

	PARADISE VALLEY POLICE GENERAL ORDER Welfare Calls Involving Children	Order Number 44.7
		Date 04-01-14

44.7 Welfare Calls Involving Children

- A. If the *officer* is asked to check on an ill or injured child, *officers should* seek consent to speak with any adults who are present and the child or children separately. The following types of questions *should* be asked and observations made:
1. Children's names, ages and whereabouts.
 2. Name of the school and caretakers before and after school.
 3. When the child last ate and if the child eats regularly; the *officer may* ask to look in the refrigerator and kitchen cabinets to see if there is available food.
 4. *Officers should* observe the visible areas of the child, especially the head, neck, arms and legs, looking for injuries, bruises in different stages of healing, and injuries in areas not explained by childhood accidents. Ask about any injuries or bruising. Ask the child if they feel safe at home.
 5. If the child is an infant or is asleep, have the parent or guardian expose the child's chest, back, and legs, checking for bruising, pattern marks, breathing difficulties, and/or any other injuries on exposed areas.
- B. If the *officer* is asked to check on the conditions in which the child is residing (dirty house calls), the *officer should* ask for permission from the parent or guardian to walk through the house. Depending on what the *officer* finds, *officers* have the following options:
1. Document and photograph the condition of the house, if it does not rise to a criminal level.
 2. Document, photograph and contact a supervisor to discuss further actions that should be taken. Depending on the condition of the house, options may include citing the parent for for A.R.S. § 13-3613 (contributing to the delinquency/dependency of a minor), contacting DCS and removing the child, and/or pursuing felony charges.



PARADISE VALLEY POLICE GENERAL ORDER

Welfare Calls Involving Children

Order Number

44.7

Date

04-01-14

- C. When a call involves ongoing violence between adults, Communications *will* seek to determine if children are present at the scene and *will* relay that information to the *officer* who is responding. In such situations, as soon as feasible, *officers should* locate the children and, if possible, remove them from the immediate area.
- D. If the children need to be interviewed, such interviews *should* be done by *officers* with training in interviewing child witnesses. In any event, the interviews *should* be done without blaming the parents or guardians and *should* focus on the children. Any questions concerning what happened *should* be asked in an open ended style and in language that is age appropriate to the child. The children *should* be told that the *officers will* make sure they have a safe place to stay.
- E. In any situation in which there is immediate concern for the welfare of the child, whatever the circumstances (child *victim*, neglect or *abuse*), or if the parent or guardian refuses to allow access to the child, the *officer shall* remain at the scene and call for both a *supervisor* and Department of Child Safety. Before leaving a crime scene where children are present, ensure that there is a parent or caretaker present to care for the children. If there is not, contact DCS regarding placement of the child. If a neighbor or relative offers to care for the child, do not allow the child to go with the person without DCS permission. The *DR* on any incident involving children *shall* include name and contact information of the caregivers.
- F. The agency should maintain a list of social services agencies available in the area including information about local children's advocacy centers.