
**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL**

Effective Date: July 29, 2003
Revised Date: December 12, 2007

Number: A-0402

Abuse Investigations—Open Case

Purpose To provide guidelines for responding to new emergency response (ER) referrals on open Orange County Children and Family Services (OC CFS) cases, including children placed in other counties.

Approved This policy was originally approved by Michael Riley, Ph.D., Director of CFS, on July 29, 2003. The revised policy was approved by Mike Ryan, Director of CFS, on December 12, 2007.

Background New allegations of child abuse and/or neglect received on open CFS cases are subject to the same laws and regulations that govern the screening and investigation of all child abuse reports. The focus of the ER investigation of an open CFS case is to assess the immediate safety of the alleged victim and to determine whether further protective interventions are necessary to ensure the child's health and well-being.

This Policy and Procedure (P&P) will address investigation of new referrals on open cases when the parent, relative caregiver, or non-related extended family member (NREFM) is the alleged perpetrator.

This P&P incorporates information from CFS P&P Emergency Response in Another County (A-0405), which is now rendered obsolete.

For more general guidelines on conducting ER investigations, refer to CFS P&P Abuse Investigations—Practice Guidelines (A-0412).

Legal Mandates • California Department of Social Services (CDSS) [Policies and Procedures Manual, Division 31-125, 135](#)

- [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 300](#)
 - [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 342](#)
 - [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 387](#)
 - [Penal Code Sections 11165-11174.3](#)
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POLICY

Coordinated Response

OC CFS will provide child welfare services in a manner that best protects children and supports families in caring for their children in their own homes. As a part of this process, responses to new child abuse and/or neglect allegations received on an existing case will be conducted in a coordinated and informed manner, with child safety as the overriding priority.

Referral Assignments

New referrals that allege child abuse and/or neglect by a licensed/certified caregiver, a member of the caregiver's household, a group home staff member, or an unidentified person who may reside in or be employed in the child's placement, will be investigated by the Foster Care Investigations and Monitoring (FCIM) unit, per CFS P&P Abuse Investigations–Foster Care (A-0101).

All other new referrals on open cases will be assigned as follows:

- “Immediate responses” will be assigned to an ER or Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) social worker, based on the nature of the allegation(s)
- “10 day responses” will be assigned to the case-carrying social worker for the following programs:
 - Voluntary Family Services (VFS)
 - Specialized Family Services (SFS) VFS
 - SFS Intake and Investigations
 - Dependency Intake
- “10 day responses” will be assigned to a social worker from the ER 10-day unit for the following programs:
 - Dependency Investigations
 - Integrated Continuing Services (ICS)
 - SFS ICS
 - Multi-treatment Transition Services (MTS)
 - Adoptions

New referrals received on cases that are open for financial services only (e.g., Legal Guardianship with no dependency), will be investigated by an ER or CAST social worker.

For more detailed information on response times for ER investigations, refer to Response Times section of CFS P&P Abuse Investigations–Practice Guidelines (A-0412).

**Children Placed
Out of County**

New referrals on open OC cases where the child is placed, temporarily located, or found in another county will be assigned as follows:

- “Immediate responses” will be assigned per [Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Cross County Emergency Response Referrals \(see Attachment 1\)](#)
- “10 day responses” will be assigned per Referral Assignment section above

**Consultation/
Joint
Investigation**

Note: From this point forward in this P&P, the term “ER social worker” refers to any social worker from ER, CAST, or the ER 10 day unit.

Upon assignment of a new referral on an open case, the ER social worker will inform the case-carrying social worker of the new referral, the allegation(s) involved, and the designated response time by telephone, email, and/or pager.

The ER social worker will offer the case-carrying social worker the opportunity to team on the ER investigation.

If the ER social worker is unable to make direct contact with the case-carrying social worker, the ER social worker will contact the case-carrying social worker’s Senior Social Services Supervisor (SSSS) or another SSSS in the same program to consult regarding the case, prior to commencing the ER investigation.

The case-carrying social worker will provide the ER social worker with accurate, current information to aid in the ER investigation (e.g., family compliance with case plan, language needs, children’s school/daycare location, most recent contact with family, etc.).

**ER Social
Worker
Responsibilities**

The ER social worker assigned to the new referral is responsible to:

- Complete the ER investigation
- Make decisions affecting the immediate safety of all children involved in the referral

- Determine whether protective custody is necessary
- Consult with the case-carrying social worker regarding any information that may affect a decision to bring the children into protective custody

When the ER social worker determines that protective custody is necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the children in the referral, the ER social worker will:

- Take the children into physical custody
- Arrange transportation to Orangewood Children’s Home (OCH) or an alternative emergency placement
- Team with law enforcement
- Schedule and attend a Team Decision Making meeting, per guidelines set forth in CFS P&P Team Decision Making (D-0308)
- Complete all applicable paperwork [i.e., Application for Petition, investigative narrative, and all required Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data entry]

Case-Carrying Social Worker’s Responsibility

When it is determined that there is no immediate safety concern for the children involved in the referral, the ER social worker will notify the case-carrying social worker of the outcome of the investigation. At that time, the case-carrying social worker will determine whether additional services or intervention are necessary to address any issues raised during the investigation.

REFERENCES

Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on them.

- CFS P&P [Abuse Investigations–Practice Guidelines \(A-0412\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Abuse Investigations–Foster Care \(A-0101\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Team Decision Making \(D-0308\)](#)

Other Sources

Other printed references include the following:

None.

REQUIRED FORMS

Online Forms Required forms that may be printed out and completed, or completed online, are listed below and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

	Form Name	Form Number
	None.	

Hard Copy Forms Forms that can be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms) are listed below. ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

	Form Name	Form Number
	None.	

CWS/CMS Forms The following required forms may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS. ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

	Form Name	Form Number
	None.	

Brochures Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this procedure include:

	Brochure Name	Brochure Number
	None.	