

## **MEMO FROM THE MAYOR**

### **SUBJECT: The Heart-Break of a Missing Child, Part 2**

#### **At a Glance:**

- **This Memo provides valuable information on obtaining a Checklist in the order of steps to take when a child goes missing.**
- **When parents or guardians determine their child is missing, they need to report it to law enforcement right away—no waiting.**
- **Parents and guardians of children in Emmett need to acquire and complete a Keep My Child Safe Kit from the Emmett Police Department if they have not already done so.**

#### **Knowing What to Do Can Save Your Child's Life**

In this Memo Edition, we complete our two-part series on the horrific notion of having a child go missing and the doubly horrific notion of being the parent or guardian of a missing child. Most parents have had that experience, if only momentarily. Whether at a sporting event, a department or grocery store, scores of parents have turned around and discovered their young child is not where they thought.

Later, children might spend after-school hours with a classmate, though uncoordinated with mom or dad. While these events terrify caring parents and guardians, knowing what to do and when to do it provides the best opportunity for life over death (or just as odious, sexual slavery).

#### **The First Twenty-Four Hours**

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, under the auspices of the US Department of Justice, has produced a checklist in its Introduction of *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide*. By firing up your computer and going to <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/pubs/childmissing/introck.html> (last visited 21 Sep 2021) one can download the checklist in its entirety. I recommend doing so; then print it off. Thereafter, laminate the checklist and keep in an easily accessible place, one always known, even under the crushing stress of a missing child. Due to space limitations, this memo presents only the condensed explanation of each step; hence, having the original will provide more explanation.

Review it with other adults and responsible teens in the family, as well. In fact, just as responsible heads of households often rehearse a fire drill for when the smoke alarm sounds, families might rehearse how to use the checklist. Once you have made a quick and thorough check of your house, any outbuildings on your property, known hangouts in the neighborhood, perhaps school (depending on time of day) friends and relatives (having more than one family member assist is recommended) your initial efforts should never take more than thirty minutes. Even if they do, begin step 1, below, anyway. The Emmett Police Department will not criticize you if they find your “missing” child hiding under a pile of laundry to be washed because of a sketchy report card you need to sign.

[1] Immediately report your child as missing to law enforcement. Ask investigators to enter your child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Persons File. Under federal law there is no waiting for entry into this system for any child under age eighteen.

[2] Request Emmett Police to put out the Mandatory Alert for Missing Children (MAMC) here locally.

[3] Limit access to your home until law enforcement arrives to collect possible evidence. Do not touch or remove anything.

[4] Ask for the name and telephone number of the investigator assigned to the case.

[5] Give law enforcement all the facts and circumstances related to your child’s disappearance, including your efforts taken to locate.

[6] Write a detailed description of the clothing worn by your child and personal items he or she had at the time of the disappearance.

[7] Make a list of friends, acquaintances and anyone else who might have information or clues about your child’s whereabouts. Provide contact information, if possible.

[8] Provide recent photographs of your child, both color and black and white to law enforcement. The best way to do this is to already have them available in the Child ID kits provided by the Emmett Police Department, including the fingerprints they take of your child.

[9] Call National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 800-THE-LOST (800-843-5678). Ask for help in photo distribution.

[10] Call the Idaho State Police Missing Persons Clearing House at 208.884.7130 to determine what services and resources it can provide in searching for your child.

[11] Ask local law enforcement to assist in organizing a search for your child.

[12] Ask local law enforcement for help in contacting the media.

[13] Designate one person to answer your hardline number at home (if you have one) and keep a notebook of paper so the person answering can take information from the caller concerning your missing child.

[14] Keep your own notebook or pad of paper with you at all times to jot down thoughts or questions and record answers and important information (names, dates, telephone numbers).

[15] Take care of yourself and your family. Your child needs you to be strong and clear thinking.

### **The Second 24 Hours**

The second twenty-four hours are specifically detailed in the Introduction checklist referenced above. It entails significant coordination on the part of parent(s) or guardian(s). Hence, if employed, they might want to ask for a couple of days off. But as suggested in Part 1, the best way a parent, grandparent, or guardian can be proactive is to obtain and complete the Child ID Kit with assistance from the Emmett Police Department.

Along with the pictures and fingerprints, it never hurts to gather up some of their hair after a haircut or bangs readjustment and keep it in a sandwich bag along with the kit. Also, after the next dental exam and your child gets a new toothbrush, take his, her, their old one, put it in a plain brown envelope that will hold it in its entirety and have our child(ren) lick the envelope glue and seal it. Keep it at ambient room temperature never to exceed 80 degrees F. Cultures that love their children, also protect them.