

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

First Contact with DCF

The reporter becomes the first participant in the CPS intervention process by bringing his or her suspicions or knowledge of child abuse or neglect to the attention of DCF, usually by calling Careline.

Without this person, no report exists and no Department response will be undertaken.

Note: Most reports are made to Careline by telephone. However, reports may also be submitted to DCF in writing or in person.

Who Must Report

In accordance with state law, any person may cause an oral or written report to be made to DCF when there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect.

“Mandated reporters” are those professionals who are specifically required by law to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Failure to report is a criminal offense. A mandated reporter who fails to make a report may be fined not less than \$500 and not more than \$2000 and may be required to undergo mandated reporter training.

For a list of mandated reporters and the specific legal requirements regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect, see DCF Policy 33-1, “Careline.”

Legal references: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101 and §17a-101a.

Primary Responsibility of the Reporter

The primary responsibility of the reporter is to provide sufficient information regarding the alleged victim, perpetrator and incident to enable Careline to determine if the report can be accepted for a child abuse and neglect investigation.

The caller also should be available to provide any further information to the investigator during the course of the investigation.

Reporter Liability and Protections

Any person, institution or agency that, in good faith, makes or does not make a report shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability provided such person did not perpetrate or cause such abuse or neglect.

No employer shall discharge, or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against, any employee who in good faith makes a report, testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect.

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PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Careline
Tasks**

The general tasks of the Careline Social Workers and Social Work Supervisors are as follows:

- answer and process calls or written information alleging suspected child abuse or neglect;
- determine if an allegation meets legal sufficiency as a report of suspected child abuse or neglect consistent with state statute, DCF policy and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Screening Tool;
- gather and record as much identifying and relevant information as possible about the allegations;
- use the SDM Response Priority Tool to determine the appropriate response time for the commencement of the investigation;
- when appropriate, forward the report to the Careline Supervisor for review and approval prior to transmitting the report to the appropriate Area Office;
- notification to State Police or other law enforcement agencies when appropriate;
- depending on the required response time, conduct investigations of abuse or neglect on new or active cases when the Area Offices are closed;
- answer and process other calls which relate to the provision of services to children and families;
- conduct background checks for schools, licensed agencies and foster care provider applicants;
- process and document calls regarding non-investigatory situations on active cases and, when appropriate, refer the caller to the assigned Area Office or a Careline Supervisor to determine if any further actions are needed.

Note: A report is always transmitted to an Area Office Intake Supervisor even when a Careline investigator conducts the investigation.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Report Types Requiring Initial Investigation Assignment

- Same day reports/24 hour reports;
- Critical Incident reports;
- child fatality with surviving siblings or other children in the home;
- child taken into protective custody by law enforcement or a physician due to abuse or neglect;
- caregiver currently incapacitated due to drugs, alcohol or mental illness;
- child currently abandoned;
- child left alone (consider safety, risk and other relevant factors);
- substance abuse by mother of a newborn and the newborn has positive urine or meconium toxicology for drugs;
- to or more substantiated investigations on a current household member within the previous 12 months;
- ay report on an open protective services case (excluding Voluntary Services);
- sexual abuse;
- previous adjudication of abuse or neglect;
- any report involving potential criminal activity involving child abuse or neglect;
- congregate care;
- previous risk assessment of "high;"
- foster care; and
- persons entrusted.

Answering Calls at Careline

When answering a call in which suspected child abuse or neglect is alleged, the Careline Social Work Screener shall:

- collect and assess information in a systematic manner; and
- use the LINK-generated tools, including the CPS Report Protocol and the SDM Screening and Response Tools, to guide and document actions.

Uniform Response

The Social Work Screener shall answer the telephone in a manner that confirms the caller has reached the Child Abuse and Neglect Careline. Such a response benefits the caller by confirming that he or she has reached the correct number and that DCF has offered assistance.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**
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DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Steps to Answer a Call and Complete a Report	The Careline Social Worker shall take the following steps to answer a call and complete a report:
Step	Action
Call received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer and determine the nature of the call; • collect and process the information; • if the allegation involves suspected abuse or neglect, conduct the telephone interview; • document the information in LINK via the CPS Report Protocol; • discuss anonymity with mandated and non-mandated reporters; and • inform a mandated reporter of the written reporting process via completion of the DCF-136, "Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect"
Complete a background search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upon receipt of the call, search LINK for current or prior child protective services history
Determine report acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the legal sufficiency of the allegation for report acceptance; and • utilize the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Screening Tool
Determine response time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete the SDM Response Priority in LINK to determine the response time for the commencement of an investigation
Determine response time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on the response time and other information gathered, determine whether the report will be accepted as a child protective services investigation or as a Family Assessment Response case
Complete notifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete the DCF-2122, "Letter to Mandated Reporters" (LINK-generated); • complete a DCF-823, "Critical Incident Report," if applicable; and • in cases of serious abuse, serious neglect or sexual abuse, call the police and complete the DCF-737, "Notification to State or Local Police of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse, Severe Physical Abuse or Severe Neglect"

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Types of Calls

The Child Abuse and Neglect Careline receives several different types of calls regarding allegations of suspected child abuse and neglect and other issues related to children and families.

The table below lists the most common types of calls:

Category of Call	Related to...
Allegations of child abuse and neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• physical abuse;• sexual abuse;• physical neglect, including domestic violence;• emotional neglect, including domestic violence;• educational neglect;• medical neglect;• moral neglect;• abandoned child;• drug endangered child (DEC); and• Safe Haven baby.
Information and referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• requests for information about child and family services or programs provided by DCF;• requests for information about programs provided by other state or community agencies (refer to 211 Info-line);• Voluntary Services requests;• Interstate Compact requests;• re-entry requests; and• requests for background checks.
Activity regarding children and families with whom DCF is already involved (active cases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• placement disruption;• medical permission to treat;• request for medication;• placement resource problem;• a crisis situation in a foster family;• a crisis situation in a client family;• hospitalization of a child;• runaway/AWOL; and• request for placement due to parent's inability to provide care.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Reports
Received
First in the
Area office**

When information regarding abuse or neglect is reported first to an Area Office, the following procedures apply:

Type of Information Received in Area Office	Action
Telephone calls	Callers shall be instructed to contact Careline directly when making new reports of suspected abuse or neglect.
DCF-136 or letter	If an Area Office Social Worker determines that a DCF-136 or letter is a follow-up to a previous oral report, it shall be added to the Uniform Case Record in the Area Office. If it contains new information, the Area Office Social Worker shall make an oral report to Careline for assessment and determination of report acceptance.
Walk-in reports	An Area Office Intake Social Worker shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• collect and document the allegations;• immediately telephone the report to Careline for determination of report acceptance and response time; or• assist the person in calling Careline from the Area Office or other appropriate area. <p>Note: For reports requiring a same-day response, the Area Office Supervisor shall immediately assign an Intake Social Worker to initiate the investigation and then transmit the report to Careline.</p>

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Basic Questions

The Careline Social Worker shall ask the following basic interview questions for all child abuse and neglect calls.

If the caller cannot answer the questions, the Social Worker shall make every attempt to identify other persons who may have the information.

Category	Information to Be Obtained
Who	<p>Obtain, if possible, for all subjects of a report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name and any aliases, with correct spelling; • gender; • ethnicity; • age or date of birth; • address; • current location; • role relationships; • name and location of non-custodial parent; • names of siblings or other children living in or out of the home; • any known information about extended family members; • telephone numbers; • language(s) spoken; and • other identifying information <p>In addition, request the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the caller and any other person who may have knowledge of the situation for future contact by the Intake Social Worker; • the relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child, <i>e.g.</i>, parent, step-parent, babysitter, child care worker; • the relationship between the caller and the alleged perpetrator; and • where the following persons are employed: alleged perpetrator, non-perpetrator parent, guardian, other caregiver.
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened, in simple terms? • Did the reporter observe physical evidence of abuse or neglect? • What prompted the disclosure?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately when did the incident occur? • Is it a chronic situation?
Where	Where is the child currently located?
How	How does the caller know what happened?
Why	<p>Why is the call being made at this time?</p> <p>Note: This question should only be asked if the information is necessary to assess the urgency of the response and will not unnecessarily extend the length of the call.</p>
Safety Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family safety factors, <i>e.g.</i>, domestic violence. • Intake Social Worker safety factors, <i>e.g.</i>, weapons, drugs. • Can the reporter identify two strengths the family possesses?

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Additional Questions

In addition to the basic questions, the Careline Social Worker shall ask the following questions to complete a report for the following particular categories:

Category	Questions
Physical Abuse	<p>Describe the injury:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On what date and at what time did the injury occur? • What prompted the disclosure? • What does the injury look like (color, size, fresh or fading, shaped like)? • What part of the body was injured? • Is there a need for medical treatment? • What is the parent's explanation? • What is the child's explanation? • Are there any precipitating factors? • What led to the disclosure or brought the child to the caller's attention? • Did anyone witness the abuse? • Are there any family members who are taking action to protect the child? • Has the reporter had previous concerns or interactions with the family? • Is the child currently afraid of the alleged perpetrator? • Is the child afraid to go home? • Are there any other injuries or bruises noted? • Was a skeletal exam completed?
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To whom did the child disclose the abuse? • What prompted the disclosure? • Did the child disclose directly to the reporter? • What is the age of the alleged perpetrator and his or her relationship to the child? • What is the alleged perpetrator's access to the victim and other children? • What steps are being taken to prevent further contact between the perpetrator and child? • Has the child had a medical examination?

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

Category	Questions
Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What prompted the disclosure? • Where were the children during the incident? • Were the children injured? • Were the parents injured? • Was either parent hit, threatened or coerced? • Describe the severity of the incident. • Were weapons involved? • What is the non-offending parent's initiative and ability to protect him- or herself and the child? • What steps were taken to prevent the perpetrator's continued access to the home, <i>e.g.</i>, shelter, police, restraining order? • Were the police notified? Who made the notification? Who was arrested? What were the charges? • Did the caller witness the domestic violence? • Is there a history of domestic violence? • How frequent are the incidents?
Substance Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What prompted the disclosure? • What specific substances are being used by the parent, <i>e.g.</i>, crack, heroin, alcohol? • What is the frequency of the substance use? • Do the children have knowledge of the substance use? • Are the parents high or intoxicated while directly caring for the children? • Are there drugs, either legal or illegal, in the home? If so, where are they located? • Do the children have access to the drugs? • Is there drug paraphernalia in the home? • Have the parents ever been arrested for possession or sale of drugs? • Have the parents ever experienced blackouts? • How well are the children supervised? Are they left alone for extended periods of time? • Is there adequate food in the house? • Screen call for DEC referrals. • Identify as DEC referral via check box.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Death of a Child

Any incident in which a child's death occurs due to suspected abuse or neglect shall be accepted by Careline for a child protective services investigation.

The death of a child is a critical incident that shall be reported immediately to the following persons:

- Careline Supervisor, Program Manager and Program Director;
- Commissioner or designee;
- Regional Director;
- Area Office leadership team;
- Facility Superintendent, if applicable;
- Child Advocate;
- Agency Legal Director;
- Court Monitor;
- Director of Communications; and
- any other DCF staff deemed necessary.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 31-8-3.1, "Critical Incident Reporting Procedures."

Death of a Child - When Other Children are in the Home

In situations in which siblings or other children remain in the home of a child who has died, the Careline Social Worker shall:

- prioritize the report as requiring a same day response by a DCF investigator;
- contact the local police department using the DCF-737, "Notification to State or Local Police of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse, Severe Physical Abuse or Severe Neglect," and by telephone to immediately initiate a collaborative investigation; and
- immediately notify the Careline Director or Program Manager.

The Careline Supervisor shall ensure that the DCF-823, "Critical Incident Report," is forwarded to all designated DCF staff.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Death of a
Child - When
No Other
Children Are in
the Home**

In situations in which there are no siblings or other children in the home of a child who has died, the police and the DCF investigator shall make efforts to conduct a joint investigation.

Careline staff shall:

- accept the report for a child protective services investigation;
- immediately notify the Careline Program Manager or Program Director;
- establish contact with the local police department investigating the incident; and
- request that the police follow up with Area Office intake staff at the conclusion of the criminal investigation.

The Careline Supervisor shall ensure that the DCF-823, "Critical Incident Report," is forwarded to all designated DCF staff.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

**Notification
to the Area
Office of a
Child Death**

When a child who is known to DCF dies, Careline shall notify the Area Office according to the guidelines in the following table.

These procedures shall be followed during both regular office hours and after-hours:

When...	And...	Then...
a child's death results from suspected abuse or neglect or by accident	the child has an open case with DCF at the time of death	<p>the Careline Social Worker shall immediately notify the Careline Supervisor, who shall notify the Careline Director or Program Manager.</p> <p>The Careline Director or Program Manager shall immediately notify the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner or designee; • Area Office Director; • Program Manager for the assigned Social Worker if the AOD is not available; • any other AO manager, if neither the AOD nor the assigned PM are available; or • the assigned Social Work Supervisor, if none of the above managers are available.
the child's death occurs after a prolonged medical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child has an open case with DCF at the time of death; and • the child's death is not unexpected 	<p>The Careline Social Worker shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediately notify the Careline Supervisor, Program Manager or Program Director; and • notify the Area Office administration, as above, unless requested to do otherwise for a particular case. <p>A designated Social Worker shall notify the child's parents.</p>

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

Autopsy

When a child who has been under the care of DCF dies after a longstanding medical illness, the need for an autopsy will be reviewed by Careline or Area Office staff in conjunction with the DCF Medical Director.

Even if DCF was the legal guardian or statutory parent of a child who has died, consent for an autopsy must be given by the person who assumes responsibility for the burial of the body. DCF staff will work with that person to obtain consent for an autopsy.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. [§19a-286](#).

**Death of a
Child After-
Hours**

If the death of a child who has been in the care of DCF occurs after hours, Careline has the following responsibilities:

- the Careline Program Director shall telephone the Commissioner or designee, the Regional Administrator and the Area Office Director;
 - the Careline Social Work Supervisor shall complete and forward the DCF-823, "Critical Incident Report," to the designated agency staff;
 - the Careline Investigator shall provide face-to-face notification to the biological parents whenever possible after conferring with the Careline Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager or Director; and
 - the Careline Investigator shall provide necessary follow-up contact and support to the child's caregivers.
-

**Death of a
Parent
Whose Child
is in Out-of-
Home Care**

When a child is in out-of-home care and the child's parent dies:

- the Careline Supervisor shall immediately notify the Area Office Director, following the procedures for "Notification to Area Office..." in the above table; and
- the Careline Supervisor shall notify the designated DCF staff.

When the parent's death occurs after hours, the Careline Supervisor shall consult with the Program Manager or Director, and other significant persons involved with the child to determine the best course by which to inform the child of the parent's death.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Human Trafficking - Classification Guidelines

If a reporter suspects or is reporting human trafficking, the Careline Social Work Screener will document that in the allegation narrative including all details the reporter uses to support the allegation.

When the reporter does not mention human trafficking but the Screener suspects the maltreatment described might be indicative of human trafficking, the Screener will document one or more of the following reasons for his or her suspicion, along with supporting details:

- there is reasonable cause to suspect human trafficking of a child by a caregiver or non-caregiver;
- there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been forced into prostitution, forced labor or domestic servitude;
- there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually exploited for commercial purposes;
- a professional who works with human trafficking cases suspects or is reporting human trafficking;
- a law enforcement agency suspects that that it has encountered a human trafficking situation in which children are involved.
- Is this a runaway? Is the child listed in NCIC? (For law enforcement calls.)

In suspected human trafficking situations, the Screener will ask the following additional questions:

- Is this an arrest? What is the charge?
- Is the child in Connecticut or out of state?
- Is the child committed or otherwise has DCF involvement?
- Were the parents or caregivers notified? What was their response?
- Did the parents or caregivers report the child missing?
- Is the trafficker or pimp identified?
- Where was the child located?
- Does the child have an arrest history?

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Transmitting Accepted Reports to the Area Office

The Careline Supervisor shall immediately transmit all approved reports received at Careline to the designated Area Office.

The Careline Supervisor shall call the Area Office to notify it that such a report is being transmitted.

If the response time necessitates an after-hours investigation, the Careline Supervisor will assign the investigation to a Careline investigator.

Note: Those reports which require a two-hour response and which are transmitted to the Area Office at least 15 minutes prior to the close of a regular work day shall be assigned to an Area Office Intake Social Worker for immediate investigation.

Supervisory Approval

A Careline Social Work Supervisor must approve:

- all not accepted reports, and
- all upgrades or downgrades in the commencement time of an investigation.

Length of Calls

Calls shall be answered and information obtained promptly and efficiently to avoid delays for other callers and to transfer accepted reports to the Area Offices for investigation in a timely manner.

The Careline Social Worker shall control and direct the telephone interview in a courteous and professional manner.

The goal of the interview is to obtain sufficient information to determine if the call can be accepted as a report of suspected abuse or neglect and to initiate an investigation.

When to End a Call

The Careline Social Worker shall end a call when enough information has been gathered to determine one of the following:

- the information gathered is sufficient to determine that a CPS response is required;
 - the call is not a child protective services report and no investigation is needed (in this case, redirect the call to community resources, 211 Infoline or other DCF divisions); or
 - the information does not meet legal sufficiency for an accepted report.
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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Ending the Call

To end the call, the Careline Social Worker shall:

- advise the caller that his or her information will be processed with appropriate follow up;
- thank the caller for his or her concern; and
- ask the caller to call again with any future suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

If the caller does not want to hang up or persists in relating repetitive or tangential information, the Careline Social Worker shall:

- advise the caller that sufficient information to take action and determine an appropriate response has been provided; and
- end the call in a professional manner.

Response Time for an Investigation

The Careline Social Worker shall use the SDM Response Priority Tool in LINK to establish the risk level to the child and determine the time within which the investigation must commence.

The table below presents the times used to prioritize investigations. In all cases, however, investigations shall commence as soon as possible.

Note: Response times are calculated from the time the report is accepted at Careline.

If the report of child abuse or neglect is...	Then, the response time for commencing an investigation is...
A situation in which failure to respond immediately could result in the death of or serious injury to a child	same day
A report of abuse from a school	same day (see below for exception)
A non-life threatening situation which is severe enough to warrant a same- or next-day response to secure the safety of the child and to access the appropriate and available witnesses	24 hours
A non-life threatening situation which, because of the age or condition of the child, indicates that a timely response is required	72 hours

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Reports Received from Schools Except as noted below, when a school makes a report that a child may have been neglected or abused or is fearful of returning home, the report shall be prioritized for a same day response. The Careline Social Worker shall request that the child be kept at the school until the DCF investigator arrives to interview the child.

Exception to Same Day Response to School An exception to the same day response time to a report from a school may be made by taking into account the child's safety after a mutual assessment by the Careline Social Worker and the reporting school. Approval of a Careline Social Work Supervisor is required.

Careline Primary Investigator's Role The Careline Primary Investigator's role differs from that of an Area Office Intake Social Worker in the following ways:

- The Careline Investigator is required to investigate any report made to Careline that requires an immediate response (or 24 hour response on weekends or holidays) whenever Area Offices are closed. This includes both new and existing CPS cases and reports concerning facilities and foster homes.
- Careline Investigators are considered "essential" staff and are required to respond to investigations in "all weather conditions" even if state cars have been officially grounded.
- The Careline Investigator is required to respond to investigations anywhere in the State of Connecticut, and occasionally outside the state, to complete essential aspects of an investigation.
- The Careline Investigator is required to accurately and independently assess the impact of (but not limited to) domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse, medical issues and criminal history on a child's safety without the consultation of the Regional Resource Group specialists or DCF legal staff.

Note: Careline management has contact information for DCF subject matter experts for use in emergency after-hours situations.

Requirements of a Careline Investigation The Careline Investigator is required to make every attempt to interview all the children in the home, all caregivers, the reporter, all appropriate medical professionals, law enforcement personnel and all other available service providers, family members and collateral contacts during an investigation.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Transition of
Careline
Investigation
to the Area
Office**

After concluding an after hours investigation, the Careline Investigator shall transmit all documentation and evidence to the designated Area Office Social Work Supervisor by the start of the next working day.

**Drug
Endangered
Child (DEC)
Protocol**

The following Careline Protocol covers drug endangered children (DEC) cases involving collaboration with law enforcement (LE) prior to action.

**Area Office
or Careline
Pre-LE
Action
Collaboration
and Planning**

When applicable, Area Office staff will collaborate with all concerned official entities prior to execution of a law enforcement action related to illegal substances that may involve drug endangered children.

Concerned parties may include, but are not limited to:

- law enforcement (LE);
- Office of the State's Attorney (OSA);
- Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP);
- HAZMAT; and
- local, state and federal counterparts.

DCF may share information with LE within state and federal guidelines.

Cross reference: DCF DEC Protocol (09/29/2010).

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Area Office
or Careline**

- Staffing

When LE identifies that there are children involved in a substance abuse investigation, DCF will “stand by” in response to the LE contact.* In cases where there is a planned LE action that involves a child(ren)’s exposure to illegal substances or activity related to illegal substances, DCF will ensure that there are adequate staff available to meet the needs of the child(ren) and conduct interviews pertinent to the DCF case.

- In these planned matters, DCF will work with appropriate staff within DCF to secure potential placement for the child(ren).
- As it is the preference of DCF to utilize relative placements whenever appropriate, DCF staff will conduct a search of its records to identify relatives for potential placement purposes. **Although DCF will have prior knowledge of an impending LE action, DCF staff may NOT reach out to relatives in regard to any such action or resulting potential need for placement prior to the LE action occurring.** In all cases where a relative option is identified and determined to be appropriate under DCF policy, such placement will be utilized.

- Placement

- To be best prepared to provide for placement for the child(ren), DCF will concurrently pursue traditional foster care through the DCF Office of Foster and Adoptive Services (OFAS) in cases where the relative option is not definite at the time. OFAS placements will be pursued that support the best interest of the child(ren), *e.g.*, maintaining sibling groups together, and considering proximity to community connection.
- In cases where a relative option is determined to exist but is not available on the date of the removal, DCF may use a traditional foster home while continuing to secure relative placement.

Any parent or caregiver who has a child(ren) removed from his or her care will be provided with the DCF-159, "Immediate Removal - 96-Hour Hold of Children."

*The Area Office shall designate AO staff for this role. Careline shall determine if primary staff or AO Careline coverage staff shall be designated for this role on a case-by-case basis.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Careline
Report:
Written Report
for Mandated
Reporter**

In cases in which DCF and LE collaborate prior to the LE action, the **DCF staff** responding to the case will make a report of abuse or neglect to Careline as soon as practical, but not later than 12 hours after the action. This report will be made in accordance with existing mandated reporting laws.

LE will be requested, as required by mandated reporting laws, to submit a written report (DCF-136) to the DCF Careline within 48 hours of DCF responding to the scene.

**DEC
Procedure
when LE
Action
Occurs
without Prior
Notice to
DCF**

When law enforcement calls to make a report and they state they are at a home making an arrest of a parent and the children are at the home, the Careline Social Work Screener will take the name of the family, the number of children and the address. The Social Work Screener will then place the caller on hold and pass the information to a Social Work Supervisor so he or she can dispatch DCF to the scene. The Social Work Screener then returns to the call and continues to take the report.

A Social Work Supervisor will determine whether to send an on-call Social Worker out first until a primary investigator arrives or to just send a primary investigator directly. Distance and time must be factored into the assignment.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

Location of Child at DCF Response Time DCF staff will **not enter any premises** until deemed “cleared” by the appropriate entity in control of the site (*e.g.*, LE, DEEP, HAZMAT). “Cleared” means that the premises are found to contain no health or safety hazards to any person entering the site.

Cleared sites: Entry will be permitted for the purpose of conducting a full assessment and, if a child is removed, for the purpose of obtaining possessions for the child that maybe needed for placement.

NOTE: In cases where there is a risk of contamination as determined by the entity in control of the site, nothing will be removed from the premises.

DCF may observe the residence with LE present to view any risks that are present due to the drug environment or other household situation.

Contaminated Persons/Sites: In cases in which the entity in control of the site (*e.g.*, LE, DEEP, and HAZMAT) determines that there are contaminated persons or the site is contaminated, DCF will not transport a child prior to the entity in control completing any needed decontamination.

DCF will not remove any items from a site that is identified as contaminated.

In the event that the child requires transportation to a medical facility for treatment purposes, the entity in control of the site will arrange for such transport. DCF shall follow the child to the medical facility and proceed with case services and placement services, if needed.

DCF will not transport any child unless he or she has been decontaminated.

Medical Evaluation of Child(ren): In all cases in which a child requires decontamination, DCF will seek medical treatment to determine if the child has been exposed to illegal substances through inhalation or other physical contact or has any medical needs resulting from the environment. A child removed from a drug manufacturing environment at which no decontamination was necessary should be still be evaluated by a medical provider prior to placement.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

23

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Tools and Equipment

The Careline Investigator is provided with a "permanently assigned" state vehicle and must follow all DAS Home Garaging guidelines. The Careline Investigator must schedule and ensure routine maintenance on the vehicle, ensure it has full tank of gas at the start of each shift and ensure that it is routinely cleaned.

The Careline Investigator must ensure that four different types of valid car seats are properly secured in the vehicle in order to be prepared for transporting children of different ages and sizes.

The Careline Investigator is assigned one gas credit card to purchase gas at a commercial station and one gas card for any DOT gas station. A list of the DOT gas stations statewide is kept in the glove compartment of each vehicle.

The Careline Investigator is assigned a cellular telephone for use in contacting the Careline Office, Area Offices and foster homes and for performing any other case-related duties.

The Careline Investigator must also carry and maintain the following:

- laptop computer;
- gas card;
- camera;
- tape measure;
- cellular phone;
- flashlight;
- current maps of all Connecticut towns;
- phone and address lists of all municipal police departments, State Police barracks and hospitals; and
- a current emergency foster home list.

The Careline Investigator must also carry the following forms in multiple languages:

- clothing vouchers;
- "Parents Right to Know" brochure;
- Immediate Removal - 96-Hour Hold of Child(ren) (DCF-159);
- Immediate Removal - 96-Hour Hold Placement Notification (DCF-160);
- Certification of Title IV-E Status (DCF-2223);
- Medical Assistance Form (DCF-MA1);
- Medical Insurance Information (DSS-W-1621);
- Board and Care Agreements (DCF-469);
- Authorization for Release of Information **To** the Department of Children and Families [DCF-2131(T)]
- Authorization for the Release of Information **From** the Department of Children and Families [DCF-2131(F)];
- Notice of Privacy Practices (DCF-2236);
- Service Agreement/Safety Plan (DCF-2166); and
- Substance Abuse Screening/Information Form (DCF-2110).

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

Other Related Requirements Careline Investigators must be required to be available to work during normal business hours for, but not limited to, the following reasons: to testify in court proceedings, to testify in substantiation hearings for Area Offices or the Special Investigations Unit, to participate in fatality review proceedings, to attend mandatory trainings or staff meetings, and to ensure routine vehicle maintenance.

Careline Investigators are also required to regularly drive long distances up to and sometimes exceeding two hours to respond to and return from investigations depending on location, weather and traffic-related issues. Driving distances and times will increase if a Careline Investigator is simultaneously assigned multiple investigations.

Due to the unpredictability of investigations, Careline Investigators may be required to work past his or her regularly-assigned hours. Careline Investigators may also be required to work for extended periods of up to 16 hours with little or no down time depending on work assignments.

Safety Issues Careline Investigators may be exposed to frequent nighttime operations in dangerous, hostile areas with high crime, gang activity and unleashed or roaming animals.

After Hours On-Call Schedule and Staffing Designated on-call staff shall cover a one-week cycle.

Each Region shall have a sufficient number of on-call Social Workers to cover each weekly cycle.

Each Region shall designate an on-call coordinator for Regional on-call staffing.

Types of Calls Responded to by the Regional On-Call Social Workers The Regional on-call Social Workers shall primarily respond to after-hours calls about open cases which are not new reports of abuse or neglect.

These calls can be situations requiring:

- telephone assistance or intervention; or
- on-site intervention, *e.g.*, a placement disruption, re-placement of a runaway.

Note: At times, on-call Social Workers may be assigned to a new report depending upon Area Office and Careline demands.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Steps Taken by Careline to Forward Calls to the After Hours On-Call Social Worker

If the Careline Social Worker cannot resolve a situation by providing basic information to the caller, the call shall be forwarded to the Area Office on-call Social Worker as follows:

Step 1: Careline Social Worker will search LINK for essential case data, case name, legal status and assigned Social Worker's name.

Step 2: Careline Social Worker will provide the on-call Social Worker with the following information:

- the LINK data;
- the identity of caller; and
- the reason for the call.

Step 3: Careline Social Worker will log the call and the time the on-call Social Worker was contacted.

Note: If the on-call Social Worker cannot be reached within ten minutes of the call to Careline, the Careline Social Worker shall contact the on-call Program Manager.

Step 4: Once assigned, the on-call Social Worker is supervised by a Careline Social Work Supervisor.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Steps Taken by After Hours On- Call Social Worker

When contacted by Careline, the on-call Social Worker shall respond as follows:

- telephone the caller within ten minutes of being contacted by Careline;
- immediately respond to any emergency situation;
- notify the Careline Social Work Supervisor of site visit findings and any safety concerns;
- upon return from a site visit, notify the Careline Social Work Supervisor;
- complete a case activity note in LINK for every call;
- at the beginning of the next working day, provide the case activity notes to each of the following persons in the Area Office:
 - assigned Social Worker;
 - Social Work Supervisor;
 - Program Manager; and
 - OFAS Program Manager, when a placement is involved;

Note: If the on-call Social Worker cannot complete the case activity notes before the beginning of the next business day, he or she must call the Area Office Social Work Supervisor to provide the information and answer any questions. The information must be e-mailed and entered into LINK as an after hours case activity note as soon as possible.

- maintain a log of calls received from Careline, recording the following information:
 - case name;
 - caller's name;
 - nature of call;
 - time of call;
 - resolution of situation; and
 - time required to resolve the situation, either by telephone or by making a site visit.
-

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Responsibility of Regional On-Call Coordinator A manager in each Region shall be designated as the coordinator of that Region's on-call system, with the following duties:

- meet with the on-call Social Workers as necessary;
- notify the Area Office and Careline Director of any problems or issues;
- maintain the on-call schedule;
- by noon of each Thursday, provide Careline with the names of the after hours on-call Social Workers for the coming week;
- notify Careline of any changes to the schedule during the week;
- ensure that the following resources are available for each on-call Social Worker:
 - a cellular phone;
 - Area Office on-call handbook with area-specific maps, phone numbers, court forms, etc.; and
 - a state car.

Responsibility for Making Placements The after hours on-call Social Worker is responsible for locating a placement when:

- a runaway is located;
- an out-of-home placement disrupts; or
- a child in an active in-home case requires placement, *e.g.*, a parent demands removal of a child, a child runs away and refuses to return home.

To locate a placement, the on-call Social Worker shall attempt to place a child with a qualified relative. If that is not possible, the Social Worker shall utilize the Area Office's emergency foster home list or, if no homes are available, the statewide emergency foster home list or the emergency shelter list.

If no appropriate placement is available, the on-call Social Worker shall contact the Careline Social Work Supervisor for assistance. If necessary, the Careline Social Work Supervisor will contact a Careline Manager to determine if a DCF-operated facility may be used.

Note: The Careline after hours on-call Social Worker may be assigned, from time to time, to assist a Careline Investigator when making a placement which is the result of a report of abuse or neglect.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Cases
Involving
Multiple Area
Offices**

When a situation occurs on a case which originates in Area Office A, and the child is placed or located in the geographic area of Area Office B, Careline shall contact the Area Office that is responsible for the case to respond to the situation.

The Careline Social Work Supervisor acts as the after-hours gatekeeper for all emergency placements.

Case Alerts

The assigned Area Office Social Worker and Supervisor are responsible for resolving potential or known problems on open cases which are identified during work hours.

If the Area Office Social Worker anticipates a problem developing after the close of the office, he or she shall contact Careline to discuss the details. He or she shall also provide case alert information, in writing, to the Careline Supervisor or Manager.

A case alert shall include the Area Office's recommendation for action and potential placement resources, if a placement may be needed.

The Area Office shall provide a copy of the case alert to the on-call Social Workers and Careline when deemed necessary.

**Request for a
Careline
Investigation**

An Area Office may request that an investigation be continued by Careline in the following situation:

If...	And...	Then...
the Area Office investigator attempted, but was not able, to conduct an investigation by 7 p.m. because the investigator could not locate the child during that time period	the Area Office manager determines that, because of the risk to the child, the situation cannot wait until the next working day for further attempts to locate the child	the Area Office manager may contact Careline to request that a Careline Investigator or an on-call Social Worker be assigned to continue the investigation.

**Non-
Delinquent
and Out-of-
State
Runaways**

During the hours when the Area Offices are closed, the Area Office on-call Social Worker shall have primary responsibility for assessment and planning for emergency intervention services to non-delinquent, out-of-state runaways under the direction of the Careline Social Work Supervisor.

During regular office hours, an Area Office Social Worker shall be responsible for these activities.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

**Action on
Receipt of
Request**

Upon receipt of a call from a child, police department, detention facility, or other source requesting services for an out-of-state runaway, Careline shall determine:

- if there is a report of the child's legal status (verify by police contact);
 - the parent's or guardian's whereabouts and any attempts to contact them; and
 - the child's willingness to return home or accept placement services from DCF as assessed by:
 - any history of abuse or neglect; and
 - the child's competency to refuse to return home.
-

**Contact With
the Parent or
Guardian of
a Runaway**

The Careline shall attempt to contact the parent or guardian of an out-of-state runaway to discuss:

- the parent's or guardian's willingness to have the child returned home;
- transportation arrangements;
- the ability to return the child home within 12 hours (the length of time that the police may legally hold the child); and
- the parent's or guardian's willingness to have the child placed by DCF.

Note: There is no statutory requirement for written parental consent to place an out-of-state runaway.

**Child Accepts
DCF Services**

If the child agrees to accept DCF services, the Social Worker shall:

- obtain any written documentation;
- complete LINK narratives and forward them to the Area Office; and
- find a temporary placement until transportation arrangements can be made to send the child home.

If a temporary placement is needed, the after hours on-call Social Worker and Careline Social Work Supervisor shall collaborate on locating a placement for the child.

Note: The Interstate Compact Office is not available after hours.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Use of 96-Hour Hold

If the parent or guardian refuses to cooperate with having a runaway child placed or in planning for the child's return home, or if the child refuses to return home due to allegations of abuse or neglect, placement may be made pursuant to a 96-hour hold.

The report shall then be accepted for a child protective services intake and an additional report shall be made to the state where the parent or guardian resides.

Child Refuses DCF Services

If the child refuses DCF services, placement or to return home, the Social Worker shall:

- notify the Area Office where the child is located of his or her refusal;
 - forward any written documentation, including teletypes, to the appropriate Area Office staff; and
 - notify the parent or guardian of their right to pursue a requisition process through their state's Interstate Compact Office.
-

Runaways Committed to the State of Origin

When a runaway is committed to his or her state of origin, the Careline Social Worker or Social Work Supervisor shall:

- contact the appropriate out-of-state agency;
 - determine how soon the child can be picked up;
 - discuss with the runaway his or her willingness to return;
 - locate temporary placement, if required;
 - forward the case information to the appropriate Area Office staff; and
 - enter the case information in LINK.
-

Reports of Abuse or Neglect Concerning a Department Employee

Reports of abuse or neglect in which a DCF employee is the alleged perpetrator shall be forwarded by Careline to the Special Investigations Unit for assignment to an SIU investigator.

These types of situations may involve the DCF employee and:

- his or her own children; or
- a child receiving services from DCF, including a child residing in a DCF-operated facility.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 34-12-8, "Reports of Abuse or Neglect Concerning a Department Employee."

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Careline Managers' Responsibilities

A Careline Manager is on call 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and has the following responsibilities:

- manage all after-hours Careline functions, including after-hours investigations;
- authorize the following:
 - emergency staffing to cover shift vacancies;
 - medical permission to treat in complicated medical situations, with consultation with the on-call DCF medical staff; and
 - 96-hour holds;
- review critical incident and significant event reports;
- notify Central Office and Regional Office Administrators of critical incidents and potential high profile media cases;
- interface, as appropriate, with Regional managers to ensure:
 - continuity of service delivery on active DCF cases; and
 - appropriate investigation response to protective service reports; and
- perform all related duties and decision making to ensure an efficient Careline operation.

Notification to Mandated Reporters

DCF has a legal obligation to provide mandated reporters with information regarding the acceptance and outcome of reports made by the reporter on behalf of children and families. This notification shall be made using DCF-2122, "Letter to Mandated Reporters" (LINK-generated).

The DCF-2122 must be sent by Careline at the time the decision is made to accept or not accept the report.

At the time of the case decision, the DCF-2122 is again generated by LINK and sent by the Area Office Intake Social Worker.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE
PRACTICE GUIDE**

**TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1**

**Request to
Change
Careline
Accept/Not
Accepted
Decision**

Area Office staff shall not administratively screen out any Careline report.

In situations in which the Area Office may have information that merits a reconsideration of a Careline decision to accept or not accept a report, the Area Office shall request a change of the decision.

A request to change the decision may not be based solely on a disagreement with Careline's decision and shall occur the same business day as the receipt of the report or the next business day if the report is received after the close of regular business hours.

In the event of a request to change a decision to accept a report, the original response time remains unless Careline changes its decision to a not accepted report.

The response time shall be based on the initial receipt of the report and not on the date the decision is changed.

The Area Office may not request that a particular Careline decision be changed more than once.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Process to Request a Decision Change

The following steps shall be followed in order to request a decision change from Careline:

- The Area Office Intake or Special Investigations Manager to whom the report is assigned must submit the request to the Careline Manager who is assigned to the Social Worker Screener who took the report.

NOTE: The appropriate Careline Manager can be identified by doing a LINK search of the Social Worker and Social Work Supervisor.

- If the Careline Manager is scheduled to be out for over 24 hours, call the main Careline number (860-560-7000) for the name of the on-site covering manager.
 - The AO or SIU Manager must submit the request to the Careline Manager via telephone or e-mail the same business day as the report is received or the next business day if the report is received after regular business hours.
 - All requests must include:
 - LINK case number;
 - date of report;
 - reason for request, from this list:
 - victim over 18 years old and not in DCF care;
 - ongoing issue in an active case;
 - duplicate information;
 - perpetrator not a caregiver or entrusted person;
 - allegation does not meet statutory child abuse or neglect definitions; or
 - insufficient information to investigate; and
 - rationale for requesting change to a not accepted report.
 - The Careline Manager shall have one business day to review the request and make a decision.
 - If the decision is for the report to remain accepted, the Area Office is responsible for meeting the identified response time.
 - If the decision is for the report to be changed to not accepted, the case will be re-assigned in LINK to the Careline Manager who made the original decision.
-

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

Steps for Processing a Change to Not Accepted Report

- If the report is attached to a case with prior DCF involvement, the Careline manager is assigned to the case in LINK, the report is de-linked from the case, a request is submitted to the CO LINK Specialist to re-set the decision to "pending," the Careline Manager documents the rationale for the change to a not accepted report in the "Supervisory Narrative/Comments" section and in a "Closing Summary" narrative in LINK, and the case is processed as an "Administrative Closing."
- If the report is attached to a case with no prior DCF involvement, the Careline Manager is assigned to the case in LINK, the not accept decision is completed via the creation of an unsubstantiated dummy protocol, a "Closing Summary" narrative in LINK is entered, and the case is processed as an "Administrative Closing."

Mandated Reporter Letter

If the Careline Director or designee reverses the decision from an accepted to a not-accepted report, the Careline or Area Office Manager shall notify the mandated reporter, if any, in writing explaining how the decision was made and how the information will be followed up.

Courtesy Visits for Other States

Careline sometimes receives calls from child protection agencies in other states requesting that DCF assess a child or family even if there are no current allegations of abuse or neglect. These are known as requests for "courtesy visits."

Prior to forwarding such a request from another state to the Area Office for action, the Careline Social Worker must ensure the call is not appropriate for handling by the DCF Interstate Compact unit.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CARELINE PRACTICE GUIDE

TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
DCF CARELINE POLICY 33-1

- Courtesy Visits** Courtesy visits may include but are not limited to these situations:
- An out-of-state CPS agency is requesting that DCF determine the living conditions of a child, the ability of the caregiver to care for the child or other issues impacting the child or family not rising to the level of abuse or neglect.
 - An out-of-state CPS agency is requesting that DCF determine where the child and family reside and that the child is connected to needed services and is in school.
 - An out-of-state CPS agency is requesting an assessment of relatives who may be temporary visiting resources to children who are in the custody of the requesting state. (A temporary visit is defined as a child visiting a relative over the summer for vacation or for less than 30 days.)
-

Careline Responsibilities The Careline Social Work Screener shall document the request by e-mail and in LINK. The request will be reviewed by the Careline Program Manager or designee. If the request is accepted, it will be forwarded to the appropriate Area Office.

Area Office Responsibilities The Area Office shall assign the task to a Social Worker and commence the request within 72 hours through phone or face-to-face contact. The Social Worker shall conduct the requested task if appropriate, document the findings in LINK, and report the finding to the requesting state.

Note: Concerns about confidentiality or other legal issues should be brought to the attention of the Area Office legal staff immediately.

Timeframes for Completion Depending on the information requested, the Social Worker shall complete the assessment and send a report to the requesting state within 45 days.

Identified Safety Factors If an obvious safety factor is identified from the courtesy visit, the Social Worker, with guidance from the Social Work Supervisor or Program Manager, should call in a report to Careline. If accepted by Careline, the courtesy visit will then be changed to a CPS intake case.