

Special Investigations Unit

22-1-1

Policy

The Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Special Investigations Unit (SIU) shall investigate all accepted careline reports regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect in which the alleged perpetrator is:

- a licensed or approved foster parent by DCF or a child placing agency (CPA) that include allegations of suspected abuse or neglect of a foster, adopted or biological child in the home, if the foster home has an active placement or had an active placement at the time of the allegations
- a DCF employee as an alleged perpetrator of suspected abuse or neglect when the employee is:
 - acting in his or her professional capacity, including as a DCF social worker or as DCF facility staff
 - a parent/legal guardian of an alleged victim
 - a household member in the home in which the alleged victim resides
 - a person entrusted with the care of an alleged victim
- a relative of a DCF employee when the DCF employee resides in the household or is in a caregiving role to the alleged victim
- staff of a residential facility (including, but not limited to, group homes, detention centers, STTAR homes, in-state residential treatment centers, DCF-operated facilities)
- active-duty police officer
- state elected official
- involved in a case which is assigned directly to SIU by the Commissioner.

During the investigation process, DCF will consider all participants' race, ethnicity and cultural perspectives, as well as biases (implicit, explicit, structural), that may influence DCF's decision making regarding the children's care and safety.

Note: The victim in an SIU investigation report may include young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 years for whom DCF is providing services.

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**SIU
Coordination with
Other
Social
Workers**

Upon assignment, the area office social worker staff assigned to the child victim(s) as well as the Foster Care Division (FCD) support worker, and licensing division will be notified of the SIU case assignment to conduct a collaborative joint investigation.

SIU will assess the safety of the child(ren). If a safety factor is identified, coordination between SIU, area office staff, licensing and foster care division will occur to determine if a safety plan is warranted or a removal of the children.

**DCF
Investigation
Policy**

DCF Policy 22-2-2, "Child Protective Investigations" applies to the SIU, unless exceptions are noted in the sections below.

**Who is
Notified of
Special
Investigation
Reports**

When a report is received at the careline, an e-mail notification shall be automatically generated through the computer system to the appropriate parties:

Type of Report	Report Goes To
Foster home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area office assigned staff of child(ren) in the home • FCD assigned staff or the director of the child placing agency
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Relations • SIU director • agency legal director
Employee who is also in the role of foster parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Relations • SIU director • agency legal director • the area office assigned staff of child(ren) in the home • FCD • assigned staff or the director of the child placing agency

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Who is Notified of Special Investigation Reports,
continued

Type of Report	Report Goes To
Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the area office assigned staff of child(ren) in the facility • facility superintendent or director • DCF licensing unit • DCF congregate care unit
DCF-Operated facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the area office assigned staff of child(ren) in the facility • superintendent • SIU director • Labor Relations • agency legal director
<p>SIU shall make contact with the appropriate partner agencies, such as the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Correction (DOC), Office of Early Childhood (OEC), Court Support Services Division (CSSD), and the State Department of Education (SDE).</p>	

SIU Joint Investigations

Parties to joint investigations may include but are not limited to:

- area/ regional office CPS staff
- DCF FCD
- DCF licensing/ congregate care program leads
- DCF grants and contracts
- Labor Relations
- Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Office of Early Childhood (OEC)
- Department of Correction (DOC)
- state or local police
- child placing agency staff.

In all joint investigations, the SIU Investigator shall maintain the lead role in conducting the investigation and interviews on behalf of DCF.

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Special Investigations Unit**22-1-1****Investigations in DCF and Child Placing Agency Foster Homes**

The Foster Care program supervisor and the child placing agency director, if applicable, shall place the licensed foster home on hold and support the family during the investigation process.

The area office social worker(s) assigned to the child(ren) shall participate with SIU in the initial home visit to help determine whether the child(ren) must be removed from the foster home.

If immediate safety concerns are identified and a removal is necessary, the area office social worker or child placing agency shall secure a placement and arrange for transportation as needed.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 24-1-1, Foster Care Division Policy

Joint Investigations When Immediate Safety Concerns of Adopted or Biological Children are Present

If immediate safety concerns are identified and a removal is necessary regarding a biological or adopted child of the foster parent, the SIU program supervisor shall:

- issue an administrative 96-hour hold (96HH)
- coordinate identification of placement resources.

If there is no imminent danger, the family shall have the opportunity to participate in a considered removal teaming that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for the family before a decision to remove is made.

The SIU Investigators shall:

- complete all necessary interviews
- secure a placement
- complete any necessary court work
- complete the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol" (computer generated).

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Special Investigations Unit**22-1-1****Investigation
Requirements:
Foster
Homes**

The SIU investigator shall:

- review foster home provider narratives and the licensing study
- commence the investigation within the specified time frame
- continually assess the safety factors present and complete the SDM safety assessment and utilize the safety ABCD paradigm when the investigation involves allegations related to the foster parent's birth or adopted children
- use intimate partner violence and substance use assessment tools as applicable
- consult with the appropriate Regional Resource Group (RRG) if there are issues of mental or medical health, intimate partner violence or substance use
- complete the investigation within 33 business days of acceptance of the report by the careline
- notify the foster family, FCD, FFT and child placing agency of the outcome of the investigation
- include, in the DCF-2074, Investigation Protocol, all facts related to the assessment of the allegations.

Upon completion of the investigation, SIU shall notify FCD and Area office staff via email of case disposition. SIU shall forward a copy of the protocol to the child placing agency director.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 21-2, ABCD Child Safety Practice Model

**Investigation
Requirements: DCF
Employee
as a Foster
Parent**

For investigations involving a DCF employee as a foster parent the following will occur:

- upon receipt of a report to the careline, the SIU social work supervisor (SWS) shall review the report, assign an investigator and develop a course of action plan
- the SIU SWS shall notify Labor Relations and offer a representative the opportunity to be present for the alleged victim's interview (if this is not possible within the response time requirements, the SIU investigator shall provide Labor Relations with the results of the interview) and

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Special Investigations Unit**22-1-1****Investigation Requirements: DCF Employee as a Foster Parent,**
continued

- in all interviews, the SIU investigator shall take the lead in asking the questions to minimize any confusion or trauma to a child.

Investigation Requirements: DCF Employee in Their Professional Capacity

For investigations involving a DCF employee in their professional capacity or at a DCF facility, the steps outlined above in addition to the following steps will be taken:

- the careline shall notify the facility superintendent
- SIU director will notify the employee's area office director
- the facility superintendent, Labor Relations and/or the area office director shall determine whether immediate action should be taken regarding the employee's status during the investigation (e.g. administrative leave, desk duty, etc.).

Investigation Requirements: DCF Employees as a Parent, Guardian or Person Entrusted

Upon receipt of a report, the careline shall notify Labor Relations and the director of the SIU. Labor Relations shall contact the assistant chief of the bureau of child welfare and the office director to determine whether immediate action should be taken regarding the employee's status during the investigation (e.g. administrative leave, desk duty, etc.).

Upon receipt of a report from the careline, the SIU SWS shall:

- review the report
- assign an investigator
- develop a course of action plan and
- notify Labor Relations and offer a representative the opportunity to be present for the alleged victim's interview (if this is not possible within the response time requirements, the SIU investigator shall provide Labor Relations with the results of the interviews).

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Special Investigations Unit**22-1-1****Investigation Requirements: DCF Employees as a Parent, Guardian or Person Entrusted,**
continued

The SIU investigator shall:

- review any previous history and case narratives
- commence the investigation within the specified time frame
- continually assess the safety factors present and complete the SDM Safety Assessment, utilize the ABCD paradigm, the intimate partner violence and substance use assessment tools
- if there are issues pertaining to mental or medical health, intimate partner violence or substance use concerns, a consult with the appropriate experts including but not limited to the RRG staff.

If there is no imminent danger, the family shall have the opportunity to participate in a considered removal teaming before a decision to remove is made.

If the biological or adopted child of the employee must be removed from the home due to imminent danger the SIU program supervisor shall issue an administrative 96 HH and notify the area office. The SIU investigator shall secure a placement, complete any necessary court work and the Investigation Protocol (DCF-2074).

When the SIU investigator and SWS determine that the case warrants ongoing services, SIU shall arrange for the transfer of the case to the designated area office within five (5) working days. All employee cases require a legal consult regarding disposition.

SIU shall notify Labor Relations of the disposition.

Licensed Facility Investigations

The SIU Investigator shall:

- contact the facility director or designee to notify them of the report and assignment and to make arrangements for the initial contact and interviews
- complete criminal and CPS background checks on the alleged perpetrator and review any history found
- contact the ongoing social worker for the child
- contact the child's parent or legal guardian

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Special Investigations Unit**22-1-1****Licensed Facility Investigations,**
continued

- contact the child’s attorney as applicable
- complete all necessary interviews with victims, alleged perpetrator, witnesses and support staff
- collect and review all incident reports, videos, individual crisis management plans, facility policy and other pertinent information regarding the child and the incident and
- if there are issues pertaining to mental or physical health, trauma history or reactions, intimate partner violence or substance abuse, consult with the appropriate DCF subject matter experts.

If the report involves alleged sexual abuse in a confinement setting, SIU staff shall follow the requirements of the facility where the investigation is occurring regarding the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) during the investigation.

For facility investigations, the SIU Investigator is not required to complete:

- the SDM, intimate partner violence or substance use assessment tools or
- the housing, financial, additional information, risk assessment and safety checklist sections in the Investigation Protocol.

Upon completion of the investigation, SIU shall forward the investigation protocol to the facility superintendent, executive director or designee. Area office staff for youth residing in the facility shall receive email notification of the investigation findings as appropriate.

Disposition

Upon completion of an investigation, the investigator in consultation with his or her supervisor, shall make a final determination whether each individual allegation is:

- Substantiated (reasonable cause exists to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred) or
- Unsubstantiated (lack of reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred)

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Disposition, continued If the allegations are substantiated, the investigator shall recommend whether or not to place the alleged perpetrator on the DCF Central Registry of Abuse or Neglect based on the sufficiency of the evidence that the person poses a risk to the health, safety and well-being of children.

Legal Reference: C.G.S. section 17a-101g(b)

Notification of Investigation on Results Upon completion of the investigation, SIU shall send the following notifications as they apply:

- DCF-2210, Notification of Investigations Results
 - DCF-2210 B, Request for Appeal of Substantiation Finding(s)/ Recommendation for Placement on the Central Registry
 - DCF-2210 C, Notification of Investigation Results (Non-Perpetrator Parent or Guardian).
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Notification to Other State Agencies SIU shall notify the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Correction (DOC), Court Support Services Division (CSSD), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) of the outcome of any investigation which involves facilities or employees licensed by these agencies or the State Department of Education (SDE) regarding a certified teacher/school employee.
