

Department of Human Services
CHILD WELFARE
PROTOCOL

Notification and Review of Critical Incidents

Interpretation: Child Protective Services Program Manager, Office of Safety and Permanency for Children, Children and Families

Approval: Administrator, Office of Safety and Permanency for Children, Children and Families

REFERENCES: [CF 150, "Sensitive Child Welfare Issue Report" Attachment A, "Critical Incident Response Flowchart"](#)

PURPOSE

- (1) The purpose of this protocol is to:
 - (a) Outline the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare procedures that will be used when a critical incident occurs;
 - (b) Increase the Department's accountability to the public;
 - (c) Ensure timely responses by the Department with respect to critical incident in Child Welfare; and
 - (d) Increase the Department's ability to address and recommend necessary changes to statutes, administrative rules, policies, procedures, practices, training and personnel matters to respond to CAF system issues.
- (2) Reviews conducted as provided in this protocol are in addition to and separate from reviews conducted by a local Multi Disciplinary Team pursuant to ORS 418.747, a State Fatality Review team pursuant to ORS 418.748 or the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare, "Notification and Review of Child Fatalities" protocol.

DEFINITIONS

- (1) **"CIRT Lead"** means a designated Critical Incident Response Team member who is responsible for coordination of the Critical Incident response at the State level.
- (2) **"Contact Attorney"** is an Assistant Attorney General in the Human Services Section of the General Counsel Division of the Oregon Department of Justice assigned to provide legal services and advice to the Department.

- (3) **“Critical Incident”** is a fatality or a serious injury, as defined by ORS419A.004(25), where child abuse or neglect is suspected; an event or situation which is highly concerning, may pose a potential liability, is of emerging public or media interest or represents an interest of security; any other incident designated by the DHS Director.
- (4) **“Critical Incident Report”** is a report written by the Critical Incident Response Team, that addresses case status and individual case conclusions. This report may also identify system issues, including policy, training, practice and personnel recommendations.
- (5) **“Critical Incident Response Team”** is a designated committee charged with responding to critical incidents. This includes members at both the State and Local levels.
- (6) **“Critical Incident Review”** is a review of Department case related activities and systems, including policy, practice, training and personnel related issues when a critical incident occurs.
- (7) **“Immediately”** means to direct one's attention, without undue delay, to the issue at hand.
- (8) **“Local Lead”** means a designated CIRT member responsible for coordination at the local office where the critical incident is being handled.
- (9) **“Sensitive Issues”** include events or situations which are highly concerning, may pose a potential liability, are of emerging public or media interest, or represent an interest of security.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION REQUIRED UPON RECEIPT OF A REPORT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT.

- (1) Notification must be made immediately. A Sensitive Child Welfare Issue Report, CF150 per CAF Policy III-A.1.2 must be completed with the information available and forwarded to all persons listed on the form. As additional information is available the CF150 must be updated as soon as possible, but no later than 4:30pm the same working day.
- (2) The CF 150 must include a brief summary of the following information, if applicable and known, in the “Issues” section of that form:
 - (a) A factual description of the sensitive issue;
 - (b) Name(s) and date(s) of birth of effected children;
 - (c) Circumstances and date of critical incident;
 - (d) Alleged perpetrator and relationship to victim;
 - (e) Information about any protection plan for effected children;
 - (f) Information about any safety concerns for CAF employees;

- (g) Name of investigating police agency and officer;
 - (h) Status of DHS Child Welfare case, if any, at the time of the critical incident;
 - (i) Pending juvenile, criminal or civil court action; and
 - (j) Names of additional people that should be included in the Critical Incident Response process to ensure best response.
- (3) A 307 must be created if the critical incident involves a child fatality or a safety threat to a child. The CPS assessment should occur simultaneously to the notification and CIRT process. The notification and CIRT processes should not delay a safety assessment.
- (4) A DHS child welfare supervisor must secure and sensitize all child welfare case records related to the critical incident according to local branch procedures. Gather original hard copies of all child welfare records relating to the case. Print and secure all computerized child welfare records relating to the case. Arrange for a copy to be made of the entire file for retention by the local branch for continuing casework needs, if needed. Direct and assure that any information added to the case file after the critical incident identifies when the information was entered and by whom.
- (5) The SDA Manager or Child Welfare Manager may request assistance from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) when a critical incident occurs. EAP may provide an immediate trauma debriefing if appropriate, or individual Department staff may seek personal assistance. Providing immediate assistance to Department staff may prevent the later development of delayed stress and vicarious trauma reactions. A supervisor may offer the support of another staff person to assist and support the assigned worker when the incident occurred on an open Department case.

CIRT DETERMINATION

- (1) Immediately upon receipt of the CF150, all management recipients must review the information, determine if the incident may require the CIRT process and if so, bring it to the attention of Assistant Director for CAF. The Assistant Director for Children and Families (CAF) will review the information, determine if the incident may require the CIRT process and if so, bring it the attention of the Director of The Department of Human Services (DHS).
- (2) The Director of DHS will determine what critical incidents require the CIRT process.
- (a) There are no restrictions to how a critical incident may come to the attention of The Director of DHS.
 - (b) If a critical incident is identified in any way other than a CF150, sensitive issue report, a CF150 must be created.
- (3) If the sensitive issue does not warrant a CIRT process, the issue will be handled

at the local level following the local protocol.

CIRT PROCESS

- (1) Within 24 hours of the determination that a critical incident requires the CIRT process, the following must occur:
 - (a) The Director of DHS must designate a CIRT lead;
 - (b) The CIRT lead must:
 - (A) Designate a local lead;
 - (B) Designate a media response lead;
 - (C) Identify team members. Additional team members may be identified, as needed, throughout the process. Team members may appoint designees. The CIRT must include:
 - (i) The Assistant Director for CAF
 - (ii) The Deputy Assistant Director for Field Services
 - (iii) The Administrator for the Office of Safety and Permanency for Children
 - (iv) The CPS Program Manager
 - (v) The Contact Attorney
 - (vi) The Media Communications Officer
 - (vii) A Law Enforcement Agency representative
 - (c) Coordinate the CIRT assessment of the current situation; and
 - (d) Ensure that all decisions are documented.

- (2) The CIRT must address assigned tasks on an ongoing basis until completion. Safety needs must be addressed immediately.
 - (a) The CIRT lead and local lead must report to one another on a daily basis. This daily communication must be documented and distributed to the CIRT members.

 - (b) The CIRT lead must:
 - (A) Direct CIRT process;
 - (B) Thoroughly examine the critical incident;
 - (C) Identify issues;
 - (D) Consult and monitor activities and problem solve;
 - (E) Provide updates to DHS Administration;
 - (F) Develop CIRT Plan; and
 - (G) Consult with State partners as appropriate.

 - (c) The local lead must:
 - (A) Address current safety needs of effected children;
 - (B) Develop a support plan for family members if appropriate;
 - (C) Interface with local MDT; and
 - (D) Consult with local partners as appropriate.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW AND CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT

- (1) Within 30 calendar days of initiating the CIRT process, the CIRT must complete a review of the critical incident and a written critical incident report. This report must include:
 - (a) Individual case status and conclusions; and
 - (b) Identified system issues, including policy, training, practice and personnel recommendations.

- (2) Within 30 days of completing the report, if system issues are identified, the CIRT must:
 - (a) Develop recommendations to address the system issues;
 - (b) Identify action steps. The action steps will be specific as to time lines, tasks and parties responsible for the tasks; and
 - (c) Communicate recommendations, action steps and progress to the public and stakeholders as appropriate.

REVIEW OF CIRT PROCESS

- (1) On a quarterly basis the CIRT process will be reviewed by the Child Welfare Advisory Committee. This review must:
 - (a) Review process results; and
 - (b) Review process effectiveness.

- (2) If system issues are identified, the Child Welfare Advisory Committee must:
 - (a) Develop recommendations to address the system issues;
 - (b) Identify action steps. The action steps will be specific as to timelines, tasks and parties responsible for the tasks; and
 - (c) Communicate recommendations, action steps and progress to the public and stakeholders as appropriate.