

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>264</h1>
Chapter:	Administrative Issues	
Subject:	Responding to Incidents	Page 1 of 2
Approved:	Christine Johnson, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 7/14/2020
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 264	Dated: 12/10/2012

Purpose

To guide staff when deciding which incidents should be reported to central office and to guide the type of response to any such incident.

Policy

Notifying District or Unit Manager

Family Services Division district office and Woodside employees will immediately notify their district director, and central office employees will immediately notify their unit manager, about any serious incident involving clients, foster parents, regulated facilities, staff, or contract agencies. Examples of such incidents include:

- A staff member or their family member is threatened with harm or actually harmed by a client of the division (see Family Services [Policy 250](#));
- The death of a child/youth in an open case, in custody, or the subject of an intake.
- A serious accident or critical health status of a child/youth in an open case or in custody;
- The abduction, rape, or serious abuse of a child/youth in an open case or in custody;
- A contracted service provider is charged with an offense or involved in an incident that suggests the person’s judgment and ability to work with children/youth is in question;
- A staff member is accused of behaving illegally or in a grossly unprofessional manner;
- A youth escapes from Woodside;
- A child/youth with an open case commits a serious offense, such as those cited in 33 V.S.A. § 5506.

§ 5506 offenses:

1. arson causing death as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 501;
2. assault and robbery with a dangerous weapon as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 608(b);
3. assault and robbery causing bodily injury as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 608(c);
4. aggravated assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1024;
5. murder as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2301;
6. manslaughter as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2304;
7. kidnapping as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2405;

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>264</h1>
Chapter:	Administrative Issues	
Subject:	Responding to Incidents	
		Page 2 of 2

8. unlawful restraint as defined in 13 V.S.A. §§ 2406 and 2407;
9. maiming as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2701;
10. sexual assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 3252(a)(1) or (a)(2);
11. aggravated sexual assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 3253;
12. burglary into an occupied dwelling as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1203(c).

District office and Woodside employees will also promptly notify their district director (or in their absence the next person in the chain of command) and central office employees will immediately notify their unit manager when:

- A staff member is contacted by the media;
- A staff member is contacted by state or federal legislators or officials; or
- A staff member is notified that an attorney is actively exploring lawsuits or other legal action against the Department for Children and Families (DCF) or its staff.

Notifying Central Office

The district director will promptly notify central office of these incidents, as follows:

- District directors will notify the policy and operations manager assigned to their district, senior policy and operations manager, and the director of operations;
- Woodside will notify their appropriate chain of command and the director of Residential Licensing and Special Investigations (if applicable);
- Central office unit managers will alert the director of operations and/or the Deputy Commissioner, as appropriate.

In the absence of any of these individuals, staff should inform the next person in the chain of command.

The person notifying central office should be prepared to detail the following:

- The description of the incident and who was involved;
- The current status of involved persons;
- Any involvement of law enforcement and/or State’s Attorneys;
- If incarceration resulted, who, where, and under what basis; and
- Requested or required support to be offered to affected staff.

Request for Incident Report and/or Record

At the discretion of the central office manager notified, more information may be requested to understand the situation. Requests for more information will be addressed in a timely manner.