

Some Missing Person Interview Questions

Identify yourself. Explain the purpose of the interview (to find the missing person)

About the interview:

Name of the person being interviewed:

Relationship of the person being interviewed with the missing person:

Names of the people conducting the interview:

1)

2)

Place of the interview:

Time of the interview:

Other people present:

About the missing person [SUBJECT]:

Name, Age, Male/Female

What does SUBJECT look like?

Follow up: height, weight, build, hair color, hair length and style, complexion, facial hair, glasses, general appearance, distinguishing marks, tattoos, glasses, shoe size.

Follow up: Any marked clothing? Alert jewelry, sewn-on labels?

Follow up: Any means of tracking SUBJECT's location: cell phone/GPS/emergency locator device?

Do you have any pictures of SUBJECT?

Follow up: when taken? Physical, to be returned?

What changes have there been to SUBJECT since picture was taken?

What was SUBJECT wearing on their feet?

Follow up: type, brand, style, size, tread.

Who else might be with SUBJECT?

Follow up: Names, contacts.

Last Seen

Where was SUBJECT last seen?

When was SUBJECT last seen?

Who saw SUBJECT leave?

When did you last see SUBJECT?

Who saw SUBJECT last? Follow up: Contact: name, location, phone.

Which way was SUBJECT going when last seen?

What reason might SUBJECT have had for leaving?

What did SUBJECT say they were going to do?

Describe the clothing SUBJECT has on.

Follow up: Colors, Styles, Make.

Describe any other clothing SUBJECT might have taken with them.

Follow up: Hat, shirt, outwear (sweater, jacket), foul weather gear, rain gear,

Follow up: gloves, mittens, sunglasses.

How much money did SUBJECT take with him/her?

What else did SUBJECT take with him/her?

What was SUBJECT doing when he/she went missing?

What sort of equipment did SUBJECT have when they went missing?

Does SUBJECT have a vehicle? Follow up: Color, model, year, plate number, photo. Where is it?

Does SUBJECT have access to other vehicles?

Follow up: Color, model, year, plate number, photos. Where is each vehicle?

Does SUBJECT have a bike? Follow up: Color, type, year. Where is it?

Does SUBJECT have any other means of transportation? Followup: Where is it?

If SUBJECT's vehicle/bike broke down, what would he/she do?

How did you find out that SUBJECT was missing?

What have you done to find SUBJECT?

Describe the events of the last few hours.

Describe the events of the last few days

Where was SUBJECT going?.

What were SUBJECT's trip plans?

What alternate routes might SUBJECT have taken?

Did SUBJECT leave any notes?

Did SUBJECT leave any messages?

What was SUBJECT's goal?

Groups

Who was in the group?

What goals did the group have?

(e.g. Making it to a summit, making it to a shelter, picking some amount of something).

Describe the importance of those goals to the group?

Who amongst the group are leaders?

What actions might members of the group take if separated?

Follow up: What plans did the group have to take if they became separated?

What plans did the group have to take if they became lost?

How do the members of the group get along with each other?

What sort of personality clashes might exist in the group?

Health

How is SUBJECT's health?

How would you describe SUBJECT's physical condition?

How physically active is SUBJECT?

How agile is SUBJECT?

How well can SUBJECT climb?

How well can SUBJECT balance on things?

What aids does SUBJECT use for vision (glasses, contacts, reading glasses, magnifier)

What can SUBJECT see without those aids?

What spares does SUBJECT carry?

Describe how the subject communicates.

Follow up: Verbal/non-verbal, sign language.

Follow up: Can the subject conduct a conversation?

Is SUBJECT seeing a doctor? Follow up: Dr's name and phone.

What medications does SUBJECT take?

Follow up: What kind of medication, when was it last taken,

Does SUBJECT have it with them,

what happens if SUBJECT doesn't take their medication regularly.

What happens if SUBJECT does take their medication regularly?

How much does SUBJECT drink?

Follow up: Brands, where, any favorite bars?
Who does SUBJECT drink with?
Where do they go to drink?
How much does SUBJECT smoke?
Follow up: Brands, how much, would they carry cigarettes, matches, lighters?
What would SUBJECT do with butts?
How much does SUBJECT chew tobacco?
Follow up: Brands, how often, would they carry with them?
How much does SUBJECT use recreational drugs?
Follow up: What sorts?
Where might SUBJECT go to use them?
Would SUBJECT carry matches, lighter, cigarette papers?
Who does SUBJECT hang out with?
Where do they go to hang out?
What sort of candy or gum does SUBJECT like?
Follow up: brands, wrappers.
Has SUBJECT been in trouble recently?
How has SUBJECT been sleeping recently? Follow up: more than usual? Less than usual? Disturbed?
Restless?
How long ago did SUBJECT eat? What did he/she eat then?
Has SUBJECT described seeing things that weren't there?
Has SUBJECT described hearing things that weren't there?

When has SUBJECT been missing before?

Follow up: Describe what happened then.

What is SUBJECT's attitude towards strangers?

What is SUBJECT's attitude towards police officers?

Does SUBJECT know how to use the phone to call home?

Does SUBJECT know how to call 911?

Who would SUBJECT call to get help?

Does SUBJECT carry a cell phone?

Do you and SUBJECT have a password/safe word/secret word?

Do you have an answering machine at home?

Do you have an answering machine/voice mail at work? Cell phone?

Social networks

Where does SUBJECT live?

How long has SUBJECT lived in this place?

Where did SUBJECT live before?

Who is SUBJECT in contact with from where he/she lived before?

What is SUBJECT's occupation?

Has this changed recently?

Where does SUBJECT attend school/college? Follow up: What sort of courses.

Who is SUBJECT's teacher? Follow up: Name, Phone.

How is SUBJECT doing in school?

Follow up: grades, fellow students, teachers, discipline problems?

Has this changed recently?

Where does SUBJECT go to get their hair cut?

Who are SUBJECT's close friends?

Where does SUBJECT meet with his/her close friends?

How does SUBJECT keep track of his/her friends addresses/phone numbers?

Follow up: Where?

Does SUBJECT keep a diary? Follow up: Where is it?

How does SUBJECT record important events in his/her life?

Has SUBJECT had any mail recently that might be relevant?

What changes have happened recently in SUBJECT's social relationships?

What changes have occurred recently in SUBJECT's life?

Who else does SUBJECT interact with regularly?

Who else is SUBJECT close to?

Where does SUBJECT like to hang out?

Where does SUBJECT like to play?

Experience

What familiarity does SUBJECT have with the area where he/she went missing?

Where has SUBJECT learned outdoor skills?

Who has taught SUBJECT survival skills?

How often does SUBJECT sleep outdoors?

Where does SUBJECT regularly walk or hike?

Describe SUBJECT's sense of direction.

Describe SUBJECT's memory of places he/she has traveled to?

How often has SUBJECT planned trips or expeditions?

What other local places has SUBJECT been to?

Follow up: Malls, stores, hairdressers, parks, play areas.

Describe SUBJECT's routine daily schedule.

(school, work, play, exercise, shopping, school, appointments, friends, etc).

Attitudes/behavior/activities

What does SUBJECT like to do for fun?

Who does SUBJECT play with?

Is SUBJECT good with his/her hands?

Does SUBJECT like to explore?

What sort of places has SUBJECT explored?

Is SUBJECT religious?

Does SUBJECT go to church/synagogue/mosque/meeting/place of meeting for worship?

Follow up: Where? How regularly? Who is the religious leader.

Follow up: Who is SUBJECT close to?

What sort of place does SUBJECT seek solitude in?

What would strike SUBJECT's fancy?

What words would you use to describe SUBJECT's personality?

How does SUBJECT react to adversity?

How does SUBJECT react to changes in daily routine?

How does SUBJECT react when hurt?

On what occasions has SUBJECT wandered off before?

Follow up: Describe the Circumstances?

Follow up: What lead to SUBJECT wandering? Triggers for wandering/running/elopement?

Did SUBJECT have a destination?

What was the situation SUBJECT was leaving?

Follow up: Where was subject found?

How has SUBJECT been spending his/her time recently?

Follow up: Is this different from usual?

Who has SUBJECT been spending time with recently?

Follow up: Is this different from usual?
Has SUBJECT been spending time alone recently?

Follow up: Is this different from usual?
Describe the events of the last few months.
Has SUBJECT recently said goodbye to anyone?

What is SUBJECT's attitude towards animals?
Would SUBJECT chase or follow an animal?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards farm animals?
What sorts of animals that would particularly attract SUBJECT?
What sorts of animals that would particularly scare SUBJECT?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards dogs? Would SUBJECT be afraid of a bloodhound?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards helicopters?
How would SUBJECT react if he/she heard a helicopter overhead?
How would SUBJECT react to lights and sirens on emergency vehicles?
What does SUBJECT do in/around water?
How well does SUBJECT swim?
Is SUBJECT afraid of water?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards water?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards heights?
What sort of activities does SUBJECT engage in regularly?
What other sorts of activities does SUBJECT like to engage in?

What is SUBJECT's attitude towards kids?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards adults?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards police?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards people in uniform?
What is SUBJECT's attitude towards strangers?
How does SUBJECT behave around strangers? Follow up: outgoing? Reserved?

What places is SUBJECT afraid of?
How much money would you expect SUBJECT to be carrying?
What things fascinate SUBJECT?
Follow up: If subject has been described as autistic: What are SUBJECT's attractors?
What subjects does SUBJECT know a lot about?
What are SUBJECT's hobbies?
Follow up: Elderly: Still able to engage in hobby?

Travel

How large is SUBJECT's home range?
What is the furthest distance SUBJECT has traveled on his/her own?
What is the furthest place SUBJECT has traveled to on his/her own?
What is the furthest place SUBJECT has traveled to with friends?
How many trips has SUBJECT taken on his/her own?
How well does SUBJECT know how to use public transportation?
With whom would SUBJECT accept a ride?
Under what circumstances would SUBJECT hitchhike?
What sort of places does SUBJECT go to?
Follow up: malls, stores,
Follow up: parks, play areas, recreational areas.
Where has SUBJECT been walking?

Where has SUBJECT been hiking?
What sort of trips has SUBJECT taken on his/her own?
What sort of trips has SUBJECT taken with relatives?
What sort of trips has SUBJECT taken with friends?
Describe SUBJECT's outdoor experience level.
Does SUBJECT have a passport?
 Follow up: Where is it? Issuing country, passport number, name on passport?
Does SUBJECT have dual citizenship?

Technology/Social Media

How many cell phones does SUBJECT have?
 For each phone:
 What is the number?
 Have you called his/her phone?
 Is a bill available (which provider is it)?
 Where is SUBJECT's cell phone? Charger? External batteries?
 What does SUBJECT use his/her cell phone for?
 How does SUBJECT use his/her cell phone for navigation?
 What apps does SUBJECT use on their phone?
 Do you do anything to monitor SUBJECT's cell phone location?
 How does SUBJECT use his/her social media on their cell phone?
What would SUBJECT do if he/she lost cell phone signal?
Would SUBJECT leave a trail to find cell phone signal?
What social media sites does SUBJECT use?
 How much does SUBJECT use Instagram?
 How much does SUBJECT use Twitter?
 How much does SUBJECT use Facebook?
 Who are SUBJECT's friends online?
 Follow up: usernames, names, phone numbers, addresses?
What are SUBJECT's social media usernames?
Where does SUBJECT hangout online?
Where does SUBJECT post images online?
Do you have copies of images that SUBJECT has taken with his/her cell phone?
How technologically savvy is SUBJECT?
How careful is SUBJECT in maintaining privacy online?
What has SUBJECT told you about how to maintain your privacy online?

How does SUBJECT navigate?
What tools does SUBJECT use to navigate?
How well can SUBJECT navigate without those tools?

Mood

How does SUBJECT behave when he/she is in a good mood?
How does SUBJECT behave when he/she is depressed?
What sort of needs has SUBJECT expressed recently?
Has SUBJECT been behaving differently recently?
Has SUBJECT done anything unusual recently?
Has SUBJECT expressed a need to have their own space?
What sort of expressions has SUBJECT made recently of affection?
What sort of expressions has SUBJECT made recently of hatred or dislike?
What sort of concerns has SUBJECT expressed recently?

Has SUBJECT said anything recently that worries you?
Has SUBJECT expressed any desire to hurt himself/herself?
How does SUBJECT go about solving a complex problem?

Hunting/Fishing

Does Subject go hunting?

Follow up: What sorts of hunting does subject do?

Does SUBJECT go fishing?

What memberships does SUBJECT have in sportsmans' clubs?

Who has been hunting or fishing with SUBJECT before?

What is SUBJECT's attitude towards natural resources law enforcement?

Subject Hiking/Camping/Hunting/Climbing/Fishing

Why did SUBJECT choose this particular campground/hike/fishing spot/location?

Describe SUBJECT's gear and equipment. Follow up: Colors, styles, brands, condition.

Pack

Tent

Sleeping bag

Water bottle/hydration system/canteen

Flashlight - follow up: battery type

Knife

Compass

GPS – make, model

Cell phone/Radio – follow up: battery types, charging

Navigation Apps?

Maps

Camera (film/digital/video), film/media, accessories.

Walkng stick

Winter gear: Skis, snowshoes, poles, ice axe, crampons, boots

Climbing gear

First aid kit, survival kit

Fishing equipment

Describe any other equipment SUBJECT might have with them.

What new equipment was purchased for this trip?

Subject missing while Fishing

What sort of fishing?

What are SUBJECT's strategies?

Where would SUBJECT obtain his/her fishing license?

What is SUBJECT's attitude towards fishing licenses?

Who might know about SUBJECT's plans?

Who does SUBJECT fish with?

Who might SUBJECT talk about their fishing with?

Describe what SUBJECT takes with him/her when fishing?

Follow up: Brands, tackle box? color?, cooler? color? waders? life jacket?

Follow up: Alcohol?

Subject missing while Hunting

What sort of hunting?

What are SUBJECT's strategies?

Firearms : type, gauge/caliber, ammunition, sights, accessories, cases, locks?

Follow up: Where are they?
How much Orange clothing does SUBJECT have with them?
How much is SUBJECT camouflaged?
What other equipment does SUBJECT have with them?

Follow up: Tree stand, game calls, game cameras, blind, boat, 4 wheeler, gun cases/gun boots?
Who does SUBJECT hunt with?
Who might SUBJECT talk about their hunts with?

Subject missing with bike/ATV/motorcycle/snowmobile

Describe SUBJECT's bike/vehicle.

Follow up: Make, model, color, modifications, accessory equipment?

Follow up: Light/lights? Helmet? Color, Worn regularly?

Follow up: Tread pattern?

Follow up ATV: Chains, Winch?

Describe SUBJECT's experience on this sort of bike/vehicle?

How long has SUBJECT had this particular bike/vehicle?

Where has SUBJECT been with this bike/vehicle? Follow up: Distances traveled?

What tools does SUBJECT carry with the bike/vehicle?

What repair kit does SUBJECT carry with the bike/vehicle?

What supplies does SUBJECT carry on the bike/vehicle?

How much fuel was SUBJECT carrying?

Would SUBJECT bring alcohol along?

Trip plans

What was SUBJECT's destination?

Did SUBJECT leave a description of his/her planned route? Follow up: Where is it?

What sort of alternate route plans did SUBJECT have?

What sort of alternate plans for weather did SUBJECT have?

What was the trip's starting point?

When was the starting date for the trip?

Was SUBJECT planning on staying overnight? Follow up: Where?

Who was SUBJECT traveling with?

How was SUBJECT traveling to the area? Follow up: Vehicle description, location, owner.

When was SUBJECT planning on returning?

What was SUBJECT's return or pickup plan?

Subject is Elderly (may be Elderly Critical Wanderer)

Where did SUBJECT grow up?

Follow up: if local, location of childhood schools, churches, play areas.

Where did SUBJECT spend his/her working life?

Follow up: Occupations, places worked.

Follow up: if local, location of childhood schools, churches, shopping, recreation areas.

What places does SUBJECT go to regularly?

Follow up: travels there how?

What people does SUBJECT talk about?

What places does SUBJECT talk about?

What has SUBJECT been fretting about recently?

How is SUBJECT to live with?

Has this changed recently?

How has SUBJECT's routine changed recently?

How well does SUBJECT recognize the local neighborhood?

How well does SUBJECT navigate around the local neighborhood?
How well does SUBJECT navigate in unfamiliar places?

How well does SUBJECT recognize familiar faces?
How well can SUBJECT tell time?
How long can SUBJECT discuss something before forgetting?
How would you describe SUBJECT's moods?
In what ways do SUBJECT's moods change?
How frequently do SUBJECT's moods change?
How well can SUBJECT move around?
How well can SUBJECT pick up and hold things?

What has SUBJECT said recently that has worried you?
What has SUBJECT done recently that has worried you?
Have you ever had to go out and find SUBJECT before?
Has SUBJECT ever wandered away before where you didn't know his/her location for 5 minutes or more?
Has SUBJECT ever gone missing before? (Phrase several ways)
Follow up: Where did SUBJECT leave from?
Where did SUBJECT go?
What reasons did SUBJECT express for leaving?
What situation did SUBJECT leave from?
How did that situation differ from the normal routine?
Did SUBJECT leave to do something? Recreation? Reminiscent wandering?
What was done to find SUBJECT?

Does SUBJECT seek out exits?
How well does SUBJECT follow instructions?
How well can SUBJECT solve problems?
In what ways has SUBJECT behaved impulsively recently?
How recently has SUBJECT fallen?
Describe any occasions where SUBJECT appeared to laugh or cry unexpectedly?
How well does SUBJECT remember recent events?
Follow up: How do SUBJECT's memory losses affect his/her daily life?
What concerns has SUBJECT expressed recently?
Has SUBJECT described seeing things that weren't there?
Follow up: What was SUBJECT's attitude towards those things?
How has SUBJECT been changing over time?
Follow up: To what extent have changes been sudden or gradual?
On what occasions has SUBJECT's behavior been challenging to you?
Follow up: Did you perceive any triggering events for those behavioral challenges?
Has SUBJECT been registered in Safe Return or any other similar registry?
Most recent picture of SUBJECT and date taken? Changes since taken?

Subject is Child:

What is the Parents marital status?
What is the Parents custody status?
When are report cards due to be brought home?
What cartoon characters does SUBJECT like? Other mass media characters?
Most recent picture of SUBJECT and date taken? Changes since taken?
Where does subject like to play?
Does SUBJECT have an IEP?

What training has SUBJECT has for potential abduction?

Subject is Climber

What type of climbing does SUBJECT do?

What climbing experience does SUBJECT have?

Who does SUBJECT climb with? Follow up: Names, contacts.

What is the highest grade SUBJECT has climbed?

What has SUBJECT described as his/her most difficult climb?

Where was SUBJECT going to climb? Where does SUBJECT climb?

Subject may be Despondent:

See: Additional Investigative Questions for Despondent in Lost Person Behavior (Koester, 2008) pages 176-177

See also:

Additional Investigative Questions for subject categories in Lost Person Behavior (Koester, 2008) for any potentially relevant subject categories.

Key closing questions

Will SUBJECT answer if they hear their name called?

Does SUBJECT own any weapons? Follow up: Where are they?

Where do you think SUBJECT is?

Is there anything else you can think of that will help us find SUBJECT?

Ask to see SUBJECT's bedroom, closet, and storage areas.

Picture (date taken). Scent Articles. Diary. Notes. Shoes. Letters. Trip Plans. Address Book.