

<b>DSS Policy and Procedure Guide</b>	
Division 03: Child Welfare	Chapter 02: General Administration
<b>Item 31: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect</b>	
Suggested changes send to: <a href="#">DSS PSOA Mailbox</a>	Issued: January 30, 2018
References: State of California, Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, <a href="#">Suspected Child Abuse Reporting (SCAR) form</a> ; <a href="#">Suspected Child Abuse Reporting (SCAR) Instructions</a> ; Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA), <a href="#">Penal Code Section 11166(a)</a>	Revisions are in red  Replaces Issue: January 25, 2013

### Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides (PPGs) are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

### Policy

In compliance with [California Penal Code 11166\(a\)](#), it is the policy of the Department of Social Services (DSS), Child Welfare Services, that any **Child Welfare** employee of DSS, who within the scope of **their** employment observes or receives a report of child abuse, neglect or exploitation will complete **an initial report by telephone to the Fresno County DSS Child Protection Hotline (CPH) and/or to the County having jurisdiction over the child(ren) alleged to have been abused or neglected. This telephone report shall be made immediately or as soon as practicably possible and shall be followed by a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR).**

### Procedure

When a **Social Worker (SW)** receives information **via phone call and/or a walk-in** regarding suspected child abuse and/or neglect, **the SW shall:**

- Obtain all necessary information needed to submit a [SCAR](#) and report the child abuse and/or neglect to the CPH.
- Upon completion of the phone call and/or interview with a walk-in, complete the [SCAR](#) with the exception of “Official Contacted-Title” in Section B: Report Notification.
- Contact the CPH at (559) 600-8320 to report the alleged abuse and/or neglect.
- Complete “Official Contacted-Title” in Section B: Report Notification of the [SCAR](#) with the name of the CPH SW that took their call.
- Fax the completed [SCAR](#) to (559) 266-2463.

Note: If the SW received a phone call or walk-in by a mandated reporter, the SW will advise the mandated reporter to complete and submit the SCAR within 36 hours of the reported abuse/neglect to the CPH by fax, mail, or by hand delivery directly to 1404 'L' Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

When a SW is in the field and either directly observes or receives a verbal report of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, the SW shall:

- Immediately or as soon as practically possible contact CPH at (559) 600-8320 to report the alleged abuse or neglect. The SW shall **not** return to the office to make the report to the CPH.
- Take appropriate action to ensure the immediate safety of the child(ren), i.e. remaining present with the child(ren) until law enforcement and/or a DSS Emergency Response (ER) SW arrives.
- Fax the SCAR to the CPH no later than nine am the next business day.

When the reporting SW is unable to immediately reach a live CPH SW to make the report, the reporting SW shall contact a CPH Social Work Supervisor (SWS). The CPH SWS shall ensure that the reporting SW is connected with a CPH SW to take the report.

### **CPH SW Responsibilities**

Upon receiving the telephone report from a SW, the CPH SW shall process the report in the same manner as any another report of suspected child abuse or neglect and in compliance with PPG 03-03-001, Child Protection Hotline/Intake and Referral Response Determination.

When the SCAR is received, the CPH SW will clear the SCAR to determine the specific referral to which it belongs. The CPH SW will write the 19-digit referral number, referral name, assigned SW's district and the status of the referral on the top of the SCAR, and submit the SCAR to clerical staff to be routed to the assigned SW.

Upon receipt of the SCAR, the assigned SW will file the SCAR in the referral file.