

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>140</h1>
Chapter:	Special Casework Issues	
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Approved:	Karen Shea, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 6/26/2018
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 140	Dated: 3/31/2017

Purpose

To define the responsibilities of district office staff and Centralized Intake and Emergency Services (CIES) staff to ensure after hours coverage for the division.

Related Policies

Family Services [Policy 51](#): Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect
Family Services [Policy 52](#): Child Safety Interventions – Investigations and Assessments
Family Services [Policy 250](#): Staff Safety

Definitions

Call-In: Contacting an employee during off-duty hours and requiring the employee to immediately report to work, other than continuously into their regular shift. It is not considered a call-in if the employee has prior notice of the need to work. Volunteering for unexpected overtime opportunities may be a call-in. However, planned overtime related to a worker’s workload does not constitute “call-in”.

Standby: A requirement that an employee, during off-duty hours, be reachable by phone or “pager” within one hour of being called, and report for duty where needed within one hour of being reached, or normal commuting time between the employee’s home of record and duty station or other work location, whichever is greater. “Standby” duty is paid at one-fifth the regular hourly rate for each hour of such duty (rounded to the nearest whole cent).

Policy

District Office Responsibilities

If Family Services workers anticipate a significant development on an open case or suspect there may be a need for a specific service after hours, key information and/or special instructions will be documented in case notes, or CIES should be informed by phone or email. District office staff will always notify CIES when workers are involved in child safety responses that extend beyond business hours. This may include a new child safety intervention (CSI), an emergency care order (ECO) or pick-up order, an escalated situation with a youth or family, or other situations that require division involvement.

The [Non-Management Contract](#) of the [Collective Bargaining Agreements](#) requires staff

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to be on standby as needed by the division.

District offices should first consider employees who volunteer for standby and allow staff to opt-in to the local standby pool. Supervisors or district directors will approve volunteers for standby based on overall job performance. Qualified district office staff are required to be on standby to respond to urgent after hours reports of child abuse and neglect and other case situations that warrant immediate attention. To be on standby, workers must be employed by the division for **at least six months** and **no longer on original probationary status**.

Prior to being on standby for the first time, supervisors or district directors will provide an orientation to standby for new workers. Additionally, workers will shadow a more experienced worker **at least twice** during a standby shift when a call-in occurs. Staff may request additional shadowing experience as needed to support their learning. Following a standby shift where shadowing has occurred, a debrief will occur with the supervisor and two workers.

The division's standby hours are:

Monday – Friday	4:30 PM – 7:45 AM
Saturday and Sunday	7:45 AM – 7:45 AM
Holidays	7:45 AM – 7:45 AM

If called in, workers shall arrive at the destination as soon as possible, but within two hours of the page or call.

Staff who are called in should have a standby resource binder with them while they are in the field. The binder should include the following documents and information:

- A custody packet containing the paperwork needed to be completed when a child comes into custody
 - Application for foster parents
 - Placement checklist
 - Foster parent authorization letter
- The State's Attorney's on-call list/contact information
- The district office's standby schedule
- The district office's emergency placement list
- The district office's current resource family list
- The district office's contact list
- Contact information for hospitals, law enforcement, mental health crises, and

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- residential placements
- Family safety planning form
- [Child Safety Interventions: A Parent’s Guide to Investigations & Assessments](#)
- [A Child You Care About is in DCF Custody: Information for Relatives & Friends](#)
- The protocol for non-secure transports
- Pager manual (if applicable)
- Copies of division policies:
 - [Policy 52](#): Child Safety Interventions – Investigations and Assessments
 - [Policy 57](#): Risk of Harm/Sexual Abuse Investigations
 - [Policy 68](#): Serious Physical Injury – Investigation and Case Planning
 - [Policy 77](#): Medical Care for Children and Youth in DCF Custody
 - [Policy 82](#): Juvenile Court Proceedings – CHINS
 - [Policy 83](#): Juvenile Court Proceedings – Delinquency
 - [Policy 150](#): Transportation of Youth in DCF Custody
 - [Policy 153](#): Sheriff’s Transportation
 - [Policy 250](#): Staff Safety

CIES After Hours Responsibilities

CIES is responsible for documenting and responding to concerns received through the Child Protection Line (1-800-649-5285) after hours. CIES staff will gather as much information as possible about a situation from the reporter and law enforcement, as needed. CIES staff will review recent case notes and case note alerts for key information, instructions that may have been documented, and information about dangerous or potentially dangerous situations.

When a situation requires a worker’s response after hours, CIES will contact the worker on standby or availability in the district office. There may be situations when inter-district collaboration is required due to weather, other travel constraints, the location or placement of the child, or other case-specific circumstances. In these instances, CIES may contact the appropriate district for after hours assistance. CIES reserves the right to call any standby worker from any district office at any time.

Inter-District Collaboration	
Child safety intervention (CSI) commencement and the child/youth is located in another district	<p>If the district to which the case is assigned borders the district of the child’s location, CIES will contact the district assigned to the case.</p> <p>If the district assigned to the CSI is a significant distance from the child, CIES shall first consider contacting the assigned district to maintain the integrity of the</p>

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	<p>investigation (particularly for serious physical injury child safety interventions described in Family Services Policy 68).</p> <p>CIES may contact the district in closest proximity to the child with consideration to the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proximity of the assigned district; • specific needs of the investigation; • time constraints; or • travel constraints.
Instances where a child/youth in DCF custody is located in another district	<p>CIES shall consider the following when determining the appropriate district contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time urgency of the response; • proximity of district to the child/youth; • the destination of the transport if the child/youth needs transportation; and/or • the length of time the worker will need to be with child and any coordination of staffing if the child/youth needs supervision in a hospital setting.

If CIES cannot reach a worker and has left a message, CIES may call the district director if the employee is not reachable. The district director will partner with CIES to ensure there is coverage.

CIES staff will provide guidance to workers called in after hours. CIES staff will document after hours activities in case notes or in an intake and inform the worker assigned to the case.

After Hours Response Guidelines

While the division has after hours coverage in place, the support and information available after hours is not the same as regular business hours. After hours responses require a different level of safety planning.

In any situation that requires a response after hours and the response requires contact with an individual who may pose danger, the first point of contact will be to law enforcement for the purpose of either joint investigation or assistance. The division will be more cautious after hours and assume danger if information about the family or situation is unknown. In these situations, workers will only be called in after hours if law enforcement accompanies them.

In situations regarding youth transports or situations where a child or youth require

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contact with workers after hours (e.g., accompanying or supervising a child at a hospital or police station), CIES will gather as much information about the child as possible and share this information with the worker. If limited information is known about a youth entering care because of their own behavior or delinquent acts, possible risks and the safety of staff will be considered when deciding how the youth will be transported.

CIES will collaborate with workers to determine if a teamed response is needed and call-in another worker if warranted. Family Services workers should contact the CIES supervisor if they do not feel safe with a situation where they are being called in and would like additional resources (a teamed response) to respond.

Family Services workers should speak with the CIES supervisor if they require supervisory guidance to carry out the tasks being asked of them. If there is a district-level communication protocol in place, workers may also contact their own supervisor or their district director. Instances of disagreement about a call-in should be resolved through a phone call with involved district staff and CIES.

Staff shall always inform CIES of their activities and resolutions of the call-in.

If workers are called in after midnight and feel they are unable to report to work by 7:45 AM, a message should be left for their supervisor informing them of when they will arrive at work, coverage needs, and any changes that will need to be made to the planned schedule.

Standby and Call-In Time Report Coding

Division staff may code up to 24 hours in each day – 8 hours for time worked and 16 hours for time on standby. Standby shifts are 16 hours Monday-Friday and 24 hours on weekends and holidays. Standby shifts do not carry over to the next day.

District offices may choose to split up standby shifts based on the circumstances, preferences, and agreements within the office. If staff split the standby shift, they must document the time on and time off and indicate the name of the employee who shared the standby shift in the comment area.

Division staff are not permitted to work overtime and then be on standby. The workday must end (8 hours worked) before an employee can be on standby.

The division does not perform “on call” duties and therefore the “on call” time reporting code shall not be used.

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The division shall use the following standby and call-in codes, as applicable:

- STBCO – Standby (hours comp .20)
- STBP2 – Standby (hours paid .20)
- CALLC – Call-In (hours comp)
- CALLP – Call-In (hours paid)
- WRKOT – Hours worked over schedule (called in and required to work continuously into or after the workday OR telephone work)

Call-in is typically activated by a CIES supervisor. Call-in occurs for a minimum of four hours. At times, district directors or supervisors may call-in a worker to respond to an emergency. When an employee is called in and required to work, this shall not be a continuation of their normally scheduled shift or work duties assigned as part of their caseload.

In instances where an employee is required to work continuously into or after their normally scheduled shift, the employee shall receive compensation at applicable overtime rates for all hours worked (using code WRKOT).

Circumstance	How to Document
If staff split the standby shift...	Document the time on and time off and indicate the name of the employee who shared the standby shift in the comment area.
If an employee is on standby and does not get called in...	Document the time of the shift in the comment area (no other details are needed).
If an employee is called in...	Document the time they left their house and the time they returned. Indicate “called in for FSD casework” in the comment area.
If covering a pre-scheduled hospital shift or continuing work from the day...	Code for WRKOT (hours worked over schedule).

Timesheets must be completed by the end of the day on Friday or early Monday morning if any weekend shifts were worked. Approvals must be completed by 12:00 PM on Monday.