

CARELINE AND INTAKE

First Contact with DCF The reporter becomes the first participant in the CPS intervention process by bringing his or her suspicions or knowledge of child abuse or neglect to the attention of DCF, usually by contacting the Careline.

Who Must Report In accordance with state law, any person may cause an oral or written report to be made to DCF when there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters are those persons who are specifically required by statute to make a report when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child:

- has been abused or neglected;
- has had non-accidental physical injury, or injury that is at variance with the history given of the injury, inflicted upon the child; or
- is placed at imminent risk of serious harm.

Legal references: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101 and §17a-101a

Primary Responsibility of the Reporter The primary responsibility of the reporter is to provide sufficient information regarding the alleged victim, perpetrator and incident to enable the Careline to determine if the report can be accepted for a child abuse and neglect investigation or a family assessment response.

A mandated reporter should be available to provide any further information during the course of the investigation/assessment.

Reporter Liability and Protections Any person, institution or agency that, in good faith, makes a report shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability provided such person did not perpetrate or cause such abuse or neglect.

Careline Tasks The general tasks of the Careline Social Workers and Social Work Supervisors are as follows:

- answer and process calls or written information alleging suspected child abuse or neglect;
- determine if an allegation meets legal sufficiency as a report of suspected child abuse or neglect consistent with state statute, DCF policy and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Screening Tool;
- gather and record as much identifying and relevant information as possible about the allegations;
- use the SDM Response Priority Tool to determine the appropriate response time for the commencement of the investigation/family assessment response;
- when appropriate, forward the report to the Careline Supervisor for review and approval prior to transmitting the report to the appropriate DCF Office.

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Careline Tasks
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- assessment response;
- when appropriate, forward the report to the Careline Supervisor for review and approval prior to transmitting the report to the appropriate Area Office;
- notification to State Police or other law enforcement agencies when appropriate;
- depending on the required response time, commence investigations of abuse or neglect on new or active cases when the Area Offices are closed;
- answer and process other calls which relate to the provision of services to children and families;
- conduct background checks for schools, licensed agencies; and
- foster care provider applicants;

Answering Calls at Careline

When answering a call in which suspected child abuse or neglect is alleged, the Careline Social Work Screener shall:

- collect and assess information in a systematic manner; and
- use the CPS Report Protocol and the SDM Screening and Response Tools, to guide and document actions.

Steps to Answer a Call and Complete a Report

The Careline Social Worker shall take the following steps to answer a call and complete a report:

Step	Action
Call received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer and determine the nature of the call; • collect and process the information; • if the allegation involves suspected abuse or neglect, conduct the telephone interview; • document the information in computer system via the CPS Report Protocol; • discuss anonymity with mandated and non-mandated reporters; and • inform a mandated reporter of the written reporting process via completion of the DCF-136, "Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect"
Complete a background search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upon receipt of the call, search the computer system for current or prior child protective services history
Determine report acceptance and response time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilize the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools to determine acceptance and response decision.
Complete notifications	<p>Required notifications include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete the DCF-2122, "Letter to Mandated Reporters"; • complete a DCF-823, "Notification of Exceptional Circumstance," if applicable; • in cases of serious abuse, serious neglect or sexual abuse, call the police and complete the DCF-737, "Notification to State or Local Police of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse, Severe Physical Abuse or Severe Neglect"; • other notices as required by statute or police (<i>e.g.</i> notifications to superintendents).

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Uniform Response

The Social Work Screener shall answer the telephone in a manner that confirms the caller has reached the Child Abuse and Neglect Careline. Such a response benefits the caller by confirming that he or she has reached the correct number and that DCF has offered assistance.

Types of Calls

The Child Abuse and Neglect Careline receives several different types of calls regarding allegations of suspected child abuse and neglect and other issues related to children and families.

The table below lists the most common types of calls:

Category of Call	Related to...
Allegations of child abuse and neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse; • sexual abuse; • physical neglect, including domestic violence; • emotional neglect, including domestic violence; • educational neglect; • medical neglect; • moral neglect; • abandoned child; • Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking; • drug endangered child (DEC); and • Safe Haven baby.
Information and referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requests for information about child and family services or programs provided by DCF; • requests for information about programs provided by other state or community agencies (refer to 211 Infoline); • Voluntary Services requests; • Interstate Compact requests; • re-entry requests; and • requests for background checks.
Activity regarding children and families with whom DCF is already involved (active cases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • placement disruption; • medical permission to treat; • request for medication; • placement resource problem; • a crisis situation in a foster family; • a crisis situation in a client family; • hospitalization of a child; • runaway/AWOL; and • request for placement due to parent's inability to provide care.

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Reports Received First in the Area office

When information regarding abuse or neglect is reported first to an Area Office, the following procedures apply:

Type of Information Received in Area Office	Action
Telephone calls	Callers shall be instructed to contact Careline directly when making new reports of suspected abuse or neglect.
DCF-136 or letter	If an Area Office Social Worker receives a DCF-136 without evidence of a report being made the Area office will contact the Careline to make a report.
Walk-in reports	An Area Office Intake Social Worker shall assist the person in calling Careline from the Area Office or other appropriate area. Note: For reports requiring a same-day response, the Area Office Supervisor shall immediately assign an Intake Social Worker to initiate the investigation and then transmit the report to Careline.

Basic Questions

The Careline Social Worker shall ask the following basic interview questions for all child abuse and neglect calls.

If the caller cannot answer the questions, the Social Worker shall make every attempt to identify other persons who may have the information.

Category	Information to Be Obtained
Who	<p>Obtain, if possible, for all subjects of a report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name and any aliases, with correct spelling; • gender; • ethnicity; • age or date of birth; • address; • current location; • role relationships; • name and location of non-custodial parent; • names of siblings or other children living in or out of the home; • any known information about household members and extended family members; • telephone numbers; • language(s) spoken; and • other identifying information <p>In addition, request the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the caller and any other person who may have knowledge of the situation for future contact by the Intake Social Worker; • the relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child, <i>e.g.</i>, parent, step-parent, babysitter, child care worker; • the relationship between the caller and the alleged perpetrator; and • non-perpetrator parent, guardian, other caregiver.

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Basic Questions
(Continued)

Category	Information to Be Obtained
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happened, in simple terms? Did the reporter observe physical evidence of abuse or neglect? What prompted the disclosure? Where the alleged perpetrator is employed?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately when did the incident occur? Is it a chronic situation?
Where	Where is the child currently located?
How	How does the caller know what happened?
Why	<p>Why is the call being made at this time?</p> <p>Note: This question should only be asked if the information is necessary to assess the urgency of the response and will not unnecessarily extend the length of the call.</p>
Safety Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family safety factors, <i>e.g.</i>, domestic violence. Intake Social Worker safety factors, <i>e.g.</i>, weapons, drugs.

Additional Questions

In addition to the basic questions, the Careline Social Worker shall ask the following questions to complete a report for the following particular categories:

Category	Information to Be Obtained
Physical Abuse	<p>Describe the injury:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On what date and at what time did the injury occur? What does the injury look like (color, size, fresh or fading, shaped like)? What part of the body was injured? Is there a need for medical treatment? What is the parent's explanation? What is the child's explanation? Are there any precipitating factors? What led to the disclosure or brought the child to the caller's attention? Did anyone witness the abuse? Are there any family members who are taking action to protect the child? Has the reporter had previous concerns or interactions with the family? Is the child currently afraid of the alleged perpetrator? Is the child afraid to go home? Are there any other injuries or bruises noted? Was a skeletal exam completed?
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To whom did the child disclose the abuse? What prompted the disclosure? Did the child disclose directly to the reporter? What is the age of the alleged perpetrator and his or her relationship to the child? What is the alleged perpetrator's access to the victim and other children?

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Additional Questions
(Continued)

Sexual Abuse (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps are being taken to prevent further contact between the perpetrator and child? • Has the child had a medical examination?
Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What prompted the disclosure? • Where were the children during the incident? • Were the children injured? • Were the parents injured? • Was either parent hit, threatened or coerced? • Describe the severity of the incident. • Were weapons involved? • What is the non-offending parent's initiative and ability to protect him- or herself and the child? • What steps were taken to prevent the perpetrator's continued access to the home, <i>e.g.</i>, shelter, police, restraining order? • Were the police notified? Who made the notification? Who was arrested? What were the charges? • Did the caller witness the domestic violence? • Is there a history of domestic violence? • How frequent are the incidents?
Substance Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific substances are being used by the parent, <i>e.g.</i>, crack, heroin, alcohol? • What is the frequency of the substance use? • Do the children have knowledge of the substance use? • Are the parents high or intoxicated while directly caring for the children? • Are there drugs, either legal or illegal, in the home? If so, where are they located? • Do the children have access to the drugs? • Is there drug paraphernalia in the home? • Have the parents ever been arrested for possession or sale of drugs? • Have the parents ever experienced blackouts? • How well are the children supervised? Are they left alone for extended periods of time? • Is there adequate food in the house? • Screen call for DEC referrals. • Identify as DEC referral via check box.

Death of a Child

Any incident in which a child's death occurs due to suspected abuse or neglect shall be accepted by Careline for a child protective services investigation.

If any child's death occurs who is currently the subject of a CPS investigation or Family Assessment Response or is currently part of a child protective services or voluntary services case or is receiving treatment at Solnit Center, Careline shall follow the procedures outlined in DCF Policy 21-1-2, "Notification of Exceptional Circumstances".

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Autopsy

When a child who has been under the care of DCF dies after a longstanding medical illness, the need for an autopsy will be reviewed by Careline or Area Office staff in conjunction with the DCF pediatrician.

Even if DCF was the legal guardian or statutory parent of a child who has died, consent for an autopsy must be given by the person who assumes responsibility for the burial of the body. DCF staff will work with that person to obtain consent for an autopsy.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-286.

Death of a Child After-Hours

If the death of a child who has been in the care of DCF occurs after hours, Careline shall follow the procedures outlined in DCF Policy 21-1-2, "Notification of Exceptional Circumstances", and in addition:

- the Careline Program Director shall telephone the Commissioner or designee, the Regional Administrator and the Area Office Director.
- the Careline Investigator shall provide face-to-face notification to the biological parents whenever possible after conferring with the Careline Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager or Director; and
- the Careline Investigator shall provide necessary follow-up contact and support to the child's caregivers.

Death of a Parent Whose Child is in Out-of-Home Care

When a child is in out-of-home care and the child's parent dies during area office business hours Careline shall immediately notify the Area Office assigned staff.

When the parent's death occurs after hours, Careline shall consult with the Program Manager or Director, and other significant persons involved with the child to determine the best course by which to inform the child of the parent's death.

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

See DCF Policy 21-14, "Human Trafficking" and the corresponding Practice Guide

Transmitting Accepted Reports to the DCF Office

The Careline Supervisor shall immediately transmit all approved reports received at Careline to the designated Area Office.

The Careline Supervisor shall notify the Area Office when such a report is being transmitted if it requires a same day response.

If the response time necessitates an after-hours investigation, the Careline Supervisor will assign the investigation to a Careline investigator.

Supervisory Approval

A Careline Social Work Supervisor must approve all not accepted reports, exceptional circumstance, after hours reports which require a primary investigator/on call staff assignment, and use of SDM overrides

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Length of Calls

Calls shall be answered and information obtained promptly and efficiently to avoid delays for other callers and to transfer accepted reports to the Area Offices for investigation in a timely manner.

The Careline Social Worker shall control and direct the telephone interview in a courteous and professional manner.

The goal of the interview is to obtain sufficient information to determine if the call can be accepted as a report of suspected abuse or neglect and to initiate an investigation.

When to End a Call

The Careline Social Worker shall end a call when enough information has been gathered to determine one of the following:

- the information gathered is sufficient to determine that a CPS response is required;
 - the call is not a child protective services report and the call is redirected to community resources, 211 Infoline or other DCF divisions; or
 - the information does not meet legal sufficiency for an accepted report.
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Ending the Call

To end the call, the Careline Social Worker shall:

- advise the caller that his or her information will be processed with appropriate follow up;
- thank the caller for his or her concern; and
- ask the caller to call again with any future suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

If the caller does not want to hang up or persists in relating repetitive or tangential information, the Careline Social Worker shall:

- advise the caller that sufficient information to take action and determine an appropriate response has been provided; and
 - end the call in a professional manner.
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Response Time for an Investigation

The Careline Social Worker shall use the SDM Response Priority Tool to establish the risk level to the child and determine the time within which the investigation must commence.

Response times are calculated from the time the report is accepted at Careline.

Careline Primary Investigator's Role

The Careline Primary Investigator's role differs from that of an DCF Office Intake Social Worker in the following ways:

- The Careline Investigator is required to investigate any report made to Careline that requires an immediate response (or 24 hour response on weekends or holidays) whenever Area Offices are closed.

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**Careline
Primary
Investigator's
Role**
(Continued)

- Careline Investigators are considered "essential" staff and are required to respond to investigations in "all weather conditions" even if state cars have been officially grounded.
- The Careline Investigator is required to respond anywhere in the State of Connecticut, and occasionally outside the state, to complete essential aspects of an investigation/assessment.
- The Careline Investigator is required to assess the impact of (but not limited to) domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse, medical issues and criminal history on a child's safety without the consultation of the Regional Resource Group specialists or DCF legal staff.
- Careline management has contact information for DCF subject matter experts (legal director, on call DCF doctors, and child abuse experts) for use in emergency after-hours situations.

**Requirements
of a Careline
Investigation**

The Careline Investigator is required to make every attempt to interview all other appropriate and available service providers, family members and or collateral contacts for the purposes of assessing safety and risk.

**Transition of
Careline
Investigation
to the Area
Office**

After concluding an after-hours investigation, the Careline Investigator shall transmit all documentation and evidence to the designated Area Office Social Work Supervisor by the start of the next working day.

**Collaboration
with Law
Enforcement
Investigations**

The following Careline Protocol covers drug endangered children (DEC), DMST or any other special circumstances involving collaboration with law enforcement (LE) prior to an action.

Cross Reference: Substance Use Disorder and Testing Practice Guide

**Area Office
or Careline
LE Action
Collaboration
and Planning**

When applicable, DCF will collaborate with all concerned official entities prior to execution of a law enforcement action related children.

Concerned parties may include, but are not limited to:

- law enforcement (LE);
- Office of the State's Attorney (OSA);
- Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP);
- HAZMAT; and
- local, state and federal counterparts.

DCF may share information with LE within state and federal guidelines.

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**Area Office
or Careline
LE Action
Collaboration
and Planning**
(Continued)

Staffing: When LE identifies that there are children involved in an investigation, DCF will “stand by” in response to the LE contact.* In cases where there is a planned LE action that involves a child(ren)’s DCF will ensure that there are adequate staff available to meet the needs of the child(ren) and conduct interviews pertinent to the DCF case.

In these planned matters, DCF will work with appropriate staff within DCF to secure potential placement for the child(ren).

As it is the preference of DCF to utilize relative placements whenever appropriate, DCF staff will conduct a search of its records to identify relatives for potential placement purposes. **Although DCF will have prior knowledge of an impending LE action, DCF staff may NOT reach out to relatives in regard to any such action or resulting potential need for placement prior to the LE action occurring.** In all cases where a relative option is identified and determined to be appropriate under DCF policy, such placement will be utilized.

Placement: To be best prepared to provide for placement for the child(ren), DCF will concurrently pursue traditional foster care through the DCF Office of Children and Youth in Placement (OChYP) in cases where the relative option is not definite at the time. OChYP placements will be pursued that support the best interest of the child(ren), e.g., maintaining sibling groups together, and considering proximity to community connection.

In cases where a relative option is determined to exist but is not available on the date of the removal, DCF may use a traditional foster home while continuing to secure relative placement.

Any parent or caregiver who has a child(ren) removed from his or her care will be provided with the DCF-159, “Immediate Removal - 96- Hour Hold of Children.”

*The Area Office shall designate AO staff for this role. Careline shall determine if primary staff or AO Careline coverage staff shall be designated for this role on a case-by-case basis.

Report to Careline: In cases in which DCF and LE collaborate prior to the LE action, the **DCF staff** responding to the case will make a report of abuse or neglect to Careline as soon as practical, but not later than 12 hours after the action. This report will be made in accordance with existing mandated reporting laws.

LE will be requested, as required by mandated reporting laws, to submit a written report (DCF-136) to the DCF Careline within 48 hours of DCF responding to the scene.

**Other
considerations
when
collaborating
with an LE
investigation**

Location of Child at DCF Response Time: DCF staff will not enter any premises until deemed “cleared” by the appropriate entity in control of the site (e.g., LE, DEEP, HAZMAT). “Cleared” means that the premises are found to contain no health or safety hazards to any person entering the site.

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Other considerations when collaborating with an LE investigation
(Continued)

Cleared sites: Entry will be permitted for the purpose of conducting a full assessment and, if a child is removed, for the purpose of obtaining possessions for the child that maybe needed for placement.

NOTE: In cases where there is a risk of contamination as determined by the entity in control of the site, nothing will be removed from the premises.

DCF may observe the residence with LE present to view any risks that are present due to the drug environment or other household situation.

Contaminated Persons/Sites: In cases in which the entity in control of the site (*e.g.*, LE, DEEP, and HAZMAT) determines that there are contaminated persons or the site is contaminated, DCF will not transport a child prior to the entity in control completing any needed decontamination.

DCF will not remove any items from a site that is identified as contaminated.

In the event that the child requires transportation to a medical facility for treatment purposes, the entity in control of the site will arrange for such transport. DCF shall follow the child to the medical facility and proceed with case services and placement services, if needed.

DCF will not transport any child unless he or she has been decontaminated.

Medical Evaluation of Child(ren): In all cases in which a child requires decontamination, DCF will seek medical treatment to determine if the child has been exposed to illegal substances through inhalation or other physical contact or has any medical needs resulting from the environment. A child removed from a drug manufacturing environment at which no decontamination was necessary should be still be evaluated by a medical provider prior to placement.

Tools and Equipment

The Careline Investigator is provided with a "permanently assigned" state vehicle and must follow all DAS Home Garaging guidelines. The Careline Investigator must schedule and ensure routine maintenance on the vehicle, ensure it has full tank of gas at the start of each shift and ensure that it is routinely cleaned.

The Careline Investigator must ensure that four different types of valid car seats are properly secured in the vehicle in order to be prepared for transporting children of different ages and sizes.

The Careline Investigator is assigned one gas credit card to purchase gas at a commercial station and one gas card for any DOT gas station. A list of the DOT gas stations statewide is kept in the glove compartment of each vehicle.

The Careline Investigator is assigned a cellular telephone for use in contacting the Careline Office, Area Offices and foster homes and for performing any other case-related duties.

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Tools and Equipment (Continued)

The Careline Investigator must also carry and maintain the following:

- laptop computer;
- gas card;
- debit cards
- tape measure;
- cellular phone;
- flashlight;
- phone and address lists of all municipal police departments, State Police barracks and hospitals; and
- a current emergency foster home list.

The Careline Investigator must also carry the following forms in multiple languages:

- clothing vouchers;
- "Parents Right to Know" brochure;
- Immediate Removal - 96-Hour Hold of Child(ren) (DCF-159);
- Immediate Removal - 96-Hour Hold Placement Notification (DCF-160);
- Certification of Title IV-E Status (DCF-2223);
- Medical Assistance Form (DCF-MA1);
- Medical Insurance Information (DSS-W-1621);
- Board and Care Agreements (DCF-469);
- Authorization for Release of Information To the Department of Children and Families (DCF-2131(T))
- Authorization for the Release of Information From the Department of Children and Families (DCF-2131(F));
- Notice of Privacy Practices(DCF-2236);
- Service Agreement/Safety Plan (DCF-2166); and
- Substance Abuse Screening/Information Form (DCF-2110).

Other Related Requirements

Careline Investigators are required to be available to work during normal business hours for, but not limited to, the following reasons: to testify in court proceedings, to testify in substantiation hearings for Area Offices or the Special Investigations Unit, to participate in fatality review proceedings, to attend mandatory trainings or staff meetings, and to ensure routine vehicle maintenance.

Careline Investigators are also required to regularly drive long distances up to and sometimes exceeding two hours to respond to and return from investigations depending on location, weather and traffic-related issues. Driving distances and times will increase if a Careline Investigator is simultaneously assigned multiple investigations.

Due to the unpredictability of investigations, Careline Investigators may be required to work past his or her regularly-assigned hours. Careline Investigators may also be required to work for extended periods of up to 16 hours with little or no down time depending on work assignments.

Safety Issues

Careline Investigators may be exposed to frequent nighttime operations in dangerous, hostile areas with high crime and gang activity. When responding to after-hours situations, DCF staff should consider use of local Law Enforcement for support.

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After Hours On-Call Schedule and Staffing Designated on-call staff shall cover a one-week cycle.

Each Region shall have a sufficient number of on-call Social Workers to cover each weekly cycle.

Each Region shall designate an on-call coordinator for Regional on-call staffing.

Types of Calls Responded to by the Regional On-Call Social Workers

The Regional on-call Social Workers shall primarily respond to after-hours calls about open cases which are not new reports of abuse or neglect.

These calls can be situations requiring:

- telephone assistance or intervention; or
- on-site intervention, e.g., a placement disruption, re-placement of a runaway.

Note: At times, on-call Social Workers may be assigned to a new report depending upon Area Office and Careline demands.

Steps Taken by Careline to Forward Calls to the After Hours On-Call Social Worker

If the Careline Social Worker cannot resolve a situation by providing basic information to the caller, the call shall be forwarded to the Area Office on-call Social Worker as follows:

Step 1: Careline Social Worker will search LINK for essential case data, case name, legal status and assigned Social Worker's name.

Step 2: Careline Social Worker will provide the on-call Social Worker with the following information:

- the computer system data;
- the identity of caller; and
- the reason for the call.

Step 3: Careline Social Worker will log the call and the time the on-call Social Worker was contacted.

Step 4: Once assigned, the on-call Social Worker is supervised by a Careline Social Work Supervisor.

Steps Taken by After Hours On-Call Social Worker

When contacted by Careline, the on-call Social Worker shall respond as follows:

- telephone the caller within ten minutes of being contacted by Careline;
- immediately respond to any emergency situation;
- notify the Careline Social Work Supervisor of site visit findings and any safety concerns;
- upon return from a site visit, notify the Careline Social Work Supervisor;

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**Steps Taken
by After
Hours On-
Call Social
Worker**
(Continued)

- complete a case activity note for every call;
- at the beginning of the next working day, provide the case activity notes to each of the following persons in the Area Office:
 - assigned Social Worker;
 - Social Work Supervisor;
 - Program Supervisor; and
 - OChYP Program Supervisor, when a placement is involved;

Note: If the on-call Social Worker cannot complete the case activity notes before the beginning of the next business day, he or she must call the Area Office assigned staff to provide the information and answer any questions. The information must be e-mailed to assigned staff and their chain of command and entered into the narrative as an after-hours case activity:

- maintain a log of calls received from Careline, recording the following information:
 - case name;
 - caller's name;
 - nature of call;
 - time of call;
 - resolution of situation; and
 - time required to resolve the situation, either by telephone or by making a site visit.

**Responsibility
of Regional
On-Call
Coordinator**

A manager in each Region shall be designated as the coordinator of that Region's on-call system, with the following duties:

- meet with the on-call Social Workers as necessary;
- notify the Area Office and Careline Director of any problems or issues;
- maintain the on-call schedule;
- by noon of each Thursday, provide Careline with the names of the after-hours on-call Social Workers for the coming week;
- notify Careline of any changes to the schedule during the week;
- ensure that the following resources are available for each on-call Social Worker:
 - a cellular phone;
 - Area Office on-call handbook with area-specific maps, phone numbers, court forms, etc.; and
 - a state car.

**Responsibility
for Making
Placements**

The after-hours on-call Social Worker may be responsible for locating a placement when:

- a runaway is located;
- an out-of-home placement disrupts; or
- a child in an active in-home case requires placement, e.g., a parent demands removal of a child, a child runs away and refuses to return home.

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Responsibility for Making Placements
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To locate a placement, the on-call Social Worker will explore family arrangement possibilities, and attempt to place a child with appropriate relative and kin. If that is not possible, the Social Worker shall utilize the Area Office's emergency foster home list or, if no homes are available, the statewide emergency foster home list or the emergency shelter list.

If no appropriate placement is available, the on-call Social Worker shall contact the Careline Social Work Supervisor for assistance. If necessary, the Careline Social Work Supervisor will contact a Careline Manager to determine if a DCF-operated facility may be used.

Case Alerts

The assigned Area Office Social Worker and Supervisor are responsible for resolving potential or known problems on open cases which are identified during work hours.

If the Area Office Social Work staff Supervisor anticipates a problem developing after the close of the office, the Program Supervisor assigned will contact Careline to discuss the details. He or she shall also provide case alert information, in writing, to the Careline Supervisor or Manager.

A case alert shall include the Area Office's recommendation for action and potential placement resources, if a placement may be needed.

The Area Office shall provide a copy of the case alert to the on-call Social Workers and Careline when deemed necessary.

Non-Delinquent and Out-of-State Runaways

During the hours when the Area Offices are closed, the Area Office on-call Social Worker shall have primary responsibility for assessment and planning for emergency intervention services to non-delinquent, out-of- state runaways under the direction of the Careline Social Work Supervisor.

Action on Receipt of Request

Upon receipt of a call from a child, police department, detention facility, or other source requesting services for an out-of-state runaway, Careline shall determine:

- if there is a report of the child's legal status (verify by police contact);
- the parent's or guardian's whereabouts and any attempts to contact them; and
- the child's willingness to return home or accept placement services from DCF as assessed by:
 - any history of abuse or neglect; and
 - the child's competency to refuse to return home.

Contact With the Parent or Guardian of a Runaway

The Careline shall attempt to contact the parent or guardian of an out-of- state runaway to discuss:

- the parent's or guardian's willingness to have the child returned home;

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Contact With the Parent or Guardian of a Runaway (Continued)

- transportation arrangements;
- the ability to return the child home within 12 hours (the length of time that the police may legally hold the child); and
- the parent's or guardian's willingness to have the child placed by DCF.

Note: There is no statutory requirement for written parental consent to place an out-of-state runaway.

Child Accepts DCF Services

If the runaway child agrees to accept DCF services, the Social Worker shall:

- obtain any written documentation;
- complete case narratives and forward them to the Area Office;
- invoke a 96 hour hold; and
- find a temporary placement until transportation arrangements can be made to send the child home.

If a temporary placement is needed, the after-hours on-call Social Worker and Careline Social Work Supervisor shall collaborate on locating a placement for the child.

Note: The Interstate Compact Office is not available after hours.

Use of 96-Hour Hold

If the parent or guardian refuses to cooperate with having a runaway child placed or in planning for the child's return home, or if the child refuses to return home due to allegations of abuse or neglect, placement may be made pursuant to a 96-hour hold.

The report shall then be accepted for a child protective services intake and an additional report shall be made to the state where the parent or guardian resides.

Child Refuses DCF Services

If the child refuses DCF services, placement or to return home, the Social Worker shall:

- notify the Area Office where the child is located of his or her refusal;
 - forward any written documentation to the appropriate Area Office staff; and
 - notify the parent or guardian of their right to pursue a requisition process through their state's Interstate Compact Office.
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Runaways Committed to the State of Origin

When a runaway is committed to his or her state of origin, the Careline Social Worker or Social Work Supervisor shall:

- contact the appropriate out-of-state agency;
 - determine how soon the child can be picked up;
 - discuss with the runaway his or her willingness to return;
 - locate temporary placement, if required;
 - forward the case information to the appropriate Area Office staff; and
 - enter the case information in the computer system.
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CARELINE AND INTAKE

Reports of Abuse or Neglect Concerning a Department Employee

Reports of abuse or neglect in which a DCF employee is the alleged perpetrator shall be forwarded by Careline to the Special Investigations Unit for assignment to an SIU investigator. Case will be made confidential. If the report requires an after hour response it will be assigned to a primary investigation social worker for the purpose of commencement and assessment.

These types of situations may involve the DCF employee and:

- his or her own children; or
- a child receiving services from DCF, including a child residing in a DCF-operated facility.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 22-1-1 "Special Investigations Unit"

Careline Managers' Responsibilities

A Careline Manager is on call 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and has the following responsibilities:

- manage all after-hours Careline functions, including after-hours investigations;
- authorize the following:
 - emergency staffing to cover shift vacancies;
 - medical permission to treat in complicated medical situations, with consultation with the on-call DCF medical staff; Family Arrangements and
 - 96-hour holds;
- Careline staff will notify via telephone the on call manager of Exceptional Circumstances reports;
- interface, as appropriate, with Regional managers to ensure:
 - continuity of service delivery on active DCF cases; and
 - appropriate investigation response to protective service reports; and
 - perform all related duties and decision making to ensure an efficient Careline operation.

Notification to Mandated Reporters

DCF has a legal obligation to provide mandated reporters with information regarding the acceptance and outcome of reports made by the reporter on behalf of children and families. This notification shall be made using DCF-2122, "Letter to Mandated Reporters"

The DCF-2122 must be sent by Careline at the time the decision is made to accept or not accept the report.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101.

Request to Change Careline Accept/Not Accepted Decision

Area Office staff shall not administratively screen out any Careline report.

In situations in which the Area Office may have information that merits a reconsideration of a Careline decision to accept or not accept a report, the Area Office shall request a change of the decision, with supporting rationale.

(Continued next page)

CARELINE AND INTAKE

Request to Change Careline Accept/Not Accepted Decision
(Continued)

A request to change the decision may not be based solely on a disagreement with Careline's decision and shall occur the same business day as the receipt of the report or the next business day if the report is received after the close of regular business hours.

In the event of a request to change a decision to accept a report, the original response time remains unless Careline changes its decision to a not accepted report.

The response time shall be based on the initial receipt of the report and not on the date the decision is changed.

The Area Office may not request that a particular Careline decision be changed more than once.

Process to Request a Decision Change

The following steps shall be followed in order to request a decision change from Careline:

- The Area Office Intake or Special Investigations Program Supervisor to whom the report is assigned must submit the request to the Careline Program Supervisor;
- The AO or SIU Program Supervisor must submit the request to the Careline Program Supervisor via telephone or e-mail the same business day as the report is received or the next business day if the report is received after regular business hours;
- All requests must include:
 - LINK case number;
 - date of report;
 - reason for request, from this list:
 - victim over 18 years old and not in DCF care;
 - ongoing issue in an active case;
 - duplicate information;
 - perpetrator not a caregiver or entrusted person;
 - allegation does not meet statutory child abuse or neglect definitions; or
 - insufficient information to investigate; and
 - rationale for requesting change to a not accepted report.
- The Careline Program Supervisor shall have one business day to review the request and make a decision.
 - If the decision is for the report to remain accepted, the Area Office is responsible for meeting the identified response time.
 - If the decision is for the report to be changed to not accepted, the case will be re-assigned to the Careline Program Supervisor.

Mandated Reporter Letter

If the Careline Director or designee reverses the decision from an accepted to a not-accepted report, the Area Office Program Supervisor shall notify the mandated reporter, if any, in writing explaining how the decision was made and how the information will be followed up.

CARELINE AND INTAKE

**Courtesy
Visits for
Other States**

Careline sometimes receives calls from child protection agencies in other states requesting that DCF assess a child or family even if there are no current allegations of abuse or neglect in Connecticut. These are known as requests for "courtesy visits."

Prior to forwarding such a request from another state to the Area Office for action, the Careline Social Worker must ensure the call is not appropriate for handling by the DCF Interstate Compact unit.

Courtesy visits may include but are not limited to these situations:

- An out-of-state CPS agency is requesting that DCF determine the living conditions of a child, the ability of the caregiver to care for the child or other issues impacting the child or family not rising to the level of abuse or neglect.
 - An out-of-state CPS agency is requesting that DCF determine where the child and family reside and that the child is connected to needed services and is in school.
 - An out-of-state CPS agency is requesting an assessment of relatives who may be temporary visiting resources to children who are in the custody of the requesting state. (A temporary visit is defined as a child visiting a relative over the summer for vacation or for less than 30 days.)
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**Careline
Responsibilities**

The Careline Social Work Screener shall document the request and forward to the appropriate area office.

**Identified
Safety
Factors**

If there are concerns of abuse and neglect identified from the courtesy visit, the Social Worker, with guidance from the Social Work Supervisor or Program Supervisor, should call in a report to Careline. If accepted by Careline, the courtesy visit will then be changed to a CPS intake case.
