

## Saint Paul Police Department

# Youth Services Section-Missing Persons Unit



Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 7:00am – 4:00pm

Main phone number: (651) 266-5612

Fax number: (651) 266-5909

After hours reporting: (651) 266-5700

The St. Paul Police Missing Persons Unit is housed within the Youth Services Division; however, they are responsible for investigating both youth and adult missing persons, and runaways. The unit is currently staffed by two full time police officers, and is located in the Youth Services Unit on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the St. Paul Police Department's Griffin Building Headquarters, located at 367 Grove Street, St. Paul, MN 55101.

### Reporting Procedures

Runaway reports can be made for any child 17 years old and younger. These reports can be made at any time – there is not a set amount of time that must pass before a report can be made and entered.

The adult missing person policy is currently under revision within the department. Please call the Missing Persons Unit with any questions, or to file a report for a missing adult.

**If the missing person/runaway has returned home, please use the phone numbers listed above to call and cancel the report, and it will be taken out of the system.**

### Other Resources

The officers working within this unit have been trained in using multiple tools to help locate both missing juveniles and adults, including computer and cell phone tracking, when applicable. The officers also have a wide variety of resources for both juveniles and adults when they are located to assist them in getting additional resources they may need. Some of these resources include:

- Midwest Children's Resource Center (MCRC) (651) 220-6750  
Answered 24 hours a day for clinic and counseling resource information
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)  
<http://www.missingkids.com>
- Jacob Wetterling Resource Center <http://www.jwrc.org>
- National Center for Missing Adults <http://www.theyaremissd.org>
- St. Paul Youth Services Mobile Crisis Team <http://www.spys.org/>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do I have to wait 24 hours after the person is missing or has runaway before I can make a police report?**

No. A report for a runaway or missing child can be made at any time after the youth is gone.

### **My child ran away while staying with a friend or relative in another city. Do I still make the report with St. Paul Police? I think the person may try to return to St. Paul.**

No. Per Minnesota State Statute (299C.565) the missing person report must be filed in the city or jurisdiction where the person is missing from. When the report is entered into the national computer system, the St. Paul Police will know the person has been reported missing.

### **I know where my runaway/missing child is. What should I do?**

If you have located your runaway child, you may go to the location, pick up your child and take him or her home. Once the child is home, you should notify the police department so the missing or runaway report can be cancelled.

If you are afraid your child will run from you or become violent, or you will be endangered in some way by attempting to get your child from a known address, notify police and ask for their assistance. Tell police why it may not be safe for you to go alone to get your child.

State law allows officers to take a child into custody when the child has run away from a parent, guardian, or custodian, or when the peace officer reasonably believes the child has

run away from a parent, guardian, or custodian. Unless police officers have reason to believe that a child's health and welfare is at risk, they may NOT enter a premise without the owner's permission to search for a runaway child. A search of a property without the owners consent requires a search warrant, which is not possible to obtain in most runaway cases.

**What will the police do with a runaway child they have in custody?**

Once the police locate a missing or runaway, the child must either be returned to his or her parents, or another suitable adult, such as a relative.

**If I am afraid my child will run from home again, can the police take him or her to a locked setting such as a detention center or locked hospital program?**

The MN Department of Correction rules do NOT permit police to place runaway youth in a locked jail. Police may not place a child in a locked hospital setting simply because they have run away from home. If the child is seriously intoxicated or in crisis emotionally when taken into custody, police may take him or her to a detoxification or crisis intervention center, where the attending physician or other authorized staff will determine whether or not the child needs to be held temporarily for his or her own safety.

**What should I do if my child's friend wants to stay at my home, but I suspect he or she might be a runaway?**

Most runaway children seek refuge with the families of their friends. If your child has a friend who wants to stay with you, you might check with the child's parents to make sure they have given permission.

If a child tells you that he/she has been abused or neglected at home, or has been thrown out of their home and needs a place to stay, you can best assist the child and protect yourself from allegations of contributing or encouraging a child's illegal behavior by calling the police. If the child has been abused or neglected, the police will investigate the allegations and notify Child Protection. Police and Child Protection will work together to assess and plan for the child's needs.