As a large urban centre, Toronto presents many challenges when conducting a search for missing persons. The search may take place in or on the water, as well as on land. It may also take place in a variety of land–use areas. Although the search will likely take place in an urbanised area, Toronto has many parks and ravines in natural states, which resemble rural conditions. Unlike traditional rural searches, searchers in highly urbanised areas like Toronto have to consider the third dimension, upwards through the building layers.

**Search Levels**

The search for missing persons is divided into three levels of operation. Depending upon the circumstances, the search can begin at any one of the three levels, but does not preclude the steps in the previous levels, if appropriate.

**Level 1**

This level will be implemented when a person is reported missing and there are no extenuating circumstances. At this level, there are minimal concerns regarding the issue of foul play or the infirmity or limitations of the missing person.

**Level 2**

This level will be implemented when a missing person is

- under 16 years and judged likely to be incapable of caring for themselves
- mentally challenged
- over 70 years of age or infirm, or
- there is evidence of foul play

**Level 3**

This level will be implemented when the preceding two levels are ineffective or if the situation, due to the extenuating circumstances, necessitates that this level be initiated immediately.

**AMBER Alert**

An AMBER Alert is a co–operative effort between police, the media and the Ministry of Transportation to provide early notification to the public where a person under 18 years of age is believed to have been abducted and where circumstances lead police to believe that the abducted person is in danger of serious bodily harm or death and there is enough descriptive information about the abducted person, and/or the
Definitions

Last Known Position means the last substantiated (by clues or evidence) position that the missing person was known to be.

Missing Persons Search Page means a web page located on the Service Internet site used to publish information and pictures regarding missing persons investigations that have proceeded to a Level 3 search.

Place Last Seen means a point where the missing person was actually seen by a witness.

Level 1

1. The first police officer to arrive will

- interview the last person to see the missing person, where possible
- make every effort to provide an interpreter to a person who does not speak English or, who is having difficulty communicating due to a medical problem
- search the home and the immediate area thoroughly
- ensure the neighbours are canvassed
- ensure the description and all other pertinent information is broadcasted to the officers in the field
- ensure the information is provided to surrounding police services, if appropriate
- obtain a photograph of the missing person, if available, so that it can be transmitted electronically to relevant agencies
- offer to obtain the assistance of Victim Services, if required
- provide the telephone number of the detective sergeant
- consider using a poster or bulletin to assist in locating the missing person

Level 2 and Level 3

1. When commencing a Level 2 or Level 3 search, the supervisory officer will

- attend the scene and establish a command post
- ensure relatives of the missing person are interviewed
- ensure the description and all other pertinent information is broadcast
- assign search areas
- obtain adequate personnel to conduct the search
- consider obtaining the assistance from
  - Marine Unit
  - Public Safety & Emergency Management
  - Mounted & Police Dog Services
  - other police services
  - Volunteer Resources
  - community organisations
- consider having someone familiar with the missing person accompany a patrolling police officer, when practical
- ensure any evidence is collected and preserved
• consider requesting assistance from the media
• consider using a poster or bulletin to assist in locating the missing person

2. The divisional detective will conduct a timely and thorough investigation.

**Level 3**

**Unit Commander/Duty Inspector**

1. Upon being notified of the requirement for a Level 3 search the unit commander or Duty Inspector will ensure a web page is created with information regarding the missing person including a photograph, if available.

**Missing Persons Located (All Search Levels)**

1. Upon receiving information that a missing person has been located, the police officer will
   • attend the location to confirm the information
   • ensure the missing person is safe
   • ensure the complainant and/or next of kin is notified