 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>55</h1>
Chapter:	Child Safety Interventions	
Subject:	Unaccepted Reports on Open Cases	Page 1 of 3
Approved:	Aryka Radke, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 11/1/2023
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 55	Dated: 7/29/2016

Purpose

To outline the responsibilities of family services workers and supervisors in situations where a new report of child abuse or neglect is made to Centralized Intake and Emergency Services (CIES) which does not meet division policy criteria for acceptance of a new child safety intervention AND the division already has an open case with the family.

Definitions

Involvement: A case currently open of any case type (excluding the exceptions listed below): a child safety intervention, family support, conditional custody, custody, probation case, etc.


This policy does not apply to licensed foster homes as Family Services [Policy 222](#) (Foster Care Interventions) guides this work.

Additionally, this policy does not apply to cases that are pending delinquency or youthful offender status (DY case type) which are opened only for the purposes of writing court reports and attending court hearings per Family Services [Policy 164](#) (Youthful Offender Status). There are no established supervision requirements during this stage and these cases are exempt from this policy.

Policy

At times, a new report is received regarding a family with whom the division already has involvement. These reports will be screened according to Family Services [Policy 51](#). If the report is not accepted by the second reviewer, this person will forward the intake to the assigned worker and supervisor within 24 hours.

All new concerns shall be addressed by the family's assigned family services worker in consultation with a supervisor as needed. The unaccepted report may prompt the worker to review the most recent *SDM Safety Assessment* to determine if the current safety plan addresses unresolved danger(s). If there are noted dangers and/or risks, an in-person meeting with the family will be the necessary response. Other concerns may be addressed by a phone call with the caregiver, youth, or service providers. In rare instances, the worker and supervisor may determine no response is necessary (i.e., if the information was already known to the division or has already been investigated or assessed). **The worker and supervisor will decide the most appropriate response to the concern and document the response in case notes.**

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Case notes regarding unaccepted reports on open cases must include the following information:

- The intake number and the date of the report;
- A summary of the concerns reported;
- Whether the concerns were discussed with the family in person or by phone;
- The family’s response to the concerns;
- The plan for addressing the concerns; and
- A new safety plan, if needed.

The case note should be structured similar to the examples listed below.

No Response Necessary

A new report was received on (date) regarding concerns of _____. In response to intake # _____, Family Services Worker (name) and Supervisor (name) determined that follow-up was not needed. The plan for addressing the concerns is _____. A new safety plan was not needed.

Response Necessary


A new report was received on (date) regarding concerns of _____. In response to intake # _____, Family Services Worker (name) and Supervisor (name) determined that follow-up was needed. Family Services Worker (name) discussed the concerns with the family by phone/in person on (date). The family’s response was _____. The plan for addressing the concerns is _____. A new safety plan was/was not needed. (If applicable), the following steps were taken on (date):

- _____
- _____
- _____

Reports containing non-child protection related concerns, such as absences from school or requests for referrals or support, should also be addressed by the assigned worker. This may include providing information or additional resources to the family or services providers.

Ongoing Assessment of Safety and Risk

The *SDM Safety Assessment* is used in cases open due to a child protection matter and is not required for juvenile justice cases. A new *SDM Safety Assessment* is not required for all unaccepted reports on open cases.

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A new *SDM Safety Assessment* is completed on open cases when:

- (1) There are changes in the family or household circumstances; or
- (2) There is a change in the ability of safety interventions to mitigate dangers.

Examples of a change in family or household circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- the birth of a baby;
- a change in household composition/make-up (such as the addition of new household members or a person leaves the household);
- the family moves;
- there is a new criminal charge;
- there is a significant change in health; or
- there is a new report of child abuse or neglect during the open case.

The *SDM Safety Assessment* should be completed within one working day of the assigned worker becoming aware of changes in the family's circumstances or a change in the ability of safety interventions to mitigate dangers.

After the worker completes the above tasks and there continues to be significant concerns that warrant a higher level of intervention, other steps may be necessary.

Possible steps include, but are not limited to:

- An announced or unannounced home visit to the parent or caretaker's home;
- A well-child check by law enforcement if there are reasons (safety concerns, information received late at night, etc.) that a home visit by the worker cannot occur promptly;
- Contact with community partners and providers (CFS contractors, therapists, treatment providers, education/school staff, etc.);
- Scheduling a team meeting or family safety planning meeting;
- Consulting with a State's Attorney to discuss new or increased court oversight; or
- Making an additional report to CIES as needed.