

## **FSC OPERATIONAL CODES OF PRACTICE**

### **No. P4: MISSING PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD**

**Essential for:** All UMs  
All FSC employees

**Discretionary:**

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#### **General Principles**

FSC has a duty of care for its staff and users, especially where they are young or vulnerable. This OCoP aims to deal with the situation of personnel going missing whilst away from the Centre or normal place of work. OCoP P1 (Out of Classroom Activities), OCoP P3 (Groups Away from Permanent Supervision - GAPS), and OCoP IM20 (Lone Working) all contain guidance on reducing the risk of personnel going missing in the first place. OCoP IM6 deals with personnel missing from the Centre or normal place of work.

#### **Hazards & Risks**

Whilst it is most likely that personnel missing in the field is due to harmless reasons, eg. task overrunning, lost track of time, or forgetting to report in, it is always possible that they are missing because they are unable to make the rendezvous point due to getting lost, being prevented from rejoining or being injured.

Once it is clear that personnel are missing then an additional set of hazards and associated risks will come into play, eg. others becoming lost or injured whilst searching, transport connections being missed, etc.

The overall level of risk will depend on the nature of the environment, the number of personnel missing and the experience and preparedness of all those involved. In general terms, the larger the group of personnel missing the more able they will be to cope with any hazards whilst conversely the larger the number involved in looking for missing personnel the more likely it is that a further incident will occur.

#### **Who May be Affected**

The health and safety of the following could be affected directly by having personnel going missing:

- Groups under direct FSC supervision
- Groups away from permanent supervision
- Independent groups staying at an FSC Centre.

Less directly the following could have their health and safety affected as a consequence of personnel going missing:

- Anyone involved in the search and, potentially, rescue of missing personnel <sup>(1)</sup>
- Others whose programmes or planned works are disrupted <sup>(2)</sup>

Note <sup>(1)</sup> If the search for missing personnel is to involve other than FSC staff and the immediate group it is advisable to bring in expert help, eg. Police, Coastguard, Mountain Rescue, who will take overall responsibility for the safety of the search operation.

Note <sup>(2)</sup> It is important that before other FSC staff are brought in to support the missing personnel incident that the safety of anyone within their charge is considered.

### **Managing the Incident**

If personnel are identified as missing as a result of regular head counts, checking in procedures or by any other means then the situation should be quickly assessed using the procedure in Appendix One. This will also give pointers to the best course(s) of action to follow.

### **Training**

FSC staff should be trained in carrying out risk assessments and should have the skills, experience and resilience to be comfortable in the environment they are leading in.

FSC staff should be familiar with the contents of Appendix One.

### **Reporting & Reviewing the Incident**

Missing personnel incidents, where action is necessary other than waiting within the time identified in Appendix One Q6, must be reported through FSC's accident/incident reporting procedure. The incident form should be accompanied by a completed copy of Appendix One. If this type of incident needs reporting it will also normally need an internal review to be carried out.

If the incident requires the assistance of professional help in the search, eg. Police, Coastguard, Mountain Rescue, then it must be treated as a Major Incident (see OCoP IM4) as it is likely to be reported in the media. This should not, in any way, act as a deterrent to involving the emergency services in the search.