

2007 Missing Children Reference Report

**National Missing Children Services,
National Police Services,
Royal Canadian Mounted Police**

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Acknowledgments

National Missing Children Services (NMCS) extends its appreciation to all the partner police agencies that made a commitment to entering missing child reports into the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system, and for keeping the CPIC records current. A special thank you is extended to the law enforcement officials and coordinators who work diligently on missing children investigations and initiatives in their provinces.

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Executive Summary

National Missing Children Services (NMCS) is the only national missing children clearing house for information and assistance to police, not-for-profit agencies and parents. It is proud to have been serving Canadians for the past 20 years.

From December 1988 to December 2007, 10,045 cases were opened and 7,742 cases closed. Currently, 2,303 cases are active.

The NMCS tracks and stores information on its cases yearly. The results of this research show that in 2007, NMCS assisted in the investigation of 65 Canadian cases involving 91 children, 368 United States cases involving 505 children, and 136 international cases (excluding the U.S.A.) involving 181 children.

The NMCS researcher also analyzes the missing children entries in the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). Entries are made by accredited Canadian police agencies. An analysis of the 2007 reports showed that the total number of missing children reports increased to 60,582 from 60,461 reports entered in 2006. The number of reports in all categories of missing children increased, with the exception of the parental abduction and runaway categories.

The runaway category composes over three-quarters of the missing children reports. More females than males run away and most often they run away from their family residence. Over 80 per cent of runaway children have a history of repeat or chronic running episodes.

The parental abductions reports, both custody and non custody, totalled 285. More male children than females were abducted, a different finding from 2006. In the majority of the cases, a custody order was not *in place*. Forty-four per cent of the children were under the age of 5, 31 per cent between ages of 6 and 11, and 25 per cent between the ages of 12 and 17. About three-quarters were last seen at their family or foster home residence.

Stranger abduction reports increased to 56 in 2007 from 46 in 2006. More females than males were reported missing. Over half of the children disappeared from their family residence. Thirty-nine per cent were under the age of one, and 29 per cent were 14 and 15 years-old.

In 2007, 60,582 cases were entered and 57,673 transactions were removed from the CPIC system. Sixty-five per cent were removed in the 24 hours following the initial missing report, and 88 per cent were removed within a week. *Note: The 2007 "remove" transactions may include children entered on the system in previous years but who were found in 2007, and then removed.*

NMCS and its partner agencies offer several services to law enforcement agencies and the families of missing children, including a travel reunification program, photo-age

Progression service, training for law enforcement officials, and updates on the Amber Alert program.

The NMCS works closely with National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC) to combat Internet-facilitated sexual criminal activity that targets, exploits, victimizes, and abuses children and youth.

NMCS collaborates on missing children cases with several federal government departments and agencies: the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, RCMP, National Police Service and its international partner, and the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

It also recognizes and works with several not-for-profit agencies, such as Child Find Canada and its provincial offices; the Missing Children Society of Canada; the Missing Children Network Canada; Victims of Violence; Canadian Centre for Missing Children; Operation Go Home; and International Social Service Canada.

Introduction

National Missing Children Services Functions

NMCS is the only national missing children clearing house for information and assistance to police, not-for-profit agencies and parents. It was created to assist law enforcement agencies in the investigation, location and return of a missing child to their parent or legal guardian. The service is linked to all Canadian police and related agencies through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), to United States police agencies through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and to most foreign police agencies through Interpol.

National Missing Children Services has a two-fold mandate: Operations; and Research and Program Development.

Operations

NMCS is an investigative and operational support unit assisting Canadian agencies with their investigations. It coordinates national and international investigations with law enforcement agencies by using its network of contacts. NMCS works co-operatively with municipal, regional, provincial and national law enforcement agencies as well as with other Canadian searching organizations.

In 2002, NMCS announced the appointment of a national Amber Alert program coordinator. The coordinator provides advice and updates on the program to Canadian law enforcement and searching agencies. NMCS liaises with Transport Canada regarding employee training, as well as providing training to Canadian law enforcement agencies.

NMCS also has partnered with National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre, RCMP National Police Services investigators to determine if there are links to other crimes against children, such as the trafficking of children, Internet luring, and pornography.

Research and Program Development:

The researcher conducts original studies:

- to contribute to policy development;
- to advance investigative processes;
- to assist in the development of investigative response plans; and
- To determine the nature and scope of the missing children problem in Canada.

In 2006, NMCS collected information from left-behind parents whose children were abducted by the other parent or guardian. Canada's not-for-profit agencies supported this

research by contacting their clients and requesting their participation. The final research report has been released in English and French and is available on the NMCS web site.

An extensive reference report on Canada's missing children is written and published yearly. The report is launched by a federal government official on May 25th, National Missing Children's Day.

The research officer responds to media and public inquiries for national statistical information, trend analysis, and research study findings related to children and youth. Research data collection and methodological advice and feedback on university graduate and post-graduate papers are provided to national and international students. As well, research and crime trend articles about missing children issues are published in law enforcement magazines.

To fulfil its prevention objectives, NMCS has developed a safety booklet, including information on "What to Do If Your Child Is Missing," "Safety In Cyberspace," and "Keeping Children Safe."

Reports, booklets and research studies are available by contacting the service at 1-877-318-3576 (toll free line) or visiting the website at www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca.

Data collection

This report is divided into two sections. The first section looks at operational files from the Police Information Retrieval System, an internal monitoring system used by National Missing Children Services (NMCS).

The second section focuses on the National Missing Children and Youth Police Occurrence Reports perspective as generated by the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system.

Analysis I National Missing Children Services

The NMCS tracks and stores information on its cases yearly. The results of this research are:

From December 1988 to December 30, 2007, 10,045 cases were opened and 7,742 cases closed. Currently, 2,303 cases are active.

In 2007, National Missing Children Services (NMCS) opened 569 assistance files, and closed 387 files. Some of the closed files included cases from previous years. Law enforcement requests made up 405 of the 419 files, while 14 business and other types of requests made up the remainder.

Requests for assistance are broken down into three categories and analyzed. The three categories are “Canadian Investigative Assistance Case Analysis;” “United States Investigative Service Analysis;” and “International Investigative Service Analysis.”

1. Canadian Investigative Assistance Case Analysis

In 2007, National Missing Children Services (NMCS) assisted in the investigation of 65 cases involving 86 children. Of the 91 missing children, 47 were female, 34 male and ten “unknown” gender. Of *all* the cases handled, *mothers* were the abductors more often than fathers.

Investigation and networking assistance was most often requested for cases originating in Ontario (49 per cent), Quebec (22 per cent), and British Columbia (12 per cent). See Table 1.

Assistance was requested most often in the months of January to April, with more reports in February and March. To explain this phenomenon, children are often reported missing following a holiday, such as Christmas, Easter, March or summer school break. Also, in the warmer weather more children are playing outdoors or away from home, some run away, which makes them more vulnerable to victimization.

Sixty-six per cent of the NMCS cases, compared to seventy-four per cent in 2006, were classified as *parental abductions*. Runaway reports increased from 9 per cent in 2006 to 18 per cent in 2007, and *stranger abduction* reports increased from two to five per cent during the same period of time.

In 2007, children under five represented 41 per cent of the cases in comparison to 47 per cent in 2006, and teenagers represented 25 per cent of the missing children cases compared to 32 per cent during the same period of time. More females than males were reported missing.

In 2007, assistance with investigations was requested more often for children aged four (10 requests), five and six (7 requests each), and ten (7 requests) years. In essence, in 2007, 75% were under the age of 12 years, as was the finding in 2006.

Table 1—2007 NMCS Assistance Requests from Canadian Law Enforcement by category, province and territory

	Number of cases													
PROFILE	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	Total
Parental	0	0	1	4	2	0	1	23	8	1	2	0	1	43
Mom	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	15	5	0	2	0	1	26
Dad	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	6	3	1	0	0	0	15
Both	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Runaway	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	12
Other	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	6
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Stranger	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
TOTAL	0	0	1	8	4	1	1	32	14	1	2	0	1	65
	Number of children													
PROFILE	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	Total
Parental	0	0	3	5	4	0	2	34	12	1	3	0	1	65
Mom	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	16	6	0	2	0	1	30
Dad	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	3	2	1	0	0	0	10
Both	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Runaway	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	12
Other	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	10
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Stranger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
TOTAL	0	0	3	9	8	1	2	45	18	1	3	0	1	*91

* 10 cases did not specify gender and/or age of child

The number of cases handled by NMCS has steadily decreased - a downward trend that began in 2002. This trend may be the result of ongoing training to Canadian law enforcement provided by NMCS operational staff. In 2006, the police computer system was changed to a new system, which could have affected the changes as well.

Table 2 is a comparison of the frequency of requests by year.

Table 2—Frequency of Requests for Assistance by Year and Total Cases

2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
65	100	127	130	142	175

2. United States Investigative Service Analysis

NMCS works closely with the United States law enforcement community and supports its partner service, the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Since the two countries share a common border, it is important for investigators to be vigilant and co-operative in their investigations in order to prevent illegal border crossings.

In 2007 368 United States cases involving 505 children were referred to NMCS for investigative assistance; an increase of 179 requests from 2006. Female missing children made up 286 of the cases, while male children made up 219. Forty-seven states requested assistance. Most of these cases originated from California (120), followed by Florida (54), and New York (35). Over the years, these States have consistently contacted NMCS for assistance with cases.

NMCS classified 63 per cent of the United States cases as *parental abduction*; 26 per cent as *runaway*; six per cent as *stranger abduction*; and four per cent as *unknown*.

In 2007, as compared to 2006, there was an increase in runaway requests —26 per cent compared to 20 per cent, and unknown requests - four per cent as compared to two per cent.

Of the 232 parental abduction cases handled by NMCS, 63 per cent involved abductions by mothers, a decrease of seven per cent from 2006, 35 per cent involved abductions by fathers an increase of nine per cent from 2006, and four per cent implicated both parents, which matched last years requests. Some other research findings also show that mothers are most often the abductor.

3. International Investigative Service Analysis (excluding the U. S.)

International requests for assistance continue to be an important component of the work done by NMCS. When a child is missing from another country and there is some indication the child may be in Canada, NMCS opens a file and assists with the investigation in Canada.

In 2007, NMCS assisted with 136 cases, involving 181 children, an increase of 20 requests from last year. NMCS assistance was requested for more cases involving missing female children than male. The average age of the missing children was eight years. More children went missing at ages four to eight years.

In 2007, there were 91 parental abduction assistance requests, an increase of 16 cases from 2006. Fifty-two per cent of these requests involved mothers as abductors, and 46 per cent fathers. Forty countries requested NMCS assistance with their investigations, including France (22), Belgium (19) Mexico (10) and Spain (10). The requests from France, Belgium and Mexico increased by about 50 per cent from 2006.

Sixty-seven per cent of the international cases were classified by NMCS as parental abduction; nine per cent as runaway; 15 per cent as stranger abduction; four per cent as unknown; and six per cent as other.

Analysis II CPIC Data Collection and Analysis

CPIC entries are made by accredited police agencies in Canada when there is a need to utilize this service. In addition to other information, the CPIC system houses the national data base on missing children (See Appendix 1 for a comparison of reports by year, and Appendix 2 for the 2007 CPIC total missing children reports by category, province and gender).

The total number of missing children reports increased from 60,461 reports in 2006 to 60,582 in 2007. The number of missing children reports in all categories of missing increased, with the exception of the parental abduction and runaway categories. An analysis of CPIC 2007 missing children reports by category is as follows:

Runaway reports

- *Runaways* make up the greatest number of missing reports, 76%.
- 58% of the children entered in the *runaway* category were female and 42% were males.
- 52% of the females were ages 14 and 15 years old, 32% were between 16 and 17 years, and 1.5% were under 11 years old.
- 47% of the males were 14 and 15, 36% 16 and 17, and 3.3% were under 11 years old.
- Over 82% of both males and females had a history of repeat or chronic running episodes. Only 17% had no history of running away.
- 30% were reported as missing from the family residence and 20% from a foster home.
- Ontario (16,424), Alberta (9,993), British Columbia (8,381) and Quebec (5,163) had the most reports.
- Of the runaway reports 63% were removed within 24 hours. Some of these reports may include missing reports of children running away in previous years and located in 2007 and in 2006, more females than males were abducted.

Parental Abduction

- *Parental abduction* reports decreased by 41 reports this year - to 285 from 326 in 2006.
- 154 males and 131 females were reported missing. This is different than 2004 and 2005 as males and females were abducted equally.
- 107 of the reports had a custody order in place, and 178 had no custody order in place.
- 44% of the children were under the age of 5 years, 31% between 6 and 11 and 25% between 12 and 17 years old.
- Elementary school age children were more likely to be abducted than children over 12 years of age.
- 85% had no history of missing, and 15% had a history.
- 69% went missing from their family residence and 4% from a foster home or the school premises.
- Ontario (120), Quebec (84), Alberta (30) and British Columbia (27) had the most reports.
-

Stranger abduction

There were 56 reports entered in the *stranger abduction* category, which includes abductions by strangers, relatives and close friends. This year showed an increase of 10 reports whereas last year, 2006, there was an increase of 16 reports from 2005. An analysis of the information available on these reports showed that there were four children reported missing between the ages of one and five years (the majority located), five between the ages of six and 12 (the majority located), and the remainder were mostly older teenagers (the majority located). Only one Quebec child was still missing in January 2008. As well, an infant was abducted from an Ontario hospital, located several hours later, and safely returned to its parents.

- 34 females and 22 males were reported missing.
- 39% were under the age of one, and 29% were 14 and 15 years of age.
- 64% had no previous history of missing and 36% had a history.
- 71% went missing from their family residence or foster home.
- Ontario (17), Alberta (17) had the most reports.

Unknown

There were 11,216 unknown reports, an increase of 455 reports from last year. This category is used when there is no previous record of the missing child. Also, there is insufficient background information to enable coding the missing incident under any of the other causes. More female than male children were reported missing. The females were more often younger than the males -14 and 15 years-old as compared to 16 and 17 years-old. Over half the missing reports were characterized by “repeat, chronic or habitual” missing.

Accident

- There were 33 *accident* reports, an increase of 9 from last year. The probable cause of the missing incident is an accident where the body has not been recovered.

Wandered off

- There were 576 *wandered off* reports in 2007, an increase of 9 reports from last year. The wandered off category is used when it is presumed the child has wandered away and not returned when expected. Feedback received from the Canadian law enforcement community has revealed that this category is sometimes used to enter youth who are missing from social service care.

Other

- There were 2,227 *reports classified as other*, an increase of 18 reports from last year. This category is used when a child/youth has not returned to a detention home or institution housing young offenders.

Reports of All Categories of Missing Children

An analysis of CPIC 2007 missing children reports by combining *all categories* of missing shows:

- 82% of all missing children reports involved children ages 14 to 17 years, with more missing reports entered in CPIC in the 14- and 15-year old category.
- 77% of all missing children reports had repeat or habitual characteristics of missing. The remaining 23% per cent had no previous history of missing.
- Children under five years of age represented 1.3% of the total number of all missing children reports. More males (404) than females (366) were reported missing under the age of 5 years. This is a change from last year as more females than males were reported missing.

- More females (244) than males (236) were reported missing under the age of 1 year, a change from last year. Also, the reporting of children missing under the age of 1 year increased in 2007.
- 33% of the children went missing from their family residence while some went missing from a type of arranged care—12% from child care and 21% from foster care.
- 21% went missing from institutions - school, detention and youth centres and those classified as “other” institutions. Less than 1% of all missing children went missing from a shopping mall, place of work, or while on a vacation.
- Law enforcement agencies cited alcohol or drug dependency as a problem in 20% of missing children reports.
- 57,673 transactions were removed from the CPIC system in 2007. Sixty-five per cent were removed in the first 24 hours of having been reported missing, and 88% were removed within a week.*

**The 2007 “remove” transactions may include children entered in previous years but who were found in 2007 and then removed.*

Programs, Services and Initiatives

NMCS and its partner agencies offer the following services to law enforcement agencies and families.

1. The Travel Reunification Program

NMCS administers a Travel Reunification Program which provides travel assistance for parents who cannot afford to travel within Canada or abroad to reunite with their child and bring them home. Certain criteria must be met to qualify and the travel is subject to availability.

The Travel Reunification Program is coordinated with a transportation company and no funds are exchanged between the parent and NMCS. All arrangements must be made through NMCS services during its regular business hours, and it should be noted that the process *may* take approximately 48 hours. NMCS does not reimburse parents who have made prior flight arrangements.

In 2007, three parents or guardians used this program to transport four children home safely. The provinces using the program were Nova Scotia (1 trip, 2 children), New Brunswick (1), and Quebec (1).

2. The Canadian and International Amber Alert Program

The America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert program is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin when a serious child-abduction case is reported to police.

The plan was originally developed in 1996 following a search for nine year-old Amber Hagerman. While riding her bicycle near her home, Amber was kidnapped and murdered. Following this incident, citizens designed a search plan that involved community resources and the media. By using television, radio and the electronic highway signs, an abductor may be located more quickly.

The following basic criteria must be met before law enforcement can initiate an Amber Alert:

- The child must be under 18 years of age.
- There must be confirmation that the child has been abducted.
- Police must have sufficient descriptors to make a search for the child possible, such as descriptions of the child, abductor, accomplices, or the suspect's vehicle.
- Most importantly, police must judge that the child is in serious danger or risk of harm, and be convinced the broadcast will help find the child.

In 2007, there were 4 Amber Alert activations in the following provinces: Ontario (1), British Columbia (1), Alberta (1), and Quebec (1), involving 6 children. Two females and four male children were abducted. Three abductors were strangers to the child and one was the child's mother.

Since 2002, there have been 29 Amber Alert activations in Canada—four in 2003, three in 2004, six in 2005, 12 in 2006 and four in 2007. An Amber Alert was issued 29 times for 35 children (19 females and 16 males). Twenty-six were recovered alive and three were found deceased.

For more information on the Amber Alert Plan, contact the National Amber Alert Coordinator at National Missing Children Services, National Police Services (613) 993-8656 or toll free at 1-877-318-3576.

3. Photo-Age Progression Service

NMCS provides a photo-age progression service for all Canadian law enforcement agencies and not-for-profit searching agencies. This service renders a likeness of what a child who went missing some time ago might look like today. Certain criteria must be met before the process is activated. For example, the child has to be missing for a

minimum of two years. Canadian forensic artists perform the photo-age progression. In 2006, four requests were processed.

4. The Air Canada Kids' Horizon—RCMP Child Recovery Award Initiative

The *Child Recovery Award* recognizes the work and efforts of a Canadian individual or Canadian organization in the search for and safe recovery of a missing child or children.

The award includes two hospitality class tickets from Air Canada. Tickets are valid to any Air Canada scheduled destination (blackout periods and restrictions apply). The 2007 recipient of the award was Cst. Holly Marks. She played a pivotal role in the development of the AMBER Alert plan in the Pacific Region, "E" Division. She provided leadership to the development team and helped cultivate essential operational partnerships with media, transportation, corporations and government agencies.

5. Law Enforcement Officials Training Service

National Missing Children Services provides a two-day training workshop several times a year for investigators, law-enforcement representatives, and other individuals who are working in the field of missing children.

The goal of the course is to sensitize participants to the missing child investigative process as it relates to criminal and/or civil proceedings. This workshop is designed to provide the participants with additional tools needed to more efficiently and effectively conduct their investigation. An overview is given of the various resources available, such as the federal government, program partners, recognized not-for-profit agencies, government assistance agencies and other resources that can be used to augment investigations. In 2007, two training workshops were conducted, one in British Columbia and one in Ontario, involving 60 law enforcement personnel.

6. Missing Children Internet-Luring Investigative Assistance

Internet luring has become a major concern as it relates to missing and exploited children and youth. In this scenario, a stranger develops a relationship with the child over the Internet without ever meeting face-to-face. Then, attempts are made to meet the child in secret, placing the child in a position of vulnerability and danger.

From 2000 to 2007, NMCS assisted with the investigation of 29 Internet-luring investigations. NMCS luring cases are now investigated in co-operation with its partner service, National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC), National Police Services, RCMP.

In response to an investigator's request for assistance, a NMCS operational analyst

may investigate by:

- checking available databases to gather information;
- soliciting border, immigration, foreign affairs, and justice services expertise;
- advising or acting on the information gathered from the investigation;
- liaising with Interpol and the investigator in the destination country of the child;
- advising the National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC), if exploitation is an anticipated component of the case;
- providing advice on avenues to conduct searches; and
- Liaising with not-for-profit agencies as required.

The Internet is a powerful learning tool but parents need to *be informed* about Internet advancements, set the rules of use, be alert to any changes in behaviour, and attentive to other noticeable changes, such as the use of inappropriate language or dress for the child's age group. Keeping a child out of harm's way is the key to their safety. For your education, NMCS has produced a *safety tips booklet*, which is posted on its website at www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca. The safety tips booklet is also available by calling 613-993-2699.

7. National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC) Service

The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC) was created in response to the growing and disturbing crime of Internet-facilitated child sexual exploitation. The Center's mandate is to reduce the vulnerability of children to Internet-facilitated sexual exploitation by identifying victimized children; investigating and assisting in the prosecution of sexual offenders; and strengthening the capacity of municipal, territorial, provincial, federal, and international police agencies through training, research, and investigative support. Although the mandate is broad, initiatives in a variety of specialized areas have been identified to meet the needs of law enforcement working in this area. Subsequent reports will incorporate results as performance measures are currently being established.

In its brief period of operation, the NCECC has established itself as a credible, necessary, and valuable Centre. The NCECC provides a multitude of services to the Canadian law enforcement community, and the level of cooperation in this field is reported as previously unprecedented.

Current services now include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the ability to respond immediately to a child at risk in Canada or internationally;

- the ability to expeditiously verify, triage, and disseminate national and international complaints;
- assistance via the NCECC Victim Identification Unit specializing in victim identification;
- major case management and covert capacity;
- the ability to manage multi-suspect, multi-jurisdictional cases;
- the continuous development and delivery of leading edge training;
- the co-development and implementation of an operational intelligence solution;
- sharing intelligence among Canadian law enforcement agencies through the

Child Exploitation Tracking System (CETS);

- the development and sharing of best practices, training, and technologies;
- the ability to influence and bring forward required legislation;
- the provision of media strategies on major cases;
- provision of up-to-date research on these crimes nationally and internationally; and,
- the forging of partnerships with industry, international law enforcement, and NGO's (non-government organizations)

The NCECC works closely with NMCS to combat Internet-facilitated sexual criminal activity that targets, exploits, victimizes, and abuses children and youth. The NCECC is also a partner in the Virtual Global Task force (VGT), an international law enforcement working group contributing to increasing safety on the Internet. Additionally, the NCECC is an integral part of the Canadian Coalition against Internet Child Exploitation working group that is partnering with Industry Canada in various efforts. For more information, please consult www.ncecc.ca and www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com.

Since the Centre began operation, Canadian investigators from all agencies successfully identified 216 Canadian children who were victims of sexual abuse.

8. Not-for-Profit Organization Liaison on Investigative Matters, Reunification Situations and Crime Prevention Initiatives

NMCS liaises with not-for-profit organizations regularly to facilitate co-operation between the agencies and the police community. Several Canadian agencies meet a pre-set criteria for recognition by NMCS and they are listed under the heading "Recognized Organizations" on our website www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca.

Their activities and services vary. They include searching for the missing child, distributing and posting photos, meeting and advising parents, conducting and supporting research studies, conducting crime prevention projects, and working with police to plan and carry out reunions.

9. International Partnerships—The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children LOCATOR program

National Missing Children Services works closely with United States law enforcement agencies and the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in searching, recovering and returning missing children. Ongoing liaison between the two countries has proven effective in finding missing children who may have crossed over borders, either on their own or with a parent or stranger.

NCMEC coordinates the efforts of law enforcement, social service agencies, elected officials, judges, prosecutors, educators, the public and private sectors in the United States in an effort to break the cycles that historically perpetuate crimes against children.

NCMEC also offers assistance with poster distribution to NMCS through its LOCATOR program. This is an advanced, Web-based computer program offered to law enforcement agencies free of charge. It helps agencies create and distribute professional looking posters across the nation. Currently, the LOCATOR program is used in more than 4,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States, and several in Canada. Canadian law enforcement agencies can also take advantage of the NCMEC services to produce Amber Alert posters at no cost.

NCMEC sponsors yearly training for the Canadian Amber Alert coordinators at various locations throughout the United States. These meetings provide participants with regular updates on search techniques, help identify pitfalls and assist in making the necessary revisions to improve the program.

To contact a NMCS partner agency, call the toll-free hotline 1-800-THE-LOST or 1-800-843-5678, which is available in Canada and the United States 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information about missing and exploited children can be reported via a CyberTipline at <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

10. Trafficking Of Canadian Children Liaison

National Missing Children Services has closely monitored its missing children files for indications of domestic and international trafficking of children. In 2007, 4 cases involving 5 children were flagged by operational analysts as possible trafficking cases. The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre and the RCMP Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre, Immigration and Passport Branch, work closely with NMCS on these cases in an effort to locate and protect victimized children.

11. NMCS Government Department Working Partnerships

The search for and return of a missing child requires co-operation and collaboration among the following agencies: Canada Border Services Agency; Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; and the Department of Justice Canada. The main duties of these departments are as follows:

Canada Border Services Agency

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) ensures that officers located at points of entry to Canada are trained in identifying and handling situations involving abducted or runaway children. A national coordinator and eight regional representatives work to provide timely information and tools to support the efforts of its officers. In cases where information is received by CBSA about a missing child or a suspected abductor, the coordinators will issue lookouts and notify border points. Recoveries of children are reported and shared within CBSA and with partner organizations.

Beyond CBSA's internal efforts, bulletins, reports, newsletters and best practices are shared nationally and internationally. Ongoing efforts to work with not-for-profit missing children organizations and the distribution of missing children posters will continue. CBSA also provides advice and guidance to parents of abducted children regarding the procedures to follow when a child is missing.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is actively involved in 180 foreign countries. These offices provide different levels of services to Canadians abroad. The Consular Affairs Bureau assists with international child abduction cases from Hague and non-Hague countries international child abduction cases through the Consular Affairs Bureau and its network of diplomatic and consular offices in over 275 locations in approximately.

The Consular Affairs Bureau provides 24-hour, 7-day-a-week assistance through the Foreign Affairs Canada Operations Centre. It works closely with its network of diplomatic and consular offices abroad, which provide assistance in locating abducted Canadian children by working with local authorities and/or other organizations. It offers a broad range of services to left-behind parents, such as confirming the entry of the abducted child into the foreign country, locating and visiting the abducted child, and reporting on the child's welfare.

FAC assists with arrangements for the reunification of a child with a parent in cases where the courts in the other country have either granted the Canadian parent custody and/or recognized a Canadian custody order. It can determine, by liaising with the Passport Office and/or foreign diplomatic or consular offices in Canada, which travel

documentation, were used by the abducted child. It does this by providing information on the country where the child was retained and then entering this information on its legal and family laws system.

The Department of Justice Canada

The Department of Justice Canada (DOJ) has both an operational and a policy role in missing and abducted children's issues.

Part of the Department's operational role relates to the *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*, which applies in all provinces and territories of Canada. The Convention aims to secure the prompt return of children removed to or retained in breach of rights of custody in any country that is a contracting state to the Convention. The Convention also promotes the peaceful enjoyment of rights of access.

In Canada, there is a Central Authority in every province and territory whose duties include filing "outgoing" Hague applications regarding children who have been abducted and taken out of Canada, and processing "incoming" applications regarding children who have been abducted and brought into Canada.

There is also a Federal Central Authority, whose duties complement the work of the provincial and territorial Central Authorities. Those duties include liaison and coordination with provinces, territories, foreign authorities, other government departments and non-governmental groups on policy and in some cases, individual cases, as well as public education and promotion of the Convention.

The Department of Justice is also responsible for seeking the extradition of persons sought for prosecution, or the imposition or enforcement of sentence. Requests for extradition are made to a foreign state at the request of the competent Attorney General when the person is sought for prosecution or imposition of sentence, or at the request of the competent correctional authority when the person is sought for the enforcement of sentence. The extradition process does not address the return of the missing or abducted child. Rather, the purpose of seeking extradition is to return the alleged abductor to Canada to face trial or for the imposition or enforcement of sentence.

On the policy side, Family, Children and Youth Section of Justice has responsibilities for Canadian federal family law, including the parenting provisions of the *Divorce Act*.

In addition, the Department's International Private Law Section (IPL) is responsible for negotiating private international law instruments dealing with family law including *the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* and related issues, such as, trans-frontier access. The IPL Section also advises DOJ on the interpretation of the Hague Convention and leads the consultations within Canada to prepare for Special Commissions to review the practical operation of the Hague Convention.

See the Department of Justice Canada link on the *Our Missing Children* website at <http://www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca> and follow the links to: www.canada.justice.gc.ca .

Research Update

I. Parental Abduction

In 2007, a descriptive study on parental abduction was completed by the National Missing Children Services researcher. The study showed the nature of the problem, and its impact in Canadian left-behind parents and their abducted children. The results identified some pitfalls in the system.

The principle research findings were as follows:

- Most couples were separated or divorced at the time of the abduction. They described their relationship as “poor”.
- Over half the left-behind parents had a yearly income of more than \$25,000.
- Left-behind parents reported experienced a financial strain directly related to the search and recovery process.
- The estimated search and recovery cost was about \$30,000.
- Slightly more boys than girls were abducted. The average age of the child was eight years.
- All the parents felt their child suffered emotional harm as a result of the abduction.
- About one third of the children were found in Canada, about the same in the United States, and about one quarter in other countries.
- Half the children were located in less than a year.
- Parents found the search and judicial process complex and frustrating.

Discussion:

Researchers have suggested that victims of long-term recovery tended to fair worse than those who were recovered quickly, supporting the importance of a *quick start* in an investigation.

The abduction act is not usually an impulsive act but a premeditated-type conspiracy. The aim of the authorities handling these cases is to provide a search and recovery situation that is as stress-free as possible.

The parents' written comments revealed a sense of frustration with the search and judicial process. They expressed that they felt powerless and frustrated with a system that was complex, challenging and unsupportive. The situation was exceptionally stressful when they suspected the child might be or was taken to another country, as they were obliged to deal with cultural and language differences. Often they were not prepared nor did they have the finances to deal with the ensuing problems.

To alleviate some of this frustration, authorities must act on a missing child report as soon as possible. Police officials must view the abduction report as serious and not assume the child is safe with the other parent. An immediate missing child report entry in the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system, and a prompt request for a bor-

der alert, both constitute vital steps in an effort to stop an abductor from leaving the country.

Parents most often use police, legal and not-for-profit agency services. Half of the left-behind parents in this study were satisfied with the police and legal services help, and about one third with children's aid services. Almost all respondents were satisfied with the help they received from the not-for-profit searching agencies.

When the child is found, reunification plans must be developed. It is important for the child not to witness the abductor being apprehended or a parent being restrained or handcuffed. Careful planning minimizes separation anxiety.

The left-behind parent, and the located child's separation period, were not as long when the country involved was a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction - as compared to non-Hague countries.

All the children involved in this study were living in Canada at the time of the abduction, but 63 per cent were found in another country. Over half of the left-behind parents reported there was a known reason or connection to the place where the child was eventually located.

Parental abduction is an emotionally charged experience for all involved. To protect the well-being of Canadian families, the missing report must be acted upon quickly and effectively. National Missing Children Services, National Police Service, RCMP can provide investigational support. Police can access this service 24/7 by calling 1-877-318-3576 or 613-993-1525.

This research study is posted in English and French at www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca and available at the Canadian Police College Library, Ottawa, Ontario.

II. Infant abduction From Canadian Hospitals

The abduction of a newborn from the hospital maternity ward is a rare occurrence in Canada. To date, from 1991 to 2007, seven newborns have been abducted from hospitals, 5 by strangers, and 2 by a parent or person known to the family.

In 2007, a newborn was abducted from a northern Ontario hospital. After distracting the mother for a few minutes, a woman posing as a nurse slipped out of the hospital with the newborn. Fortunately, the cleaning staff noticed a woman walking down the hospital corridor with a baby in her arms - a practice contrary to hospital protocol as babies were required by staff to be transported in a bassinet. This irregularity triggered an alarm for a possible abduction.

Nonetheless, the abductor was able to leave the hospital unchallenged and traveled many hours to another Ontario town. An AMBER alert was activated immediately and a province-wide search began.

Fortunately, the search was successful and the baby was returned to its parents unharmed. A 29-year-old woman was taken into custody and charged with abduction.

Following this incident, hospital officials reviewed their security procedures. This review resulted in an ankle tag requirement for all newborns. Also, several other important changes were implemented to better guarantee the safety of newborns.

The typical hospital abduction may involve a stranger. These persons sometimes pose as an employee, nurse or relative in order to gain access to the baby. A few studies showed that only a few perpetrators pose as hospital staff, but an analysis of Canadian cases showed half of the offenders were impersonators. Worthy of note is the fact that an abductor may use a hospital-like photo ID as part of a scam to gain access to the maternity ward. Since many new mothers want to keep their babies in their room, instead of leaving them in a supervised nursery, it is easier for an abductor to con the infant from its mother's care. The impersonator usually requests the newborn be taken from the mother's care for hospital tests, photos, and the like.

The abductors are usually females who really want a baby of their own. They are often overweight, compulsive, impersonators, married or cohabitating, and live in the community where the abduction takes place. They plan the abduction by visiting the hospital frequently and learning as much as possible about procedure, staff roles and floor plans. The perpetrators range from family members to unrelated childless couples making perverse attempts to procure a baby. Some abductors are pregnant and then have a miscarriage, others are not able to have children at all, while still others fake pregnancy and after nine months are obliged to produce a baby somehow. Nonetheless, in most situations the abductor cares for the baby's needs well.

Officials of the National Missing Children Services, RCMP in Canada and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the United States recommend that mothers and families **MUST** visually inspect staff photo ID badges. The nurse should present the badge to the mother and encourage the newborn's mother and family members to carefully scrutinize and memorize the badge details. Also, it is extremely important for personnel to use specific color coding and/or unique dress designs for uniforms, which identifies them as the authority designated to handle and/or transport a newborn.

For information on "Safety Tips for Expectant Parents," please consult the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children web site at www.missingkids.com.

Appendix 1

Canadian Missing Children Reports Summary CPIC Year-end Transaction Reports for 2007

Frequency by Category and by Year Reported Missing

Profile	Kidnap	PA	Run	Unknown	Acc	Wander	Other	Total
2007	56	285	46,189	11,216	33	576	2,227	60,582
2006	46	326	46,728	10,761	24	567	2,009	60,461
2005	30	349	51,280	12,079	45	704	2,061	66,548
2004	31	332	52,280	11,373	27	671	2,552	67,266
2003	39	358	53,459	10,922	21	805	2,205	67,809
2002	35	429	52,390	10,994	38	594	2,052	66,532
2001	48	387	53,434	10,364	49	742	1,990	66,994
2000	42	416	50,633	10,031	35	597	1,958	63,712
1999	52	358	47,585	9,884	38	496	1,947	60,360
1998	42	426	48,388	10,254	28	623	2,326	62,087
1997	60	426	45,527	9,404	37	506	2,138	58,098
1996	45	409	43,717	9,181	34	822	1,914	56,122
1995	68	354	43,709	9,039	35	720	1,824	55,749

Kidnap= kidnapping/stranger abduction, PA=parental abduction, Run=runaways, Acc= accident, Wander =Wandered Off Source: CPIC annual transaction report 2007, M.L.Dalley

*** The rise in stranger abduction occurrences may be influenced by new scoring procedures.**

Appendix 2

All of Canada Reports of Missing Children for Year 2007

Cases on CPIC, Year-end Reports by Category, Province and Gender

Females														
Profile	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Totals
Stranger	0	1	0	1	10	2	2	12	5	0	0	0	1	34
Accident	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	11
Wandered	0	1	0	78	48	7	4	132	12	0	0	1	0	283
Parental	0	0	0	12	16	5	3	53	35	2	1	2	2	131
Runaway	4	48	0	5,140	5,611	1,327	2,029	9,425	2,518	232	34	236	101	26,705
Unknown	1	19	0	2,624	374	318	231	1,906	697	30	4	38	19	6,261
Other	0	1	0	328	44	17	12	492	299	3	2	11	4	1,213
Totals	5	70	0	8,189	6,103	1,676	2,281	12,022	3,569	267	41	288	127	34,638

Males														
Profile	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Totals
Stranger	1	0	0	4	7	3	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	22
Accident	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	12	2	0	0	0	2	22
Wandered	0	1	0	66	33	17	5	146	22	1	0	2	0	293
Parental	0	1	0	15	14	4	2	67	49	2	0	0	0	154
Runaway	0	45	0	3,241	4,382	839	960	6,999	2,645	225	9	89	50	19,484
Unknown	0	16	0	1,791	277	238	120	1,651	782	36	0	30	14	4,955
Other	0	1	0	266	36	5	6	391	291	5	1	12	1	1,014
Totals	1	63	0	5,386	4,750	1,106	1,095	9,271	3,791	271	10	133	67	25,944

Totals														
Profile	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Totals
Stranger	1	1	0	5	17	5	2	17	5	2	0	0	1	56
Accident	0	0	0	9	1	0	2	14	5	0	0	0	2	33
Wandered	0	2	0	144	81	24	9	278	34	1	0	3	0	576
Parental	0	1	0	27	30	9	5	120	84	4	1	2	2	285
Runaway	4	93	0	8,381	9,993	2,166	2,989	16,424	5,163	457	43	325	151	46,189
Unknown	1	35	0	4,415	651	556	351	3,557	1,479	66	4	68	33	11,216
Other	0	1	0	594	80	22	18	883	590	8	3	23	5	2,227
Totals	6	133	0	13,575	10,853	2,782	3,376	21,293	7,360	538	51	421	194	60,582