



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Protocol for DCS Confidential Safety Reporting Systems

Supplemental to DCS Policy: [20.23, DCS Confidential Safety Reporting System](#)

A. Reporter Confidentiality

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-5-106](#), states the identity of any individual who reports to or participates in the reporting system shall:

1. Be sealed from inspection by the public or any other entity or individual who is otherwise provided access to the Department's confidential records under this title;
2. Not be subject to discovery or introduction into evidence in any civil proceeding; and
3. Be disclosed only as necessary to carry out the purposes of the reporting system.

B. Reports NOT Appropriate for CSRS

All DCS employees should report serious, immediate safety concerns to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible (e.g. appropriate Regional Operations and Statewide Services Directors, Supervisor, Law Enforcement, etc.). Circumstances that are NOT eligible for CSRS are listed below. In these instances, the report will be forwarded to the appropriate entity, and the identity of the reporter may not be protected.

1. Instances in which harm has occurred.

- a) Contact emergency services (911) in life threatening situations and report to your immediate supervisor if harm or injury occurred.
- b) DCS employees who experience a work-related injury should call the Worker's Compensation line at 1 (866) 245-8588.

2. Violations of DCS policy, code of conduct, or ethics.

- a) Concerns of this nature should be reported to Internal Affairs at [Internal Affairs Referral](#).

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3. Concerns for or allegations of child abuse/neglect.

- a) These concerns must be reported to the DCS Child Abuse Hotline at 877-237-0004 or by using the online reporting system at <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>.

4. Any Criminal Activity and/or illegal Actions.

- a) These concerns should be reported to Law Enforcement.

C. Making a Report

DCS employees may make a report about an event, condition or situation which could have, *but did not have*, a negative impact on the safety of DCS employee(s) or those served by the Department (i.e. a “near miss”) at any time.

1. After accessing the [DCS Confidential Safety Reporting](#) site, the reporter will complete all sections of the Confidential Safety Reporting System (CSRS) form and submit the report into the CSRS database.

a) Sections of the form include the following:

- ◆ Acknowledgement of applicable state laws regarding the CSRS.
- ◆ The reporter must identify if the report is regarding child abuse/neglect, an illegal act and/or violation of any DCS policy.
 - If the report is regarding child abuse/neglect an illegal act and/or a violation of any DCS policy the reporter is guided out of the CSRS and directed to contact the proper authorities (i.e. Child Abuse Hotline, Internal Affairs or Law Enforcement).

b) Reporter specific information such as:

- ◆ Identity
- ◆ Contact Information
- ◆ Job Specifications
- ◆ Incident-Specific Information with a narrative of the event/incident that includes the employee’s stress level at the time of the event/incident and the consecutive number of hours worker prior to the event/incident.

Processing a Report

The Safety Action Team is responsible for monitoring and screening CSRS reports on a daily basis.

1. Reports are screened out and appropriately referred, as needed, under the following conditions:

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- a) Any report of criminal activity or child abuse/neglect.
 - b) Any report related to violations of DCS policy or other internal affairs concerns.
 - c) Incomplete information (e.g. no contact information, no description of incident, etc.)
2. The CSRS web application is securely maintained and access to the system is limited to protect reporter confidentiality.
 3. The Safety Action Team is the only entity allowed access to a reporter's identifying information and will not reveal the reporter's name in any discussion or written report regarding the CSRS.
 4. All reports are assigned to a Safety Analyst for review.
 - a) If more information is needed, the Safety Analyst will attempt to contact the reporter using the contact information provided.
 - b) Reports are reviewed for immediate safety concerns and then analyzed for data collection and quality improvement.
 - ◆ Any safety concerns found that present an immediate risk of harm for a child/youth or a DCS employee will result in an immediate effort to contact the reporter and promptly address the safety concern.
 - c) The Safety Analyst enters a narrative into the CSRS web application describing the incident, any known influencing factors, and a summary of communications with the reporter. Preliminary findings and considerations for safety improvement are included in this narrative as well.
 - e) CSRS reports are reviewed and closed within five (5) business days from the date of submission.

D. Data Aggregation and Recommendations

1. Based on identified areas of concern, Quarterly Reports are developed and forwarded to the appropriate position of authority within DCS (e.g., Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Regional Director, Quality Practice Team, etc.).

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- a) The “appropriate position of authority” is determined by the Safety Action Team based on the prevalence (i.e. regional or statewide) and significance of the identified concerns.
2. Quarterly Reports include the following:
 - a) A summary of the types of safety-related reports being made to the CSRS;
 - b) A summary of significant systemic, safety-related factors.
 - c) Considerations regarding remediation of these identified safety concerns.
 3. The Safety Action Team meets quarterly, at a minimum, to aggregate statewide safety-related data from the CSRS and develop considerations for county, regional, and statewide improvements to the DCS system, which may include:
 - a) Enhancements to existing workflows;
 - b) Processes;
 - c) Policies;
 - d) Teamwork; and
 - e) Communication.
 4. Quarterly considerations from the Safety Action Team are sent to Executive Director of Quality Compliance.
 5. Quarterly considerations are either approved or left in surveillance. Approved considerations are considered formal recommendations.
 - a) If considerations are approved as recommendations, tracking and implementation will be completed by the Executive Director of Quality Compliance.
 - b) If considerations are left in surveillance, they will be directed back to the Safety Action Team for additional support or dissolution