



Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs • Washington State Department of Social & Health Services

September 26, 2007

Dear Child Protective Services Staff and Washington State Sheriffs and Police Chiefs:

SUBJECT: Communication Protocol Template with Children's Administration

The Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration (DSHS CA) and the Executive Board of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) recently met to discuss the attached proposed communication protocol template. The proposed communication template will serve as a mechanism to enhance communications between local law enforcement and Child Protective Services.

The communication protocol template was tentatively approved by the WASPC Executive Board and will be considered by the entire WASPC membership at the Fall Conference in November. We strongly encourage both law enforcement and Child Protective Services to review the communication protocol template, which is enclosed, and forward any comments, suggestions, and/or concerns to either WASPC or DSHS CA staff prior to the WASPC Fall Conference.

Children's Administration is asking each Child Protective Services office to make contact with all law enforcement agencies in their jurisdiction by Monday, October 15, 2007 to discuss an implementation plan for incorporating the proposed communication template. Children's Administration recognizes the shortness of this timeline, however greatly appreciates all efforts to move the proposed communication template forward.

The Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration and the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs strongly encourage a collaborative effort to enhance communications between law enforcement and Child Protective Services.

Please forward all comments, suggestions, and/or concerns regarding the proposed communication protocol to either of the following individuals:

Jamie Yoder, WASPC Staff, jyoder@waspc.org
Cheryl Rich, DSHS CA Staff, rcch300@dshs.wa.gov

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Robin Arnold-Williams.

Robin Arnold-Williams, Secretary
Department of Social and Health Services

Handwritten signature of Don Pierce.

Don Pierce, Executive Director
Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

Enclosure

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES-LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE

The Washington State Legislature has determined that each county shall revise and expand protocols for child sexual abuse protocols to include child fatality, child physical abuse, and criminal child neglect cases, see SHB 1333 (2007). The communication protocols suggested by this document are suggested for development and incorporation into those county protocols, which are to be written and developed in each county. These communication protocols are to define minimal standards for communication and shall not limit local jurisdictions from implementing additional procedures.

1. Communication Regarding Referrals

Communication protocols shall be developed collaboratively between Child Protective Services (CPS), Law Enforcement, City and County prosecutor's offices, emergency medical service providers, other involved agencies and when applicable, Child Advocacy Centers to:

- Provide a clear understanding of each agency's roles and responsibilities.
- Enhance working relationships to improve child safety.
- Improve the coordination of investigations between agencies.
- Minimize the risk of compromise with criminal investigations.

Requirements

1. The protocol should establish procedures for communication between CPS and law enforcement when either agency has received a report of alleged child abuse or neglect. These procedures will include but not be limited to:
 - Time frames and limitations
 - Methods of communication
 - Information to be conveyed
 - Persons or positions the reports are to be made to
 - Dispute resolution process
 - Confidentiality and disclosure of information
2. The protocol should establish the procedures for inclusion of law enforcement personnel in shared planning meetings such as Community Protection Teams, (CPT), and Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) teams.
3. The protocol should establish the procedure for notification to law enforcement when a child who has been placed in protective custody pursuant RCW 26.44.050 is possibly being returned to the custody of the alleged offending caregiver. The procedure should include but not be limited to:
 - Time frames for notification

- Appropriate jurisdiction for notification
 - Circumstances for notification
4. Each protocol should incorporate the statewide guidelines for first responders to child fatalities developed by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission.
 5. Each County shall have a revised and expanded protocol in place by July 8, 2008 and shall review the protocols every two years to determine whether modifications are needed or desired.