

# CARELINE AND INTAKE

## Notification of Exceptional Circumstances

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### Policy

As a means of efficient communication and to maintain and improve quality of services, the Department of Children and Families will notify key stakeholders of exceptional circumstances. An Exceptional Circumstance may be either a Critical Incident or a Significant Event.

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### Definitions

**Critical Incidents**, for purposes of notification to the DCF Careline, are facts of suspected abuse or neglect that involve but are not limited to a child(ren) who:

- has died
- is in the care and custody of DCF and has been abducted
- has sustained a serious injury (includes, but is not limited to, burns, lacerations, bone fractures, substantial hematoma, and injuries to internal organs whether self-inflicted or inflicted by someone else) during a restraint or seclusion episode at a DCF-operated or -licensed facility
- has been hospitalized with a life-threatening condition
- has broken bones, serious burn that requires immediate medical attention or sentinel injuries (i.e. bruising, oral injury, etc.) and is five years of age or younger
- has a serious head injury that requires immediate medical attention
- has injuries to his or her internal organs
- is in the care and custody of DCF and has been sexually assaulted by an adult
- is in the care and custody of DCF and has run away and presents an imminent danger to him- or herself or the community (i.e. child under 13 years of age, medical condition, cognitive disability, etc.)
- is a victim of domestic or international human trafficking/sexual exploitation with allegation(s) against a caregiver or entrusted person
- is a participant in an event related to a DCF client that is likely to result in media coverage
- is a Safe Haven infant
- is a participant in a report that involves the death of a parent or caregiver

**Significant Events**, for purposes of notification to DCF Risk Management, are circumstances that pertain to a child(ren) who is DCF-involved that involve but are not limited to:

- a suicide attempt (a non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with an intent to die as a result of the behavior; might not result in injury)
  - an incident involving one or more children who has run away or is AWOL from a DCF or other operated or licensed entity
  - a significant disturbance involving children at a congregate care facility or licensed entity
  - any call for emergency services (911, law enforcement, 211-EMPS)
  - an allegation of a serious crime by an adult authorized by DCF to be responsible for the care of a child (including a DCF employee, licensed foster/adoptive parent, an employee of a DCF-contracted or credentialed provider, or a congregate care facility at which DCF-involved children reside)
  - an arrest of any child or youth in an open DCF case
  - death of a parent or caregiver in an open DCF case
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#### Notifications for Critical Incidents

Careline shall notify, within two hours of receipt of a new report of child abuse or neglect that constitutes a critical incident:

- the DCF Executive Team
- the Director of the Careline
- the Director of the Office of the Ombudsman
- the Central Office or Regional Administrator, Facility Superintendent or Division Director who has, or will have lead responsibility for the case or incident
- the Office Director, Intake Program Supervisor, and Quality Improvement Program Supervisor
- for all critical incidents involving an open case: the Program Supervisor, Supervisor, and Social Worker who are directly responsible for the case
- the Central Office Risk Management Unit
- the Communications Director
- the Agency Legal Director
- the DCF Medical Director or Director of Pediatrics
- the Licensing Program Manager
- the Chief Fiscal Officer
- the Administrator of Clinical and Community Consultation and Support Division;
- the Administrator of Juvenile and Adolescent Services
- the Director Human Resources Management
- the Director of the Office of Research and Evaluation
- the Office of the Child Advocate
- the Office of the Court Monitor

Notification shall be made by email using the DCF-823, "Notification of Exceptional Circumstances."

Senior managers receiving notification of exceptional circumstances from Careline shall forward the information to other DCF staff in their chains of command as deemed necessary.

**Note:** Notification to additional DCF staff as necessary, or to third parties as required by law, may occur on a case-by-case basis. However, no additional notifications shall be added to this list on a permanent basis unless approved by the Commissioner or designee.

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#### Notification to Careline by Other DCF Staff

In the case of a critical incident noted by DCF staff after Careline has forwarded the report, the Program Supervisor or equivalent shall be responsible for sending a completed DCF-823 to Careline within two hours. Careline shall then forward the DCF-823 to the notifications list.

**Note:** A DCF-823 shall only be generated if the incident can be linked to a report of suspected child abuse or neglect.

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#### Risk Management Notifications for Significant Events

For significant events the Regional Director, Facility Superintendent or their designees shall file the DCF-823 with Risk Management within 12 hours.

Risk Management shall notify the following parties of a report of a significant event within 2 business days, except for potentially dangerous and high profile circumstances for which notification shall occur on the same business day or the next business day in the case of afterhours, the weekend or a holiday:

- the DCF Executive Team
- the Director of the Careline
- the Director of the Office of the Ombudsman
- the Central Office or Regional Administrator, Facility Superintendent or Division Director who has lead responsibility for the case or incident
- the Office Director, Program Supervisor, Supervisor and Social Worker, if any, who are directly responsible for the case
- the Central Office Risk Management Unit
- the Communications Director
- the Agency Legal Director
- the DCF Medical Director or Director of Pediatrics
- the Licensing Program Manager
- the Chief Fiscal Officer
- the Administrator of Clinical and Community Consultation and Support Division;
- the Administrator of Juvenile and Adolescent Services
- the Director Human Resources Management
- the Office of the Child Advocate

**Note:** Notification to additional DCF staff as necessary or to third parties as required by law may occur on a case-by-case basis; however, no additional notifications shall be added to this list on a permanent basis unless approved by the Commissioner or designee

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#### Intersection with Risk Management

Significant Events and Critical Incidents occurring at DCF operated or licensed facilities and providers that are not linked to a report of child abuse or neglect shall be reported to DCF Risk Management by the facility, but not reported to Careline. Such notification should be captured through the Provider Information Exchange (PIE). Significant Events submitted by regional teams should use the DCF-823.

**Cross reference:** DCF Policy 5-1 "Office of the Chief of Quality and Planning Overview".

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