

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Legal, Juvenile Court & Custody Issues  
**Policy Number:** 7.02.01  
**Policy Name:** Timely Reporting of Alerts and Critical Incidents

**Original Effective Date:** 05/01/1994  
**Revision Date(s):** 07/01/2021, 07/01/2017, 03/01/2014, 10/25/1995  
**Current Revision Date:** 07/01/2024  
**Approved By:** Jacqueline M. Fletcher

**PURPOSE:** To ensure cases and information of a critical nature are reported to the worker's chain of command, including the Director and Deputy Directors of Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Director of Cuyahoga County Health and Human Services (HHS) and the HHS Deputy Director of Communications and Cuyahoga County Director of Communications, in a timely fashion.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all employees of CCDCFS.

**POLICY**

- A. An Agency Alert is defined as any information on a case that is believed to be of an unusual or concerning nature. This may include any of the following:
  - 1. Potential or actual media involvement of a child or family involved with DCFS, including contact by media for information.
  - 2. Case involving a public figure.
  - 3. A case situation that is similar to other situations receiving national attention (e.g. human trafficking, child abduction, etc.)
  
- B. A Critical Incident is defined as an incident involving one or more of the following:
  - 1. Potential or actual life-threatening injury or illness of a child on an open case, regardless of custody status.
  - 2. Criminal activity that includes the arrest of a child, parent, foster parent or other licensed caregiver involved with DCFS when the crime is a felony or a crime against a child.

## PROCEDURES

- A. Upon receipt of critical information, the specified report (Alert or Critical Incident) must be completed and submitted to the staff's chain of command. This includes all DCFS Deputy Directors, the DCFS Director, the HHS Director, the HHS Deputy Director of Communications, and the Cuyahoga County Director of Communications. This must be reported within the working day. Any delay in reporting must be discussed with the assigned deputy director.
- B. During normal business hours, assigned staff is responsible for ensuring documents are completed. After normal business hours, Hotline supervisory staff will complete required documents.
- C. Anytime an unusual situation presents itself and staff are unsure if a report is needed, a discussion with the Senior Manager and/or Deputy Director should take place to determine if a formal report is required.
- D. Critical Incident Follow-Up Form concerning the Agency's involvement with the family and the child(ren) must be prepared and submitted to the chain of command and Director within one working day. Subsequent Follow-Up forms are only needed if the situation changes substantially.

### **SEE ALSO:**

#### **Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services Policies and Procedure Manual**

Policy 7.02.02 Child Fatality Review Process

Policy 7.04.01 Sharing and Dissemination of Confidential Client Information

Policy 10.06.02 Media Representation / Public Information Requests

### **RELATED FORMS**

Location: DCFS Intranet

Agency Alert Form

Critical Incident Report Form

Critical Incident Follow-Up Report Form