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Lost dependent guidelines

This document is a process guide for event managers, and needs to be adapted with event specific details.

PURPOSE

To ensure the safe and timely return of lost dependents at a public event.

LOCATION

The *location* refers to the specific place where lost dependents are registered and collected from. For the purposes of this document it is called the Lost Child Tent.

- For large events, the *location* should be separate from rest of the incident control point (ICP) or management area
- The *location* should be able to accommodate up to 10 dependents, and needs tables and chairs for adults and children.
- Depending on the time of your event appropriate lighting in and around the *location* may be required.
- In some events it may be agreed that the information centre or beside the main stage is the *location* for registration, collection and coordination of a lost dependent.
- Clearly identifiable signage at the *location*.
- *Location* printed in pre event publicity, programmes and on site maps around the venue.
- *Location* to be a quiet area (little noise as possible) with play items suitable for a range of ages.

COMMUNICATION

- Large scale events generally have RTs (radio transmitters), this is an effective way to communicate to event staff in a large area when organising a search.
- Have a hard copy of the specific event procedure available for easy reference.
 - Contact phone number should be included at all main communication points i.e. ICP, Lost Child Tent, Main stage
- When making announcements use the description of the dependent only, do not use their name.
- If video walls are available, ensure a description and action is placed on screen.

STAFFING

- Staffed with 'children orientated' persons such as Play Centre / Day Care staff etc
- It is recommended that three staff are constantly with the dependent/s to ensure the safety of the dependent/s and for the protection of the staff members. (Three are needed if you consider that other staff may need to take 'comfort' stops during the event).
- Whatever the location, ensure one person is responsible for coordinating the procedure and capturing dependent's information (lost dependent report page 5) and the another caring for the dependent/s.
- Event staff briefing - ensure the lost dependent procedure is reviewed, and that all staff know the key contact and location where to take them.
- Staff to have access to radio system (event) and cell phone(s)/spare batteries or charger.

PROCEDURES

For the procedures below we have made a Lost Child Tent the main point for coordination and collection. This may vary for medium to large scale event.

Caregiver reports missing dependent

1. When a staff member is approached by a participant who has lost a dependent, they need to obtain the following information:
 - a. Description – sex, age, ethnic group, hair colour, clothing description, name. Also does the dependent understand their name (this can be particularly helpful with older children).
 - b. Location dependent was last seen
 - c. Approximate time dependent has been missing
2. Contact the Lost Child Tent with details. If Lost Child Tent cannot be contacted please call the Event Manager/Communications HQ.
3. Lost Child Tent will confirm details over radio with event staff, then make/arrange an announcement through the main sound system (and/or smaller stages where appropriate). Do not use a name only a description of the dependent.
4. All staff hearing a lost dependent announcement over the main sound system or RT should survey the immediate area they are in to ascertain if the dependent is there.
5. If a dependent has gone missing near a waterway staff within that area should search **immediately** and report to Lost Child Tent.
 - a. Police should be involved early in this situation.
 - b. This may be covered by onsite Surf Life savers depending on the venue and amount of water present.
 - c. Needs to be specified in the procedure so all staff know where they are responsible for looking and do not double up.

6. If the dependent is still missing after 5 minutes please contact Lost Child Tent for another announcement.
 - a. If after 30 minutes the child hasn't been located ensure the Police are contacted, if not already onsite.
7. When the dependent is found the Lost Child Tent should ensure all staff are notified and to stop the search. Will make a general announcement over the RTs/main sound system that the dependent has been found. This is very important particularly if a wider scale search is being organised for the missing dependent.
8. Staff at Lost Child Tent to ensure correct person collects dependent.
9. If caregiver is found
 - a. Caregivers name and details to be recorded when reunited with dependent (ID REQUIRED). Record information on the Lost dependent form.
 - i. Use common sense for identification, people do not always carry a lot of identification on them. Ensure contact numbers are recorded.
 - b. *Check dependant's reaction. This is very important* - if child becomes distressed or seemingly fearful staff **MUST** contact security /Police and pass on your concerns.
 - c. Dependents are not to be given to any caregiver unless staff are satisfied with identification of the caregiver and the reaction of the dependent. Get them to sign for the dependent and print name as well in the register.

Lost dependent found

1. Dependent taken to the Lost Child Tent by the person who finds the dependent

*Do not let the dependent go with another member of the public to the Lost Child Tent, even if they offer and seem trustworthy
– take the dependent **yourself**.*
2. At the Lost Child Tent the dependent is looked after by staff, with details added to register (see lost dependents report page 5)
3. Lost Child Tent will confirm details over radio with event staff, then make/arrange an announcement (main stage sound system and/or smaller stages in the venue). Do not use a name only a description for announcements.
4. The caregiver should now make their way to the Lost Child Tent location for collection.
5. Repeat announcement in 10 minutes if no caregiver has been found.
6. If care giver is found
 - a. Caregivers name and details to be recorded when reunited with dependent(ID REQUIRED). Record information on the Lost Dependent form.
 - b. Use common sense for identification, people do not always carry a lot of identification on them. Ensure contact numbers are recorded
 - c. *Check dependant's reaction. This is very important* - if child becomes distressed or seemingly fearful staff **MUST** contact security /Police and pass on your concerns.
 - d. Dependent's are not to be given to any caregiver unless staff are satisfied with identification of the caregiver and the reaction of the dependent. Get them to sign for the dependent and print name as well in the register.
7. At the end of the event, if children are still present, Police to assist in repatriation.

If using this document please advise the base guideline was supplied by Auckland City Council

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

Thank you to:

NZ Police Operations Planning

Safety Planning Guidelines for Events December 2003. Produced by Ministry of Civil defence & Emergency Management. www.civildefence.govt.nz

Auckland Zoo – Policy Lost Children

Scottish Borders Council – Child Protection Committee

LOST DEPENDENT REPORT

Lost Dependent Report for EVENT NAME	
Date:	Time in:
Report written by:	
Information about dependent (as known)	
Name	
Address	
Age	
Phone number	
Location dependent was found	
Who found dependent	
Description of dependent	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Clothing description	<i>Top</i> <i>Skirt/pant</i> <i>Footwear</i> <i>Hat</i> <i>Other</i>
Unique physical features	
Information about Caregiver	
Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Identification	
Signature of caregiver	
Signature of staff member	
Time out	

This form was sourced from www.civildefence.govt.nz