person's health and mental status.
- ✓ Determine the missing person's intent: What is their goal? Where are they trying to go?
- ✓ Determine the missing person's ability to survive in the environment.
- ✓ Determine the missing person's ability to travel.
- ✓ Determine the missing person's ability to respond.

Develop an accurate profile of the missing person.

- ✓ "Paint a mental picture" of the missing person from the information gathered during the investigation and interviews.

Use the investigation, information and scenario analysis to prevent wasted effort on a non-search.

- ✓ Look at the possible reasons for why the person is missing.
- ✓ Is the person voluntarily missing or truly lost and disoriented?
- ✓ What are the possible outcomes—the missing person could be found alive or dead.

Take advantage of the media, which is an effective source of clues.

- ✓ The more eyes that are looking for the missing person increase the chances the person will be found in a short time.
- ✓ Be prepared to handle the increased number of clues that will be generated; more personnel will be needed to answer phones and sift through information.

Consider that the missing person may have used public transportation and left the area.

- ✓ Know the public transportation available in your area and whom to contact for information.

Trailing dogs are an effective resource.

- ✓ Identify local, state and federal sources of trained search and rescue trailing dogs. Consider training your own dogs.
- ✓ Use trailing dogs to get a direction of travel from the point last seen (PLS).

Call in mutual aid search team resources early in the search mission.

- ✓ Identify and train with the local search and rescue teams in your area.
- ✓ Call on them early!

Train personnel to implement the labor intensive and time-consuming tasks of investigation and door-to-door canvassing.

- ✓ Establish protocols to use auxiliary volunteers from law enforcement and allied agencies.
- ✓ Develop a procedure to use spontaneous volunteers.