



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Child Welfare Policies and Procedures: Chapter 16

Subject:	1641 Critical Incident Reporting Policy
Authority:	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 5101 – 5115)
Standards:	Guiding Principles and Standards Practice Model (GPS)
Application:	All Child Welfare staff
Purpose:	
Critical Incidents must be recorded and reported to executive management to ensure the following: a written record is maintained, executive management is notified and briefed, and trackable data is captured.	
Policy Statement:	
South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) Child Welfare staff will immediately report Critical Incidents to appropriate leadership.	
Definitions:	
Critical Incident: an incident resulting in the imminent risk or suffering of serious bodily or emotional injury of a child known to DSS, a Reportable Child Fatality, or a Reportable Near Fatality.	
Child Known to DSS: a child receiving protective services from DSS.	
Immediately: As soon as possible, not to exceed one hour.	
Near Fatality: an act that, as certified by a physician, places the child in serious or critical condition.	
Reportable Child Fatality: a child fatality caused by or suspected to have been caused by abuse or neglect by a caregiver or the fatality of a child known to DSS.	
Reportable Near Fatality: an act, caused by abuse or neglect, that a medical professional certifies as placing the child in serious or critical condition, or the near fatality of a child known to DSS.	
Level One Critical Incident: the fatality of a child with an open Child Protective Services (CPS) case, including Investigations, Family Preservation, and Foster Care; the near fatality of a child with an open CPS case, including Investigations, Family Preservation, and Foster Care and abuse and/or neglect is suspected; or the near fatality of a child with an open Foster Care case and no abuse and/or neglect is suspected.	

Level Two Critical Incident: the fatality of a child with no open case and abuse and/or neglect is suspected; the near fatality of a child with no open case and abuse and/or neglect is suspected; the near fatality of a child with an open Investigations or Family Preservation case, or and no abuse and/or neglect is suspected.

Immediately: as soon as possible, not to exceed one (1) hour.

Policy Guidelines:

A. Phone Notification	1. Upon learning of a Critical Incident, staff will: a. take necessary and appropriate action to preserve human life and safety. b. immediately notify the supervisor. If the supervisor cannot be reached, the County Director must immediately be notified. 2. Upon learning of a Critical Incident, the Supervisor must immediately notify the County Director. 3. Upon learning of a Critical Incident, the County Director will immediately notify: a. The State Director and/or the Deputy Director of Child Welfare Services, via phone, if the Critical Incident is determined to be a Level One Critical Incident. See the Critical Incident Response Protocol flow chart. b. The Regional Director, via phone, if the Critical Incident is determined to be a Level Two Critical Incident. See the Critical Incident Response Protocol flow chart.
B. Critical Incident Documentation	1. Within six (6) hours, staff or supervisor will complete DSS Form 3010: Critical Incident Reporting Form and forward to the County Director. 2. The County Director will immediately review DSS Form 3010: Critical Incident Reporting Form to confirm the incident as a Critical Incident. 3. The County Director will immediately forward DSS Form 3010: Critical Incident Reporting Form to the appropriate leadership as referenced in the Critical Incident Response Protocol flow chart, including program area leadership.
C. Notification to South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy	1. The Deputy Director of Child Welfare Services will notify the South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy via email upon receipt of DSS Form 3010: Critical Incident Reporting Form in the following cases:

	a. the fatality, near fatality, or serious bodily or emotional injury of a child who is in the custody of or receiving services from DSS, or b. circumstances that result in a reasonable belief that a state agency failed in its duty to protect a child, resulting in the imminent risk or suffering of serious bodily or emotional injury, or death, of a child.
Forms:	DSS Form 3010: Critical Incident Reporting Form
Resources:	Critical Incident Response Protocol flow chart
Related Management Reports:	N/A