



# MISSING PERSONS DNA PROGRAM FAQ

California Department of Justice  
Bureau of Forensic Services

## **What is the DOJ's Missing Persons DNA Program (MPDP)?**

The California Department of Justice's Missing Persons DNA Program (MPDP) is a program that exists solely to help bring loved ones home. The MPDP compares DNA from unidentified persons and human remains with the DNA from personal articles belonging to reported missing persons (like a toothbrush) and DNA from relatives of missing persons.

## **Where does my DNA profile get stored?**

The Missing Persons DNA Program stores DNA profiles in two different databases. One database contains DNA profiles from unidentified persons and human remains. The other database is considered a family reference database and it contains the DNA profiles of relatives of missing persons and DNA profiles from personal items that belonged to a missing person (like a toothbrush). As a family member of a missing person, your DNA profile will be stored in the family reference database.

## **Could my DNA sample be used in a criminal investigation?**

No. Family reference samples are NEVER searched against databases that contain DNA profiles of evidence from criminal investigations or DNA profiles of persons arrested or convicted of crimes. They are ONLY searched against the unidentified person and remains database to help identify missing persons.

## **What happens if the MPDP finds a match between my DNA and DNA in the unidentified person and human remains database?**

When an individual is identified by a family member's DNA sample, the remains of the individual are returned to the investigating agency so they can go home to their family.

## **What happens to my DNA sample once my loved one is identified?**

When an individual is identified, family reference samples are DESTROYED and the DNA profiles are REMOVED from the family reference database.

## **If my loved one is found in the unidentified persons and remains database, what does this mean for law enforcement?**

If an individual whose DNA is included in the unidentified persons and remains database is identified, a criminal investigation into what happened to that individual can move forward. This is one reason it is so important for a missing person's family members to provide DNA samples to help identify their missing relative.

## **Is there a cost associated with my providing my DNA?**

The Missing Persons DNA Program is a service that is provided by the California Department of Justice at no cost to the public or law enforcement agencies. The sole purpose of the program is to help identify missing persons.