

	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES MANUAL		Effective Date 6/12/09	
	CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES		Section 7	Sub-Section 7

7.7 After Hours Services

Purpose:

In order to enhance its ability to respond to situations of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, the D.H.H.S. has established 24 hour child protective services.

The Intake Unit, with a publicized 24 hour toll free line (1-800-452-1999), accepts and screens child abuse and/or neglect reports and requests for service.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

1. District Responsibilities:

- a. Qualified District staff will be on standby and available for response to after hour reports. Caseworkers must have been employed as a caseworker for at least six months before they are placed on after hours coverage. Coverage will include, at minimum:
 - (1) One caseworker per district
 - (2) A back up plan at times when standby worker is not available
 - (3) One supervisor per region
- b. Districts will send to the Intake Unit current regional standby staff schedules, which will cover a minimum of one month and is provided to the Intake Unit at least 7 days in advance.
- c. Districts will ensure any special instructions for specific cases are entered into the MACWIS Special Instructions window or call Intake if the window cannot be changed.
- d. Districts will determine whether Standby worker may contact workers and/or supervisors for open cases when the information needed is not available in another way.
- e. Districts are responsible for the development of working relationships with necessary community supports, especially with law enforcement, judges, and hospitals.
- f. The Standby worker will be available and ready to respond, which means having access to a phone and planning appropriate activities that will not impede availability or readiness to respond.

- g. Intake will complete all final decisions on reports that come in over the weekend for all Districts.
- h. Districts are not required to have a Holiday coverage plan for seeing assessments within 72 hours. If districts assign workers to see assessments over a holiday weekend, it is the responsibility of the district to provide supervisor coverage. Coverage will not be provided by the Regional Stand-by Supervisor.
- i. District management will arrange for Standby staff to cover any time District Offices are closed during normal business hours due to weather or other emergencies.
- j. The standby worker will be continually in contact with the Intake Unit by:
 - (1) When coming on to coverage duty each day the worker and supervisor will call in no later than one hour after their shift begins, informing the Intake Unit of his/her whereabouts and updating Intake of subsequent changes as needed. Please note that weekday shifts are from 5:00pm until 8:00am and weekend shifts are from 8:00am the day the shift begins until 8:00am the following day. Staff must also keep their MACWIS demographics-office screen up to date. On weekends, standby workers should check in when they will be away from their primary phone numbers. If the on-call worker or supervisor has tried repeatedly and is unable to reach an Intake worker on the designated caseworker call in line they may leave a message on the hotline number (1-800-452-1999).
 - (2) District supervisor and casework staff will notify the Intake Unit by email immediately when there is a change in the scheduled coverage for that day. The email address for the Intake Unit is ces.intake@maine.gov. The supervisor will also notify the on duty caseworker if there is a change in schedule and the caseworker will notify the on duty supervisor if there is a change in the caseworker schedule.
 - (3) Giving accurate and accessible primary phone numbers.
 - (4) When relying on cell phones Standby staff is responsible to check that they have reliable reception to receive calls. Any time poor reception is noted; e.g., significant weather events or system outages Standby staff will contact Intake at least every 2 hours to confirm there have been no calls unless you are changing your primary method of contact. If your primary method of contact is a cell phone and you are in areas that have reliable cell phone service, you do not need to call in. In addition, if your primary phone is your cell phone you need to specify if you are to be reached at your work cell or personal cell phone number.
 - (5) If the Intake worker cannot reach a caseworker, and has left a message, the Intake worker may call the Standby Supervisor if the caseworker

has not returned the call within 15 minutes. If it is an emergency the Intake worker may immediately call the supervisor if unable to reach the caseworker.

- (6) Any district workers flexing their schedule will need to be supervised by a district supervisor. Coverage will not be provided by the Regional Stand-by Supervisor.
- (7) In the event of a serious injury or child death, the Program Administrator for the District within which the emergency has occurred will be called.

2. Intake Unit Responsibilities:

In the event of an emergency that may require an immediate on-site response, the Standby Supervisor will be contacted by Intake. All other routine emergency calls will be referred to the Standby Caseworker.

Once the caseworker and supervisor have been notified by Intake the supervisor will take the lead on directing the case and Intake will contact the supervisor if new information is gathered/received.

- a. The Intake Unit will maintain the Standby Worker/Supervisor database and update changes in the scheduled duty or contact information immediately when received. The Intake Unit will also document all Standby check-in calls and compare provided contact information with the information on the Standby database. Needed corrections will be brought to the Intake Supervisor immediately for corrections.
- b. The Intake Worker will gather as much information as possible from the reporter regarding the suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- c. The Intake Worker will utilize appropriate interview formats, Acceptance Criteria, databases, special instructions and any other relevant sources.
- d. The Intake worker will utilize Intake supervisor for consultation regarding possible emergency situations. When there is no Intake Supervisor on site, Intake staff will proceed with normal after hours protocol for contacting standby staff.
- e. If Intake staff is unable to make direct contact with the Standby staff within 15 minutes they may initiate contact with other appropriate OCFS staff to assist.

3. After hours Response Guidelines

An on-site after hours response should be considered when:

- a. A child is seriously harmed or threatened with immediate risk of serious harm. A supervisor will send out the caseworker when a child presents at a hospital

with an unexplained serious injury or if the explanation given for the injury does not fit the injury.

- b. Allegations of serious harm or threat of serious harm involve a child in an open case [This includes cases where the serious injury or harm is not directly caused by the parent/caretaker. As Intake does not always have access to current or complete case information, Intake staff may not be able to determine if parental behavior and/or condition contributed to the injury or harm to the child(ren).]
- c. When a child/youth in the custody of the Department presents at the hospital unattended without a foster parent or approved caregiver.
- d. Referral from law enforcement under the provisions of Title 22, §4023, requesting an emergency assessment in domestic violence/homicide cases.

All other routine emergency calls will be referred to the Standby caseworker. This includes:

- a. Placement disruptions
- b. Foster children in crisis
- c. Service providers requesting immediate consultation regarding a child in foster care.

4. After hours Inter-District Assistance

There may be instances when inter-district collaboration is required; e.g., weather, other travel constraints, or when the abused child is out-of-district at the time of the report, or other case specific circumstances warranting a teamed response by DHHS.

In those instances, the district where the child and responsible parent/caretaker reside is responsible and will receive assistance from out of District staff when requested.

Requests for assistance on out-of-district reports will be brought to the attention of the covering District supervisors.