



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	IX	Administrative	
Chapter:	D	Critical Incident Reporting	5-21-2012
Subchapter:	1	Critical Incident Reporting	
Issuance:	100	Critical Incident Reporting	

Purpose:

This issuance establishes the policy and procedures for reporting child related and non-child related critical incident reports.

Authority:

N/A

Policy:

Critical Incident Reporting, Generally

DCF staff shall report all exceptional or extraordinary incidents involving children, clients, employees, resource family parents, service providers, Program Operations, or State offices or property at various administrative levels

Types of Critical Incidents

Critical Incidents shall be categorized as either a child-related incident or a non-child related. However, a child fatality or near fatality shall not be reported or categorized as a critical incident.

Critical Incidents Involving Children

The following incidents involving children shall be reportable as critical incidents by all CP&P offices:

- A child who is foundling (see [CP&P-II-C-5-700](#)) or a Safe Haven infant (see [CP&P-IV-C-5-100](#)).
- Sexual abuse by:

- A caregiver of a child in any type of CP&P supervised out-of-home placement;
 - Another child in a CP&P supervised placement; or
 - A CP&P employee, volunteer, or service provider of a child under CP&P supervision.
- Child maltreatment resulting in injuries or a serious condition when inflicted by;
 - A resource parent to a child in a CP&P supervised placement;
 - A resource parent to his or her own child, or another child residing in his or her home not under CP&P supervision;
 - A DCF employee to a child under CP&P supervision; or
 - A DCF employee to his or her own child or to a child residing in his or her home.
- Suicide or a serious suicide attempt resulting in injury, by a child under CP&P supervision or in a CP&P paid, or unpaid placement.
- An allegation of a serious crime committed by a child in the care or custody of CP&P.
- An abduction of a child under CP&P supervision.
- Incidents impacting CP&P cases that have attracted or are likely to attract media interest (TV, newspapers, radio, Internet).
- Other incidents of unusual, extreme, or exceptional case situations.

Note: The death of a parent in an open/active case or a case at intake is generally not a reportable critical incident. The Worker and Supervisor conference the matter and consult the Casework Supervisor, if necessary, to determine whether unusual circumstances exist which warrant critical incident reporting.

Non-Child Related Critical Incidents

The following types of non child-related incidents shall be reportable by all CP&P offices:

- The death of a CP&P employee (including an employee on leave);
- A serious work-related injury to a CP&P employee;
- A serious injury to a resource family parent;

- A civil or criminal action proposed or taken against CP&P, an employee, a resource family parent, and/or any members of their household which occurred during the provision of service to a client or is in some way work-related;
- A crime against a CP&P employee, including a violent act or a threat of violence occurring during the course of work, SPRU, or work-related activities;
- A complaint involving possible criminality on the part of a CP&P employee or a third party/contract provider (see [CP&P-IX-D-1-100.6](#), Protocol for Reporting Critical Incidents Alleging Criminal Behavior on the Part of a CP&P Employee or Contract Provider);
- Serious, extensive damage to CP&P property as a result of an accident, crime (e.g., arson), or natural disaster (e.g., fire, flood, hurricane);
- Serious, extensive damage to licensed/approved resource family homes, adoptive homes, group homes, residential facilities, shelters, etc.; and
- Incidents impacting CP&P that have attracted, or are likely to attract, media interest (TV, newspapers, radio, Internet).

Procedures:

A) Oral Notifications of Critical Incidents

A DCF employee first becoming aware of a child related or non-child related critical incident notifies his or her Supervisor. The employee or Supervisor makes an immediate oral report to the Casework Supervisor and the Local Office Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor. The oral report includes the following information:

- Date of the incident
- Nature of the incident, circumstances, and cause(s)
- Names of persons involved and their relationships to DCF
- Whether reported to law enforcement, if appropriate
- Contact person in the investigating office/unit
- All persons notified of the incident
- Status of investigation and immediate action needed

If the incident involves a child, the Worker or Supervisor includes the following additional information in the oral notification:

- Name of the child
- NJS case identification number
- Child's date of birth or age
- Child's sex
- Child's residence/address at the time of the incident
- Case status (open, date closed, never known to CP&P)
- CP&P authority for services/legal status
- Reasons for current and prior CP&P involvement
- Relationship of caregiver to child, if applicable
- Office supervising the case

If the incident is non-child related, the oral report includes whether equipment, material, or property was involved.

Once the oral notification has been made, the Local Office Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor initiates notifications within DCF, as appropriate.

See [CP&P-II-C-1-300](#), Limiting Conflicts of Interest, for policy and procedures regarding reports of child abuse and neglect involving CP&P employees. See [CP&P-IX-D-1-100](#).5 for reporting critical incidents after hours.

B) Documenting the Critical Incident

The CP&P Worker or IAIU staff person investigating the incident completes the CP&P Form [21-10](#), Critical Incident Report, within no more than five (5) working days of the incident.

The CP&P Worker or IAIU staff person documents all persons who were orally notified in the critical incident oral report record table, including notifications made to the local police, County Prosecutor's Office, and Human Services Police.

The completed form is routed by the LO Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor to the Area Director or designee who, upon receipt, forwards it to the CP&P Director/Designee or IAIU Central Office.

The CP&P Director's Office or IAIU Central Office distributes copies of the CP&P Form [21-10](#) to relevant staff, including, but not limited to:

- The DCF Commissioner,;
- The Office of Legal Affairs and Licensing,;
- Office of Communications;
- Office of Labor Relations; and
- Other appropriate staff and/or units.

The CP&P LO Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor provides an update to the Area Director within 14 days of the initial report.

C) Reporting Critical Incidents Alleging Criminal Behavior By or Involving a CP&P Employee or Contract Provider

When a field or area office Supervisor/Manager becomes aware of complaint or allegation that involves possible criminality by a CP&P employee or a contract, including a complaint that has been filed in a Municipal Court against a DCF employee, he or she immediately notifies the CP&P Director's Office by telephone.

If a complaint or allegation is against a Central Office employee, notify the Senior/Executive Staff member to whom that employee reports as well.

The same notification process is followed by SCR upon receipt of a report after hours. The SCR Screener/Supervisor does not contact SPRU, unless directed by the CP&P Director's Office or a Senior/Executive Staff member. For a conflict matter, contact the Public Defender Conflict Investigation Unit. See [CP&P-II-C-1-300](#).

Upon receipt of a report alleging possible criminality by a CP&P employee or contract provider, the CP&P Director's Office or Senior/Executive Staff member refers the matter to the DCF Office of Legal Affairs no later than the next work day, unless more immediate action or notification is necessary.

- For a serious allegation, the Office of Legal Affairs may determine that a referral to the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) is appropriate and necessary. The Office of Legal Affairs makes the referral.
- For a less serious offense, the Office of Legal Affairs may direct the Senior/Executive Staff member or the field office Manager to refer the matter to the local County Prosecutor's Office.

As in any other situation, client information that is confidential according to N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10a cannot be shared without a court order. Direct any questions to the DCF

Office of Legal Affairs. See [CP&P-IX-G-1-100](#), Laws, Regulations, and Administrative Orders Governing Disclosure of Information.

D) Protocol for Reporting Critical Incidents during Nights, Weekends, and/or Holidays

Reports of critical incidents received during non-business hours are handled by the State Central Registry (SCR). SCR makes the immediate oral report to the Special Response Unit (SPRU) Worker, if appropriate, and the SPRU Supervisor or IAIU After-Hours Supervisor.

The on-call SPRU Worker consults the SPRUIAIU After-Hours Supervisor about case handling/response. The SPRU/IAIU Supervisor notifies the Local Office Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor. The Local Office Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor initiates notifications within DCF, as appropriate.

Key Terms (Definitions):

“Critical incident” means an exceptional or extraordinary occurrence involving a client (child or adult), an employee, a resource family parent or home, other service providers, DCF/CP&P operations, or a State office or State property, which has resulted in, or may lead to, a serious or harmful consequence.

Forms and Attachments:

Critical Incident Report, CP&P Form [21-10](#)

Child Fatality Report, CP&P Form [21-11](#)

Related Information:

None