



SASKATOON _____
POLICE SERVICE

TO: Jo Custead, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Troy Cooper
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2023 February 15

SUBJECT: Annual Missing Persons Reporting
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022

FILE #: 2,007-2

ISSUE:

As part of our annual reporting process the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) provides statistics on missing persons in Saskatoon including the number of reports, the location of where they were reported missing, the number of habitual runaways, and the proactive steps to prevent people from going missing. This report includes statistical information from January 1 to December 31, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Goal 2 of the 2022 Business Plan for the SPS identifies the need to maintain core policing operations and address community concerns that affect public safety. Missing person investigations involve partnerships with various community groups as we attempt to enhance our knowledge of the factors that cause people to run.

Strategy 2.4 is specifically focused on reducing the number of habitual runaways and missing persons. This a specific goal that the Service continues to work on throughout the year. We continue to work with Egadz and Social Services in the development of the new Sask Missing Person App/Risk Assessment Program that will help contribute to a decrease in people being reported missing to police.

DISCUSSION:

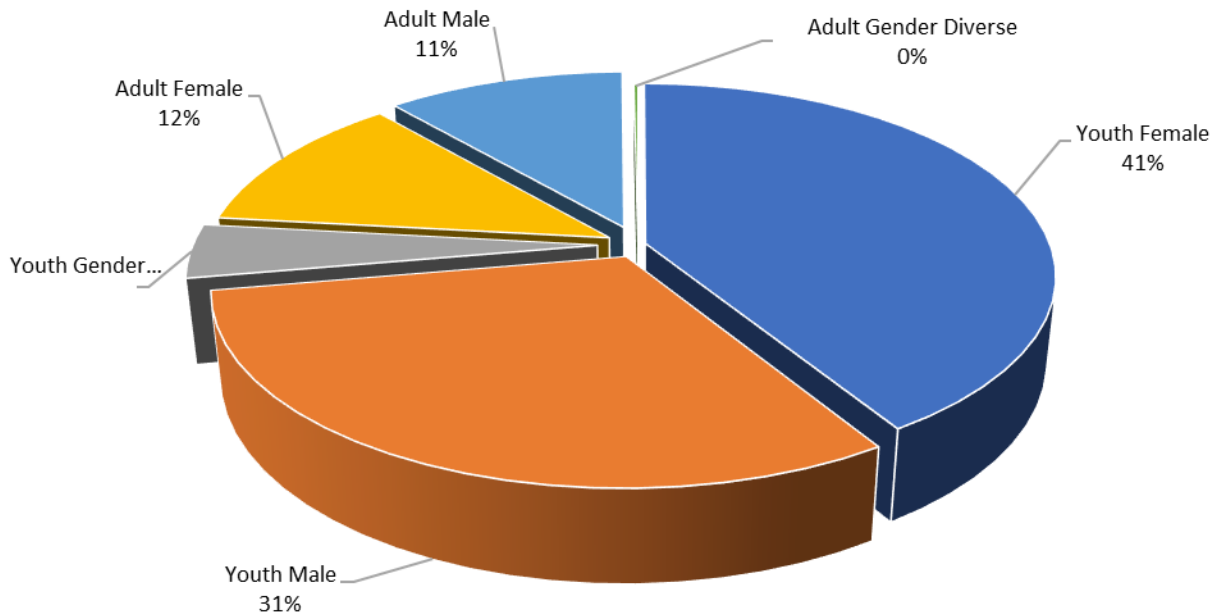
Throughout the course of this reporting period the Missing Person Unit, with assistance from the Strategic Planning Advisor, compiles various statistics relating to missing person reports in our community. The following report provides the statistics categorically; presenting them in a clear and concise manner while illustrating the nature of missing person investigations in the city of Saskatoon.

General Overview:

In 2022 the SPS received 3372 missing person reports. In comparison to 2021 this is an increase of 458 reported missing persons or an increase of 15.7%. The increase in the number of reported missing persons was observed in all three of the reporting categories of Youth, Adults and Eloped Mental Health Patients. **Eloped Mental Health Patients** are those individuals that have left a hospital or psychiatric unit against medical advice and without being discharged. The following chart shows the comparative numbers from 2021 to 2022:

	Youth	Adult	Eloped Patients	Grand Total
2022	2,576	780	16	3,372
2021	2,142	762	10	2,914
Difference	434	18	6	458
% Change	20.3%	2.4%	60.0%	15.7%

Breakdown of Missing Person Subjects by Age and Gender, 2022



	Female	Male	Gender Diverse	Grand Total
Youth (under 18)	1,379	1,046	151	2,576
Adult	399	375	6	780
Grand Total	1,778	1,421	157	3,356

Reported Missing Persons:

In the 2022 reporting period there were 3356 missing persons, not including the eloped mental patients. Of the 3356 missing subjects, 1778 (53%) were female, 1421 (42.3%) were male and 157 (4.7%) were gender diverse.

Female Youth

Of the 1778 missing person reports for females, 1379 of those were female youth (under 18 years old). This accounted for 41% of all reported missing persons. The majority of the female youth reported missing were between the ages of 15-18 years of age (57%).

Female youth between the ages of 10 to 14 years old accounted for 40% of the female youth reported missing.

Male Youth

Of the 1421 missing person reports for males, 1046 of those were male youth (under 18 years old). This accounted for 31% of all reported missing persons. The majority of the male youth reported missing were between 15-18 years of age (48%).

Male youth between the ages of 10 to 14 years old accounted for 45% of the male youth reported missing.

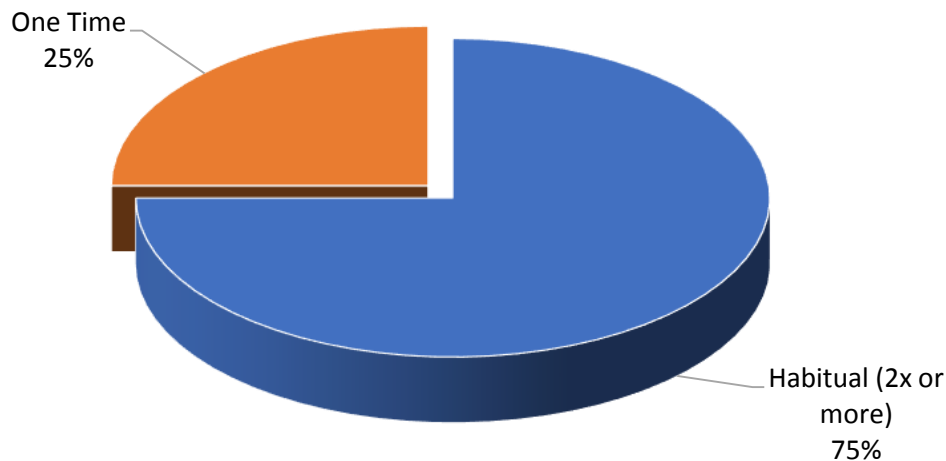
Gender Diverse Youth

There were 151 missing person reports for youth that identified as Gender Diverse. Gender Diverse youth accounted for 4.5% of all reported missing persons.

Adults

In this reporting period 780 adults were reported missing, accounting for 23% of all reported missing persons. Out of the 780 adults, 399 were females and 375 were males. 6 reported adults were identified as Gender Diverse.

Habitual Missing Persons:



A **Habitual Missing Person** is an individual who has been reported missing as a missing person subject two or more times within a specific period. In this reporting period habitual subjects accounted for 2517 missing person reports. Habitual missing youth accounted for 67% of all missing person reports in 2022.

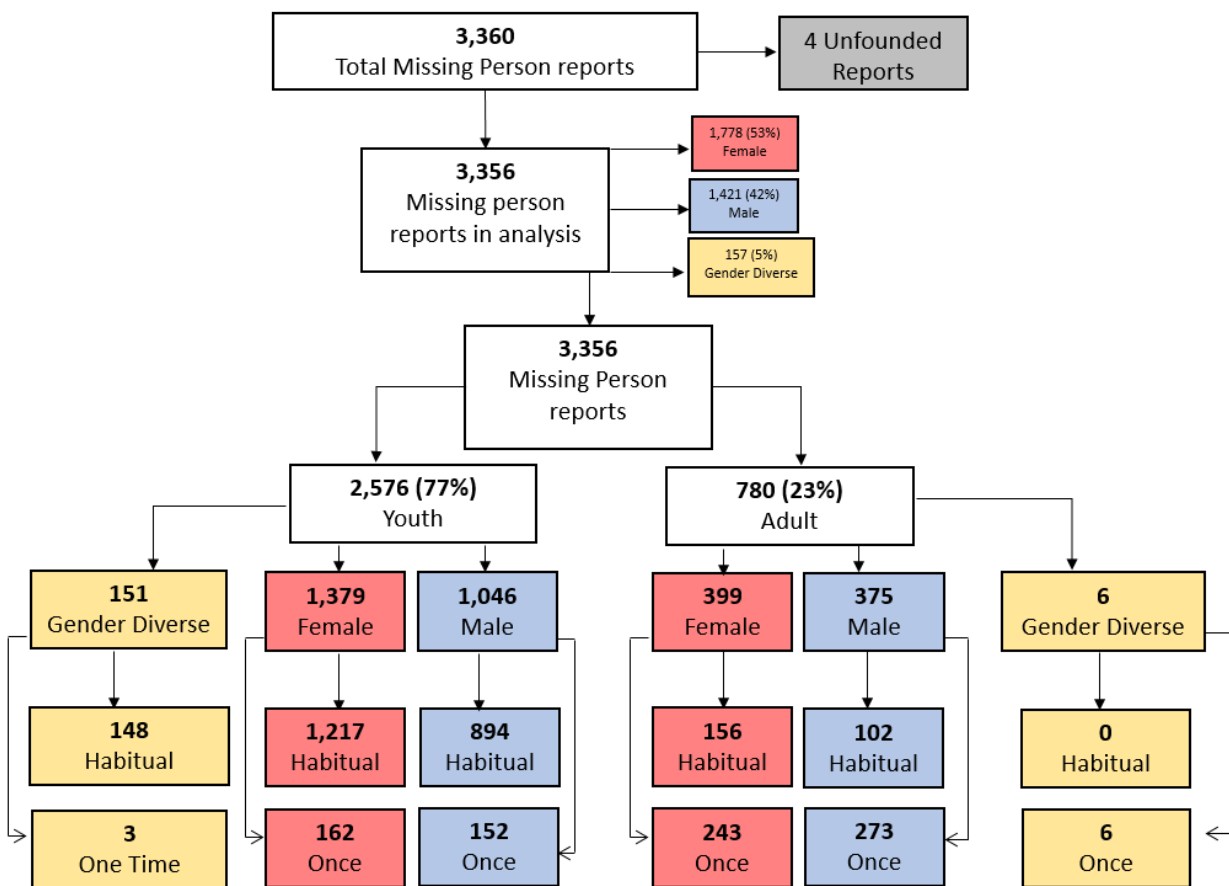
Female youth comprised the largest portion of habitual subjects, accounting for 1217 (36%) missing person reports. The 10 most frequent missing female youth make up 317 of the 1217 female youth habitual missing person reports (26%). These 10 subjects make up 9.4% of the total missing person reports in Saskatoon.

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In comparison, male youth comprised the second largest proportion of habitual subjects, accounting for 894 (27%) missing person reports. There were 27 male youths that were reported missing 10 or more times in 2022.

Adult females made up more of the habitual missing adults with 156. 39.1% of female adult missing person reports were for a habitual subject compared to 27.2% for males. When combined, adult subjects made up for 780 (23.2%) of the total of missing person reports.

During 2022 there were a total of 24 individuals that identified as Gender Diverse (6 adults, 18 youth) that were the subjects for 157 missing person reports. One Gender Diverse subject made up 26 of the 157 total missing person reports for Gender Diverse subjects and there were 15 Gender Diverse youths that have been identified as habitual.



Locations:

In this reporting period, missing person reports were generated from 877 different addresses in Saskatoon. The top 20 most common addresses for missing person reports comprised 54.4% of the missing person calls. There are 13 different groups/organizations that are responsible for the 44 homes in Saskatoon. Of the 44 homes, the largest group belongs to the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Center Inc (Egadz) also known as “My Home”.

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Top 20 Most Frequent MP Locations	Number of MP Reports	% of Total MP Reports
Location 1	366	10.9%
Location 2	198	5.9%
Location 3	154	4.6%
Location 4	146	4.4%
Location 5	138	4.1%
Location 6	117	3.5%
Location 7	99	2.9%
Location 8	95	2.8%
Location 9	82	2.4%
Location 10	61	1.8%
Location 11	52	1.5%
Location 12	49	1.5%
Location 13	44	1.3%
Location 14	42	1.3%
Location 15	36	1.1%
Location 16	32	1.0%
Location 17	32	1.0%
Location 18	29	0.9%
Location 19	28	0.8%
Location 20	27	0.8%
Total of Top 20 Locations	1,827	54.4%
Remaining Locations (857)	1,529	45.6%
Total Locations (877)	3,356	100.0%

Eloped Medal Health Patients:

The Saskatoon Health Region (Royal University Hospital, Dube Center, City Hospital and St. Paul’s Hospital) reported 16 calls for service relating to eloped mental health patients. The majority of these calls for service came from Royal University Hospital and the Dube Center.

There was an increase in reported eloped mental health patients in 2022, up 10 from 2021.

Long Term Missing Person Investigations:

The SPS currently has 19 long-term missing person investigations. All of these investigations are open investigations. The long-term missing person files remain open for the addition of new information as it becomes available. Of the 19 missing person investigations, 14 are male and 5 are female. Further to that, 11 are Caucasian (4 females, 6 males), 5 are indigenous (1 female, 4 males), 2 are Middle Eastern (both males) and 1 is African American/Jamaican (male).

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During 2022, DNA evidence was submitted to the National Center for Missing Person and Identified Remains (NCMPUR) in order to generate DNA profiles of the missing person and or family members in an attempt to help possibly identify remains found in Saskatchewan and or across the country. During the course of the year, the Missing Person Task Force Sergeant submitted 7 files to NCMPUR to have DNA profiles generated. After the profiles had been generated, there was an option to have them posted to the NCMPUR website and this was done for all of our submissions.

All of the long-term missing person investigations have been entered into the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police website for public access (<http://www.sacp.ca/>) and Crime Stoppers.

Historic Missing Persons		
	Age When Missing	Missing Since
Kathleen Johnston	26	October 20, 1953
William Gill	23	December 21, 1981
Peter McKay	5	December 31, 1986
Marc April	26	January 31, 1987
Andrew Wiebe	40	January 11, 1988
Shirley Lonethunder	25	December 20, 1991
William Krowchuk	52	July 9, 1998
Antoine Medzech	67	December 13, 2002
Darlene Anderson	44	November 6, 2006
Ricky Riopel	48	December 25, 2008
Hamza Al-Sharief	23	December 14, 2011
Kenneth Fehr	51	November 27, 2012
Ali Rizvi	45	June 23, 2014
Kandice Singbiel	33	July 28, 2015
Jordan Walker	21	December 2, 2015
Adhliea Johnson	35	March 16, 2016
Desmond Fischer	27	June 25, 2018
Eddie Burwell	31	February 2, 2018
Aaron Wuttunee	58	September 5, 2019

Saskatchewan Missing Person Partnership (SMPP):

The Missing Person Task Force Sergeant continues to participate as an active member of the Saskatchewan Missing Person Partnership (SMPP).

The SMPP is made up of representatives from various sections of the Government of Saskatchewan, Social Services, Child Find, the FSIN, Caring Hearts Saskatchewan, the Coroner’s Office, Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV), Dene Trackers, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Prince Albert Police, the Regina Police Service, the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Saskatoon Police Service.

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There were five meetings that took place in 2022 (Zoom meetings). The meetings held at the beginning of the year are typically to start planning for Missing Persons Week that occurs at the beginning of May. The committee members work collaboratively to develop initiatives to help prevent people from going missing and to improve responses and supports when people do go missing.

2022 saw a return to in person events for Missing Person Week. Missing Person Week was May 1-7 and the theme was “Caring for Families One Day at a Time” and was a combination of in person and on-line events. The shift to a social media platform during the pandemic proved to be very useful in bringing attention to the week and therefore it will continue to play an important role in getting information out to the families and to the general public.

Missing Persons Week

The SPS conducted and contributed to online events that brought attention to missing person investigations. They included but were not limited to:

May 2, 2022: grid photo of historical local missing persons

(<https://www.facebook.com/SaskatoonPolice/posts/pfbid02yeTtmD1YJGugFXbAGiBHOXmkiDsByyHrs9cK9ZAHzrQqohJgJQ9SyP4MTSz2faRvI>)

May 5, 2022: National Day of Awareness For Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

(<https://www.facebook.com/SaskatoonPolice/posts/pfbid0oC8YuDcyRVak93HSuUvMoHy1JcotBxoqaaRMUVBNuYeKMUGSfnDrQCioRjZ8QqAhl>)

May 6, 2022: Project Home – provincial billboard campaign

(<https://www.facebook.com/SaskatoonPolice/posts/pfbid02JfhstYbtHNGqDmays3GaWJhyv8YHzM9zj21SJR5efUHKHPoZmibJnyajj3BmyceWl>)

Proactive Initiatives:

Community Collaboration

The SPS continues to work collaboratively with community organizations that provide essential care homes and residences within Saskatoon and work together on the issue of persons “missing from care.”

The SPS collaborates routinely with community organizations that include the Salvation Army, YWCA, Egadz, John Howard Society, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Eagle’s Nest, Quint Saskatoon, and Sanctum Group.

Operation Runaway

As previously reported, Operation Runaway was developed in the spring of 2017 as an interagency community partnership initiated by Egadz, in collaboration with the Saskatoon Police Service, Ministry of Social Services, Saskatoon Health Authority Mental Health and Addiction Services and other community supports. The project was intended to provide an integrated, supportive and client-centered approach to assist youth who are reported missing or are running away.

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During 2022 members of the SPS Missing Person Unit continued to attend and participate in the Operation Runaway “support circle” meetings which have continued to prove to be an integral part of the process. A designated Missing Person Unit member attends these meetings weekly.

Relationship Building

The Missing Person Unit in 2022 continued to reach out to and build relationships with a number of community organizations and businesses. They included; Egadz Outreach Workers, Saskatoon Social Services, the Lighthouse, the Friendship Inn and the White Buffalo Youth Lodge. Investigators also continued to build relationships with Saskatoon Transit and Saskatoon Fire Department staff members, Mall Security (Midtown, Circle Center, Confed Mall, Market Mall), Canada Border Services, US Border Services, Homeland Security and Interpol. These different organizations are valuable resources when it comes to trying to locate missing persons.

2022 saw the “Risk Assessment Document” project come one step closure to becoming a reality. The Department of Social Services and Egadz were able to get the project approved for a test project among the My Homes (Egadz) in Saskatoon. During the test phase, My Homes saw a reduction in calls to service made to the police to report missing youth from the homes. The success of the pilot project has allowed it to move forward and was recently unveiled in January 2023. The Sask Missing Person App is generating interest within the province and as well as from other police agencies across Canada.

Missing Person Family Liaison

Saskatoon Victim Services continues to support our investigations and the families of the missing through the Missing Person Family Liaison position. The position has been instrumental in helping forge positive relationships with the families of missing persons and helping to facilitate open and honest communication between the families and investigators. During 2022, Victim Services provided assistance to families in a number of active investigations as well as our historical investigations.

SPS Internal Collaborations:

The Missing Person Unit in addition to conducting investigations to locate missing persons also reviews each case and assesses the individual circumstances surrounding the person being reported missing. If through our investigation additional risks or concerns are identified we will reach out to other sections of the Service for assistance and their expertise.

Major Crime Investigations

Each missing person report that is received by the Service has the potential to escalate into a major case investigation. During the course of 2022, the Missing Person Unit called upon members of Major Crime to assist with two of our investigations. Major Crime Investigators assisted by conducting interviews for the respective investigations. One of the investigations resulted in the missing person being located deceased (non-suspicious) and the other investigation the person was located alive.

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Patrol Missing Person Constables

Each year there are 4-8 patrol members that are assigned as Missing Person Constables on each of the 4 shifts and are responsible for conducting the initial missing person investigation. The Patrol Missing Person Constables continue to receive in service training provided by the Missing Person Unit at the beginning of the calendar year to help them with investigative best practices, tools to assist their investigations and to be educated on the community supports that can assist in their investigations.

Public Relations and Strategic Communications

During 2022, the Public Relations and Strategic Communications section assisted the Missing Person Unit with numerous media requests for public assistance and also in working with the various media outlets in the city. In 2022 there were 161 media releases issued for missing persons. The Public Relations and Strategic Communications section also helps prepare the social media content/approach to be taken during Missing Person Week.

Saskatoon HUB

In cases where missing persons habitual reporting is attributed to external factors such as addictions, absent education plan, need for income assistance or criminal justice system issues, the Missing Person Unit can refer them to HUB or can call upon HUB members to obtain current information on some of the missing people in an attempt to locate them.

VICE and Integrated Child Exploitation (ICE) Sections

The Missing Person Unit investigators are trained in the use of social media as an investigative tool. Investigators use this knowledge to reach out to and communicate with those that are missing, especially the youth. During some of the investigations, youth have been identified as being sexually exploited or appear to be at risk for sexual exploitation and or human trafficking. These cases are then referred to the VICE and or ICE Units for their continued investigations.

The Missing Person Unit interacts with all departments within the Service. The Missing Person Unit will either request the assistance of other units that may possibly have contact with missing persons due to their situations or other units/departments may come and request our assistance in trying to identify people.

CONCLUSION:

The SPS continues to make positive strides in regards to missing person investigations and the relationships forged out of those successes. The Missing Person Unit will continue to work closely with our community partners to ensure investigations are conducted as effective and efficiently as possible. We will place added emphasis on reducing the number of habitual runaways and other missing persons through continued collaboration and innovative initiatives.

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