

**National Missing Children Services  
2004 Reference Report**

**National Missing Children Services  
..... an integral part of Canada's National Police Services**

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## **Introduction:**

The number of missing children reports has been fairly consistent over the past decade. Although many parents often fear their child will be abducted by a stranger, this does not occur very often. In fact, parental abduction incidents have decreased considerably over the last decade and runaway youth continue to account for a greater number of children reported missing. They run away from home generating the most reports but the majority of children and youth are located in a day or two after leaving.

Most of the runaways are classified as chronic and habitual runners. One third have never run away before, therefore they are more vulnerable to victimization as they are usually not as "street smart" as youth who habitually run away from home. Over 85 % of the missing children and youth reports entered in the system, are removed from the Canadian Police Information Centre within a week.

## **Executive Summary**

Since the 1988 official opening of the National Police Service, National Missing Children Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police good progress has been made in addressing issues related to missing and exploited children. In 1990 a photo-age progression service was developed. This was followed by the implementation of a Travel program in 1991 to financially assist parents in Canada or abroad to reunite with their child and return to their home. Furthermore, in 1993 the our missing children (OMC) program was launched and expanded over the next eight years to include, in order of joining, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Service Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada and Department of Justice Canada. Also, a training workshop manual was developed and extensive national and international law enforcement training conducted. To advance upon our service and work in partnership with the not-for-profit sector, several searching agencies were recognized as vital to the search and recovery process. In October 2004, National Missing Children Services was amalgamated with another National Police Service, The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre. This partnership maximized the potential of NMCS missing children investigative services.

The frequency of missing children reports have remained fairly consistent over the last decade, averaging 62,473 reports at year end yearly. Parental abduction numbers were at an all time low as was the kidnaping reports. Since 2000, the runaway reports tend to be higher averaging 52,439 reports in the last five years, an average rise of 6,654 reports over the previous five years.

Research finding showed that stereotypical stranger abductions were rare, approximately 3 yearly. These abductions attracted media attention because the child was most often murdered. Elementary school age children, especially girls around the ages of 10 to 12 years, are more at risk of abduction by strangers and acquaintances. During this developmental stage, children are more likely to be playing or walking to school or activities alone. Middle and high school age girls are more at risk of abduction and assault, which is most often sexually motivated.

Parental abduction incidents typically occur between the period of separation and divorce of a couple. Most researchers agree they have difficulty working out solutions that are mutually agreeable. Abductors tend to plan the abduction alone, but following the abduction receive help and support from family and friends. Mothers tend to abduct more often than fathers. Most children are either very young or in elementary school when they are abducted.

Runaway reports comprise the greatest number of missing reports. Furthermore, runaway children are habitual runners. One child can generate many reports therefore, the number of reports do not represent individual children missing. More females than males run away. Most runaways are in their early teen years.

For the most part, children do not run away unless they are experiencing some serious problems. The problems are often associated with the stressors originating from home, school, community and peers. Running away is perceived to be a way of coping, as well as drawing attention to their problem.

It is important to note that first time runners are at considerable risk of victimization. The longer a child is living on the street, the less contact they have with family and other support systems, the more likely they are at risk of serious harm. As well, youth who runaway repeatedly tend to have experienced serious and prolonged problems and conflict more often than those who runaway only once or twice.

International requests for assistance with missing children investigations continue to be an important part of the work of NMCS. Additionally, the service shares its experiences with other countries and advises on program and service development as requested. In 2004, NMCS assisted with 457 cases involving 573 children, and shared its experiences and service opportunities at 5 international events.

NMCS is committed to supporting initiatives and programs that will ensure the safety of children. The safe return of missing children will be realized through the cooperative efforts of the our missing children program partners, the National Child Exploitation Coordination Center services, the services of the not-for-profit searching agencies, and the international network.

## **Data Collection**

This report analysis will be divided into two sections.

The first is an analysis of the National Missing Children Services (NMCS) operational files as generated from the Police Information Retrieval System, or internal monitoring system. These files include the figures of domestic and international investigations.

The second is a national missing children and youth police occurrence reports perspective as generated from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system.

## **Analysis I**

### **National Missing Children Services Internal Monitoring System**

#### **Canadian Investigative Services**

In 2004, National Missing Children Services (NMCS) assisted in the investigation of 130 cases involving 173 children. Investigation and networking assistance was requested more often with cases originating from Ontario and Quebec, followed by British Columbia and Alberta. Of the 173 missing children, 94 were females and 79 males. Children around the age of 3, 6, 10 and 14 years of age were more often reported missing; males clustered around the age of 6 years and females around the age of 14 years.

Fifty-four percent of all the cases handled by NMCS were classified as parental abductions. Of the 54%, mothers were the abductors in 42% of cases, while fathers were the abductors in 10% of the cases, and both parents were implicated in 2% of the cases. Both fathers and mothers abduct males more often than females.

Twenty-three percent of the NMCS cases were classified as runaway children, 3% were classified as unknown, and 2 % were classified as stranger abductions. There was a slight increase in 2004 in the number of runaway cases handled by NMCS which had decreased from 2002 to 2003. The "trace and locate" requests comprised 18% of the cases. This is a service provided to law enforcement which differs from missing children investigations.

The number of cases handled by NMCS decreased by 12 cases from 2003 to 2004. This was mainly due to a slight decrease in the number of parental abductions and "trace and locate" cases handled. The breakdown of cases over a five year span is as follows: 2000 - 142 cases; 2001- 142 cases; 2002 - 175 cases; 2003 - 142 cases; and 2004 -130 cases.

Forty percent of the cases were closed in one month or less, 88% in a year, and 95% within 3 years.

Table 1

**NMCS Canadian Case Workload by Province and Profile 2004**

TOTAL CASES														
PROFILE	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	TOTAL
Parental	1	0	0	8	9	0	3	41	6	1	1	0	0	70
Mom	1	0	0	6	8	0	3	30	5	1	1	0	0	55
Dad	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	13
Both	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Runaway	0	0	0	5	1	2	0	11	9	1	1	0	0	30
Other	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	11	7	0	1	0	0	24
Unknown	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Stranger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	1	0	0	15	13	3	4	67	22	2	3	0	0	130

TOTAL CHILDREN														
PROFILE	YT	NT	NU	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	TOTAL
Parental	1	0	0	13	11	0	4	62	9	2	1	0	0	103
Mom	1	0	0	10	10	0	4	47	7	2	1	0	0	82
Dad	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	12	2	0	0	0	0	18
Both	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Runaway	0	0	0	5	1	2	0	11	9	1	1	0	0	30
Other	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	14	9	0	2	0	0	32
Unknown	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	6
Stranger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	1	0	0	21	15	3	6	93	27	3	4	0	0	173

United States of America Investigative Assistance

In 2004, 348 United States cases involving 434 children were referred to NMCS for investigative assistance. Female children made up 259 of the cases, whereas male children made up 175. More females ran away than males, and more females were thought to be abducted by a stranger than males. This finding is consistent with other research findings.



The requests for assistance decreased by 15 from 2003. In 2000, investigative assistance was provided for 275 cases, in 2001, 359 cases, in 2002, 319 cases, and in 2003, 363 cases. The majority of these cases originated from California, followed by New York, Texas and Florida. This trend is consistent with 2003 findings.

Fifty-six percent of the United States cases were classified as parental abductions; 24% runaways, 11% as stranger abductions; 2% as other; 6% as unknown; 0.3% as accident, and 0.3% as wandered off. The close proximity and vastness of the border which divides the two countries, necessitates good law enforcement and border services for all types of investigations, but particularly for runaway youth.

Of the 196 parental abduction cases handled by NMCS, 63% of cases involved mothers abducting their children, 33% of cases involved fathers abducting their children, and in 4% of cases implicated both parents in the abduction act. The majority of the abductors were mothers which is consistent with other research findings.

#### International Law Enforcement Assistance (excluding the United States of America)

In 2004, NMCS assisted with 109 cases, involving 139 children. This is a decrease from previous years. In 2000, investigative assistance was provided for 143 cases, in 2001, 136 cases, in 2002, 144 cases, and in 2003, 131 cases.

The majority of the cases originated from Sweden (10), Belgium (9), Bulgaria (8) and the Netherlands (8). Fifty-eight percent of the international cases were categorized as parental abduction, 14% as runaway, 13% as stranger abduction, 7% as other, 6% as unknown, and 2% as accident. NMCS was requested to assist in more cases involving missing females than males. Most males were clustered around the ages of 5 and 8 years, whereas the females were ages 4, 14 and 15 years.

In 2004, there were 63 parental abduction assistance requests. This is a slight decrease from 2003 of 77 cases. Mothers (31) and fathers (32) tend to equally abduct their children. This finding is consistent with other research studies.

Stranger abduction assistance requests increased from 9 in 2003 to 14 in 2004. More females than males, 11 and 3 respectively, were abducted by strangers.

Please see Table 2 as follows.

# **NMCS International Case Workload by Country and Profile for 2004**

## **TOTAL CASES**

COUNTRY	PARENTAL	RUNAWAY	OTHER	UNKNOWN	STRANGER	ACCIDENT	TOTAL
Algeria	1						1
Argentina	2				1		3
Australia			1				1
Austria	1						1
Belgium	7	2					9
Brazil				1			1
Bulgaria	1	1	1		3	2	8
Burkina Faso		1					1
Chile	1		1		3		5
Colombia	2						2
Costa Rica	1						1
Czech Republic		2					2
Denmark	4						4
France	4	1	1		1		7
Germany	1						1
Ghana			1				1
Greece	1						1
Honduras	1						1
Hungary	1						1
Israel	2	1					3
Italy	2			1			3
Mexico	3		1				4
Morocco	1						1
Nepal				1			1
Netherlands	4	4					8
New Zealand	1						1
Nicaragua	2						2
Panama					1		1
Peru	1				1		2
Poland				1			1
Portugal	1				1		2
Romania					1		1
Russia	1						1
Serbia&Montenegro	1						1
Slovakia		1					1
South Africa	2				1		3
Spain	2						2
Sweden	8	2					10
Turkey	1						1
Ukraine				2			2
United Kingdom	2		1	1	1		5
Uruguay			1				1

Venezuela	1						1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>109</b>

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## Analysis II

### Canadian Police Information Centre Year End Report (CPIC)

#### Canadian Investigative Reporting

CPIC entries are made by accredited police agencies in Canada. The CPIC system houses a national data base on missing children. The number of transactions have remained fairly consistent over the past decade (See Appendix 1).

In 2004, the total number of missing children reports decreased from 67,809 to 67,266 (See Appendix 2). These numbers reflect an increase in the number of accidents, unknown missing and the other category of missing. On the other hand, kidnaping, parental abduction, runaway and wandered off reports decreased.

In 2004, parental abductions incidents were at their lowest in five years. In 2000, there were 416 reports; 2001, 387 reports; 2002, 429 reports; 2003, 358 reports; and 2004, 332 reports. Ontario consistently had the most reports, followed by Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta respectively.

An analysis of all missing children reports is as follows:

- 78% of missing children reports involve runaway children, 18 years of age and under. The number decreased from the previous years from 53,459 in 2003 to 52,280 in 2004.
- Of the 67,266 transactions of all missing children reports, 76% had repeat or habitual characteristics. Twenty-four percent had no previous history of missing. This finding is consistent with previous years.
- More females (58%) than males (42%) were reported missing. This finding is consistent with previous years.
- 19 females and 12 males were reported missing in the *kidnaping and foul-play* category (includes strangers, relatives and close friends). This is consistent with other years, with the exception of 2001, where more males

than females were kidnaped.

- 166 females and 166 males were reported missing by *parental abduction*. In 2003, more females were abducted.
- 30,654 females and 21,626 males were reported missing in the *runaway* category. This finding is consistent with previous years.
- the number of *accident* reports increased by six, from 2003 (21) to 2004 (27) but decreased from 2002 (38).
- the number of *unknown* reports increased by 451, from 2003 (10,922) to 2004, (11,373).
- the *other* category numbers increased by 347, from 2003 (2,205) to 2004 (2,552).
- the *wandered off* category numbers decreased by 134 reports, from 2003 (805) to 2004 (671). In 2003, the numbers increased considerably from previous years as those youth missing from social services were entered in this category, a practice which was not common in previous years.

An analysis combining all categories of missing:

- 80% of all missing children reports involved children ages 14 to 17 years.
- children under five years of age represented 0.8% of the total number of reports.
- more females than males were reported missing, under the age of one year. This finding is different than the finding of 2003, where more males than females were reported missing.
- 34% of the children went missing from their family residence. Some children went missing from arranged child care, such as child care (14%), foster care (20%), and institution/detention centres (22%). Fewer than 15 of the reported missing incidents were from a shopping mall, place of work, or while on a vacation.
- law enforcement reported that 18% of all missing children had an alcohol or drug dependency.

- 66,601 transactions were removed from the CPIC system in 2004. Sixty-four percent were removed in the first 24 hours of having been reported missing, and 86% were removed within a week. It should be noted that cases entered in 2004 cannot be compared to the cases removed in the same year. The remove transactions may include missing children entered on the system from previous years who were found after a number of years missing and then removed in 2004. This is consistent with the findings of other years.

## **National Missing Children Services Programs**

In addition to its research services, NMCS offers other services to law enforcement agencies and families.

### **The Travel Reunification Program**

NMCS administers a Travel Reunification Program to assist parents who cannot afford to travel within Canada or abroad to reunite with their child and return them home. Air Canada and Via Rail provide free transportation or passes, subject to availability, to and from the child's location for a parent or guardian if certain criteria are met for the travel. There is no exchange of funds from NMCS to the parent in order to activate the Travel Reunification Program. NMCS does not reimburse parents who have made prior flight arrangements. All arrangements must be made through NMCS during its regular business hours, and the process may take approximately 48 hours to activate.

In 2004, seven children were returned home using this program, one female and six males. Four children were preschool age, and three elementary school age, that is 6 to 11 years of age. Five of the children were flown from one Canadian province to the other, and 2 were flown from another country to Canada. The adults accompanying the children were: two mothers; three fathers and one guardian.

### **Photo-Age Progression Service**

NMCS provides a photo-age progression service for all Canadian law enforcement agencies and not-for-profit searching agencies. Certain criteria must be met to process a photo-age request, for example, the child has to be missing for a minimum of two years. Canadian and United States forensic artists assist in the photo-age progression. In 2004, the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

completed one photo-age progression on a missing child. This case was of mutual interest to both countries. The second request was completed by the Forensic Art Services of RCMP "E" Division, British Columbia.

### **Training Program**

National Missing Children Services provides a two-day training workshop several times yearly 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 the criminal and/or civil process. This workshop is designed to provide the participants with the additional tools needed to more efficiently and effectively conduct their investigation. The roles and responsibilities of helpful resources are over viewed, such as, the federal government's "our missing children" program partners, recognized non-profit agencies, as well as other valuable resources which can be used to augment the investigation.

In 2004, eight training workshops were conducted for approximately 100 law enforcement personnel.

### **Internet Case Assistance**

In response to an investigator's request for assistance, an operational analyst may investigate by:

- checking available data banks to gather information;
- soliciting border, immigration, foreign affairs, and justice services and expertise;
- advising or acting on the information gathered from the investigation;
- liaising with Interpol and the investigator in the country where the child is destined;
- 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.

From 2000 to 2004, NMCS assisted with the investigation of 26 Internet luring type cases. Investigative assistance was provided to Canadian police agencies involving four cases of Internet luring in 2004. These incidents involved mostly female youth between the ages of 14 and 17 years. One additional case involved a parental abduction in which the mother abducted her child to facilitate a meeting with a person she had met on the Internet.

## **National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC)**

The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC), National Police Services, RCMP, was expanded in May 2004 as part of the Government of Canada's national strategy to protect children from on-line sexual exploitation. Through leadership and partnership, the NCECC provides a national integrated environment for the coordination, collaboration, education, intelligence, and development of strategies to combat the global on-line sexual exploitation of children.

The NCECC works closely with National Missing Children Services (NMCS) to combat Internet based sexual criminal activity that targets, exploits, victimizes, and abuses children and youth. The service provides assistance to Canadian law enforcement in support of their international commitments with a mandate that is based on the G8 objectives. These objectives include: victim identification, suspect location, standardized law enforcement policies, training, research, awareness and prevention, effective legislation, and information and intelligence gathering and dissemination. The NCECC is also a partner in the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), an international law enforcement working group contributing to increased safety on the Internet. Additionally, the NCECC is an integral part of the Internet Service Providers working group that is partnering with Industry Canada in various efforts. For more information, please consult [www.ncecc.ca](http://www.ncecc.ca) and [www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com) websites.

## **Research Overview**

### **Stranger Abduction Missing Reports**

The exact number of stranger abductions in Canada is difficult to determine. A NMCS study conducted in 2000 and 2001, showed that five children were victims of stereotypical abductions. This term describes severe abduction circumstances where strangers or a person not-known-well are the perpetrators. Finkelhor (1992) a leading United States researcher on missing children defined *stereotypical abduction* "as those severe circumstances where the child is gone overnight, is killed, ransomed, transported over 50 miles from the point of abduction, or the abductor shows evidence of keeping the child permanently." These cases are usually featured in the media and the horrific details of the abduction cause national concern, and sometimes paranoia. The NMCS study results revealed that of the five children abducted in 2000 and 2001, four were murdered, two by acquaintances and two by strangers. All victims were female, four were white and one black, two were five years old, two were 10 years old and one was nine.

Research findings show that the victims are usually young white girls who either are too young to protect themselves from predators, or older and more vulnerable because they travel to and from school alone and participate in activities in the community with little or no supervision. As well, researchers emphasize that the child's risk of victimization dramatically increases as the child reaches six to 11 years of age.

Most children are abducted from their home or a play area close to home. The abductor is usually a male in his mid to late twenties, and of the same ethnic origin as the victim. Some have previous criminal records. The abductor relies on his physical strength, adult authority and power over children to con or lure his victim. They are strong, ruthless, cunning and manipulative. Predators search for children in areas where they may be playing, participating in activities or they may meticulously plan a meeting with the child. The use of a home computer and Internet linkages often allow the predator to talk with the child or youth in their own home and arrange a time and place to meet.

A number of research studies in Canada and the United States revealed that children do not live long after the abduction episode. Most are killed within three hours. Typically, the child is sexually assaulted, asphyxiated and killed. Occasionally, a child will be freed unharmed, but this is rare.

Since 2001, the kidnapping reports have been monitored yearly and the national numbers continue to remain very low. Although this figure is low, it is important to continue to study trends and other classifications of missing children for information that might assist with timely investigations. The creation of a rapid effective investigative response plan or the establishment of a protocol response is important to ensure the early return and safety of a missing child. It is important to keep in mind that most victims are in extreme danger of severe harm very soon after the abduction incident.

The National Missing Children Services Stranger Abduction study is available on-line at <http://www.ourmissingchildren.ca>.

### Parental Abduction Missing Reports

Parental abductions are more common than stranger abductions. They differ from stranger abductions in that the abducting parent usually has the *best* interest of the child in mind, be it real or perceived, and will go to any length to protect the child. Parental abduction reports have remained fairly low over the years. In 2004, the numbers are the lowest reported in a decade. This may be due to increased public awareness, alternate dispute resolution service opportunities, and/or the Canadian focus on shared parenting options.



Parental abduction incidents occur most often between the period of separation and divorce of the couple. Most researchers agree that there is evidence to show that the parents have difficulty working out solutions that are mutually agreeable.

Some reasons for abduction as stated in the research literature include: to force a reconciliation; to blame, punish and spite the other parent; to protect the child from abuse, neglect and/or violence; because of mental instability; or to revenge the other parent. International parental abductions may occur when a mixed-cultural marriage terminates and/or when the citizen of another country feels alienated from the legal system, and has family and social support in the country of origin.

Abductors differ in terms of background, citizenship and education. Although scarce, studies on Canadian abductors showed they were employed in trades which allowed them to be mobile and to find work in other locations. More than half had a high school diploma and a few had completed university or college programs.

The abduction is not a compulsive act but a premeditated type conspiracy. Most abductors act alone during the actual abduction, but receive help from relatives and friends following the incident.

The trauma the child experiences is dependent upon the following factors: age at the time of abduction; treatment received by the abducting parent and significant persons in the child's life; the duration and quality of life following the abduction; the reasons the child is given for the separation from the other parent (that is, the parent was dead or did not want them anymore); and the support and therapy the child received after the recovery.

Generally, children held for short periods of time do not develop an intense loyalty to the abducting parent. However, victims of long term abduction fare worse. Younger children soon forget the searching parent, while older children feel angry and confused.

If the child knows the other parent is alive, they may feel guilty that they have not made an effort to contact the other parent.

### Runaway Children Missing Reports

Runaway children and youth comprise the greatest number of reports to Canadian police authorities. However, these children and youth have multiple episodes of running away each year, thus creating a new file each time they disappear. In 2003, runaways generated 53,459 reports, a seemingly good cause for societal concern. Equally concerning is the fact that an additional number of children are living *on the street* and no one cares enough about their safety and well being to report them to police as missing. Thus, these numbers are not known.

Most children run away to escape an intolerable home situation, often characterized by

alcohol and drug abuse experienced in the home and with friends. Research findings revealed runaway youth may have a low self esteem, feel neglected and unwanted, show signs of emotional and psychological problems, and have difficulty in school with achievement, relationships and interaction with teachers and peers.

Most often, they do not run away for the fun of it. In essence, they run away, return home hoping the situation has changed but often it has not, so they run away again. The cycle continues and eventually this group of children become entrenched in street life - a life that exposes them to drugs, prostitution and street crime.

In the past, video arcades have drawn runaway youth to one spot where they were vulnerable to victimization. Today, internet luring and the operation of escort services through Internet connections present new challenges. Youth are exposed to a type of *underground victimization*.

In essence, running away must be viewed as a “cry for help”. Research has demonstrated an alarming incidence of abuse and neglect among today’s runaways.

### **International Partnerships**

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 the search for, recovery and return of 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 operates a 24-hour, toll-free hotline 1-800-THE-LOST or 1-800-843-5678, available in Canada and the United States. Information on missing and exploited children can be reported via a CyberTipline at <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

### **The Amber Alert Program**

The America’s Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert program is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement 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 kidnaped 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 and expediently.

The following 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 she/he has been abducted; and
- Police must have sufficient descriptors to make a search for the child possible - descriptors of the child, abductor, accomplices, the suspect's vehicle, etc.
- Most importantly, police must judge that the child is in serious danger - even in a life threatening situation - and be convinced the broadcast will help find the child.

Currently, all provinces have implemented the Amber Alert Plan, excluding the Territories and Yukon. In the early stages of implementation, two Amber Alerts were issued in Toronto, but the children were not recovered. Following refinement, two children in Quebec and two in Alberta were successfully recovered.

For more information on the Amber Alert Plan:

Contact: Constable Marie-France Olivera, National Amber Alert Coordinator, NMCS.  
telephone (613) 993-8656 or by e-mail: Marie-France.Olivera@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

### **Air Canada - RCMP Child Recovery Award**

The Air Canada/RCMP Child Recovery Award is an award of excellence recognizing the work and efforts of a Canadian individual and/or a Canadian organization in the search for and safe recovery of missing children. The award will be presented to the recipient at the annual our missing children program conference in Ottawa, Ontario scheduled for September 2005.



Included with the award are two Hospitality Class tickets provided to the recipient from Air Canada. Tickets are valid to any Air Canada scheduled destination (blackout periods and restrictions apply).

For the registration call for entries form, or for more information about the Child Recovery Award, please contact Dina Bellinger by telephone (613) 993-5111 or by e-mail: Dina.Bellinger@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

## **The our missing children Program**

The our missing children (OMC) program is fundamental to the successful search for, recovery and return of a missing child to a searching parent. It is an investigative and collaboration mechanism designed to coordinate an investigation that is complex due to the involvement of several government agencies, and on occasion other countries. Five government departments and agencies, each with a unique contribution, work closely together: Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Services Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada, and the Department of Justice Canada.

### National Missing Children Services

#### National Police Service, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The RCMP's NMCS is the only Canadian missing children clearinghouse for information and assistance to police, non-profit agencies and parents. It is also a national police service 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 CPIC, to United States police agencies through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and to most foreign police agencies in over 40 countries through Interpol.

The primary objective of NMCS is to locate, return and protect children. In 2004, NMCS assisted national and international police agencies with 530 missing children investigations, 106 fewer cases than in 2003. Parental abduction incidents comprised the most cases at 54%, while runaway incidents made up 23% of cases, findings somewhat consistent with the previous years.

National Missing Children Services has a two-fold mandate.

#### I. Operations :

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

NMCS also provides computer age progression service, posts missing children photos on the Internet, and manages a Travel Program for parents with a financial need. Investigators liaise with missing children coordinators in each province, not for profit recognized searching agencies and international support networks.

## II. Research and Program Development:

Original studies are conducted to assist with investigations, to assist in the development of investigative response plans and to determine the nature and scope of missing children in Canada. A report on Canada's missing children is written and published yearly. The report is launched by a federal government official on May 25<sup>th</sup> - National Missing Children's Day.

NMCS participates as a contributing partner at government and non-government meetings and forums related to issues involving abducted and runaway children and youth. This year, NMCS participated in the following: the development of Canada's federal strategy on trafficking of Persons, including children, that is the Interdepartmental Working Group on Trafficking and its sub committees, Prevention and Awareness committee, Prosecution committee, and Research and Data Collection committee. Also, a NMCS representative attended regular meetings of the Committee Against the Commercial Exploitation of Children and Youth, and the International Social Service Working committee on International Child Abduction: Issues for Reform, Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade - Recommendation 13 implementation, as well as in-house committees.

The NMCS researcher also reviews and gives feedback on prevention program proposals and publications related to missing children issues. Research data collection and methodological advice and feedback on university post graduate papers is provided to national and international students. NMCS staff also submit articles on runaway children and child abduction to magazines, such as the RCMP "Gazette", and the RCMP's "A" Division magazine, "Information".

NMCS has researched and developed brochures and pamphlets, including *What to Do If Your Child Is Missing?*, *Safety In Cyberspace*, and *Keeping Children Safe*.

Additionally, the Research and Development section responds to media and public inquiries for national statistical information, trend analysis, and research study findings. It also responds to interview requests from the media and accepts invitations to speak at national and international conferences.

For more information regarding NMCS, please contact 1-877-318-3576 or view the website at <http://www.ourmissingchildren.ca>

### Canada Border Services Agency

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) places the highest level of priority on the safety and protection of children entering Canada. Their commitment to this objective is demonstrated through our use of internal resources and widespread efforts to work with national and international partners towards the same goal.

The CBSA ensures that Customs Officers located at points of entry to Canada are aware of our priority and trained how to handle situations involving abducted or runaway children. A national coordinator and eight regional representatives work to provide timely information and tools necessary to support the efforts of our 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 distribute posters of missing children will continue.

Since 1986, the CBSA has been actively searching for, and locating missing children. As of December 31, 2004, 1,359 children have been recovered at the border and reunited with their parent or proper legal guardian. In 2004, customs and immigration officers recovered 74 missing children. CBSA attaches high priority to the safety and protection of children.

### Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Since 1986, and as of December 31, 2004, Customs and Immigration officers have reunited 1,359 children with their parents or legal guardians. Immigration officers are fully alert to children who need protection and pay extra attention to children as they enter Canada.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada:

- coordinates the investigation of cases of missing children nationally and internationally in cooperation with our partners in the OMC program.
- maintains and analyses national and international data on the nature and scope of missing children.
- produces and distributes, both nationally and internationally, bulletins, reports, newsletters, resource materials and the findings of research studies concerning missing children.

- intercepts and recovers missing and abducted children crossing the Canadian border.
- provides the issuance of border lookouts at the request of law enforcement agencies if it is suspected that a child, and/or abductor, is crossing international borders.
- displays posters of missing children at all border points in Canada, in cooperation with Canada Border Services Agency.
- trains law enforcement and other agencies in the techniques of detecting missing children, child abductors and abducted children.
- provides advice and guidance to parents of abducted children on how to proceed if their child is missing.

### Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC)

Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) became a partner of the OMC program in 1996. FAC brings valuable expertise to the OMC program by being actively involved in International Child Abduction cases through the Consular Affairs Bureau and its network of diplomatic and consular offices in over 270 locations in approximately 180 foreign countries. These offices provide different levels of services to Canadians abroad.

The Consular Affairs Bureau has assisted with 560 International Child Abduction cases from Hague and non-Hague countries, and has been successful in concluding 378 of these cases since it joined the OMC program in 1996. In 2004, the Consular Affairs Bureau received 72 new international child abduction cases, a slight increase in comparison to 2003. During the same year, FAC has concluded 51 of the old and new cases.

### Foreign Affairs Canada:

- provides information, advice and guidance to Canadian missions in other countries on all issues associated with international child abductions, including the management of specific cases;
- coordinates the efforts and liaises with Canadian and foreign governments, organizations and agencies dealing with international child abduction issues for the successful resolution of specific cases, where appropriate;
- encourages and promotes the adherence of other countries to the Hague Convention;

- develops and promotes the use of other mechanisms, such as bilateral agreements, that would assist in the resolution of child abduction cases, where it is evident that a country is unable to adhere to the Hague Convention;
- acts as the point of contact on issues related to international child abductions for other parties when dealing with Foreign Affairs Canada;
- provides training, advice and guidance to departmental employees as well as to appropriate national or international agencies on international child abductions issues;
- maintains a data base of all international child abduction cases and, as appropriate, produces reports for the other parties;
- in cases where the Hague Convention applies, assists in making direct contact with the relevant Canadian provincial/territorial central authority, and assists the central authorities both in Canada and abroad;
- in cases where the Hague Convention does not apply, attempts to locate and visit the child and report on his or her welfare;
- works with the central Passport Office in establishing what travel documentation may have been used by your child;
- contacts foreign diplomatic or consular offices in Canada to establish what travel documentation may have been used, or whether a visa was issued;
- provides information on the country concerned, including its legal system and family laws;
- provides client with a list of lawyers in the country concerned, who may be willing to act on their behalf in the return of the child and assists in the authentication of needed documents;
- should the client decide to travel to the country in which the abduction took place, the office provides advice and guidance before departure and ensure that officials from the Canadian government office are available to assist you upon your arrival;
- follow judicial and administrative proceedings overseas and provides client with information on developments;
- assists client in contacting officials in other countries or contact them directly on your behalf;



- provides information and advice on things that the client can do or that other organizations or offices of the Canadian government can do; and
- provides foreign authorities with any evidence of child custody, abduction, abuse or neglect.

The Consular Affairs Bureau provides 24 hour, 7 days a week assistance through Foreign Affairs Canada Operations Centre. The Consular Affairs Bureau works closely with its network of diplomatic and consular offices abroad who, working with the local authorities and/or other organizations, provides assistance in locating Canadian abducted children. Also, FAC offers a broad range of services to the left-behind parent, such as confirming the entry of the abducted child into the foreign country, locating and visiting the abducted child and reporting on his or her welfare. FAC assists in making arrangements for the reunification of a child with his parent in cases where the courts in the other country have either granted the Canadian parent custody and/or recognizes a Canadian custody order. FAC can determine, with the Passport Office and/or foreign diplomatic or consular offices in Canada, what travel documentation may have been used by the abducted child, by providing information on the country where the child is being retained and including information on its legal system and family laws.

### The Department of Justice Canada

The Department of Justice Canada (DOJ), which joined the OMC program in 2001, has both an operational and a policy role on 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 any country that is a Contracting State to the Convention, in breach of rights of custody. The Convention also promotes the peaceful enjoyment of rights of access.

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

*\* Also see Department of Justice Canada link on the **our missing children** website: go to <http://www.ourmissingchildren.ca> and then follow links to: [www.canada.justice.gc.ca](http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca)*

## Appendix 1

### **Canadian Missing Children Reports Summary For A Ten Year Period** **CPIC Transaction Year End Reports** **Frequency by Category by Year of Missing**

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Kidnap</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>Run</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Acc</b>	<b>Wander</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>52280</b>	<b>11373</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>2552</b>	<b>67266</b>
2003	39	358	53459	10922	21	805	2205	67809
2002	35	429	52390	10994	38	594	2052	66532
2001	48	387	53434	10364	49	742	1990	66994
2000	42	416	50633	10031	35	597	1958	63712
1999	52	358	47585	9884	38	496	1947	60360
1998	42	426	48388	10254	28	623	2326	62087
1997	60	426	45527	9404	37	506	2138	58098
1996	45	409	43717	9181	34	822	1914	56122
1995	68	354	43709	9039	35	720	1824	55749
1994	68	394	40140	8901	24	672	1774	51973

1. **Kidnap**, kidnaping/stranger abduction ; **PA**, parental abduction; **Run**, runaways; **Acc**, accident; **Wander**, wandered off.  
Source: CPIC annual transaction report for 2004 M.L. Dalley

## Appendix 2

### Frequency of Missing Children 2004

#### Cases Reported on CPIC by Category and By Province

#### Females

Profile	YT	NWT	NVT	BC	AB	SN	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PEI	NS	NL	Totals
Kidnap	0	0	0	1	2	0	4	9	3	0	0	0	0	19
Accident	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	14
Wandered	0	0	0	50	100	11	41	81	8	2	0	2	0	295
Parental	0	0	0	35	21	1	3	64	36	2	0	3	1	166
Runaway	3	59	0	7816	6920	1160	1757	9247	3057	303	26	216	90	30654
Unknown	0	4	0	1806	317	279	127	2924	677	28	4	45	12	6223
Other	0	5	0	356	62	6	13	720	254	2	0	10	0	1428
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10067</b>	<b>7425</b>	<b>1457</b>	<b>1946</b>	<b>13051</b>	<b>4036</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>38799</b>

#### Males

Profile	YT	NWT	NVT	BC	AB	SN	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PEI	NS	NL	Totals
Kidnap	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	12
Accident	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	4	1	0	1	0	13
Wandered	0	0	0	63	123	14	37	112	17	5	0	4	1	376
Parental	0	0	0	35	18	4	3	65	39	1	0	1	0	166
Runaway	4	31	0	4989	4 911	687	715	6667	3056	279	6	181	100	21626
Unknown	2	6	0	1428	245	178	82	2320	787	30	3	48	21	5150
Other	0	0	0	319	52	5	3	469	265	2	3	4	2	1124
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6840</b>	<b>5349</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>9639</b>	<b>4172</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>28467</b>

#### Total

Profile	YT	NWT	NVT	BC	AB	SN	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PEI	NS	NL	Totals
Kidnap	0	0	0	4	2	1	4	13	7	0	0	0	0	31
Accident	0	0	0	6	3	2	1	8	5	1	0	1	0	27
Wandered	0	0	0	113	223	25	78	193	25	7	0	6	1	671
Parental	0	0	0	70	39	5	6	129	75	3	0	4	1	332
Runaway	7	90	0	12805	11831	1847	2472	15914	6113	582	32	397	190	52280
Unknown	2	10	0	3234	562	457	209	5244	1464	58	7	93	33	11373
Other	0	5	0	675	114	11	16	1189	519	4	3	14	2	2552
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16907</b>	<b>12774</b>	<b>2348</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>22690</b>	<b>8208</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>67266</b>

## CONTACTS

<b>ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE – NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN SERVICES</b>		
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