Lost Child at Events

City of New Westminster Community Events Office
Info Bulletin for Community Events Planners

A lost child at an event should be taken very seriously. Event organizers are responsible for developing a protocol that all events staff and volunteers are trained to follow.

Be proactive to prevent any lost children! For example if a child is noted alone or wandering away, connect with the child and ask them where their grown-up is. If the caregiver is nearby, remain friendly and cheerful to reassure them that you were just checking to make sure.



Child Found Alone

A child found without a guardian will often be upset or worried. Depending upon their age, they may not know their guardian's name or what they are wearing, but this is important information to ask for and record.

An event staff or volunteer should be designated to remain with the child and try to keep them engaged with a toy or activity, so that they remain as calm as possible while their guardian is located.

Another event representative should work to locate the guardian. Depending upon the event, this might mean making an announcement on the public address system, or using radios to provide a description of the guardian to other event representatives. Determine the process in advance, and brief all event staff and volunteers on this process.

If the guardian cannot be located within five minutes, call 9-1-1. The event representative should provide as much information as possible and stay on the line until Police arrive. Police have resources they may use to try to locate the guardian. You can always let them know the guardian has been located, but time is of the essence when a guardian and child are separated.

New Westminster

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A Lost Child

If a child is reported missing to an event organizer or volunteer, stay calm! One person should be designated as the liaison for Police while the child is searched for and if not immediately located, that person should call 9-1-1. There is no necessary time to wait before calling Police to report a lost child. The quicker Police receive a call, the faster they can respond. Typically, all available units will respond.

Helpful information to get from the guardian:

- Child's name, description and address
- If the child has money with them
- What languages the child speaks
- If they had a mode of transportation like a bike or scooter
- What interests them (playgrounds/pools/animals)
- What school they go to
- If they have any friends in the neighbourhood



Another helpful piece of information is to know is if the child has a data-enabled cell phone or smart watch. In exigent scenarios such as when a child is missing, Police can reach out to cellular service providers who may be able to provide an approximate location to Police.

If a child is located while Police are en route or engaged in the search, don't forget to notify Police! They may wish to connect with the child and guardian just to ensure all is well.

By planning ahead, your event can ensure that all event staff and volunteers know what to do.

Contact Us: Community Events Office
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