



State of Tennessee
Department of Children's Services

Incident Reporting Manual For Youth Development Centers and DCS Group Home

***DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
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INCIDENT REPORTING

All critical incidents involving children/youth, occurring within the jurisdiction of the Department of Children's Services AND housed in Division of Juvenile Justice Youth Development Centers and DCS Group Homes shall be reported to the Commissioner or designee.

Table of Contents

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.....4

Definition of Incidents4

Documenting Incident Reports.....4

Time Frames for Reporting Incidents5

Incidents occurring during regular working hours5

Incidents occurring after regular working hours or on weekends5

All other Incidents.....6

Guidelines for Reporting Incidents.....6

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS7

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS OF INCIDENTS8

Part 1

General Instructions

Reporting incidents promptly and accurately is absolutely critical to the daily operation of the Department of Children's Services (DCS). Without the reporting of incidents, the Department's ability to respond to inquiries from the media, the legislative or executive branches of State government, or the general public would be seriously compromised.

Definition of Incidents

To facilitate the reporting of incidents, a list of incidents and definitions likely to occur at DCS facilities is listed in the Terms and Definition's of Incidents section of this manual (pg. 6). While the list is not inclusive, it is meant to be used as a guide by those individuals charged with reporting incidents.

Documenting Incident Reports

All incidents will be documented on the applicable *incident reporting* section in **TFACTS**.

Part 2

Procedures for Youth Development Centers and DCS Group Homes

Time Frames for Reporting Incidents

Incidents occurring during regular working hours:

All significant incidents occurring during regular working hours (8:00 a.m. till 4:30 p.m. Central Time on Monday through Friday) must be reported by telephone to the Executive Director of Residential Operations/designee **immediately**. Significant incidents include, but not limited to:

- ◆ Disturbances;
- ◆ Failure of the infrastructure (power, water, etc.);
- ◆ Escape (YDC) or failure to return; and
- ◆ Death or serious injury to a youth or staff or any situation that would likely bring media attention.

The incident must be reported by no later than the end of the next business day.

Incidents occurring after regular working hours or on weekends:

When significant incidents occur at youth development centers and DCS group homes during after hours or on weekends, the appropriate facility staff will contact the Superintendent or Group Home Director or their designees.

The YDC Superintendent/designee will evaluate the situation as reported and based on severity of the incident, determine if it should be reported to the Executive Director of Residential Operations. The DCS Group Home Supervisor/designee will evaluate the situation and determine if it should be reported to the Central Office Group Home Director/designee and based on severity of the incident, determine if it should be reported to the Director of Residential Operations.

As a **broad guideline**, the Executive Director of Residential Operations **must** be contacted about disturbances, failures of the infrastructure (power, water, etc.), escape/runaway, serious injury to a youth or death of a youth, or any situation that would likely result in media attention for the Department of Children's Services.

The Executive Director of Residential Operations will determine when information relating to incidents that occur at youth development centers and DCS group homes should be communicated to the Deputy Commissioner of Juvenile Justice and/or Director of Communication for DCS or other DCS staff as applicable.

All other Incidents

- ◆ Incidents other than those referenced on *page 2, paragraph 1* do not require the immediate notification to the Executive Director of Residential Operations during regular business hours, nor do they require immediate notification to the central office staff after regular working hours or on weekends.

- ◆ These incidents must be reported by the end of the first working day following the occurrence of the incident.

Guidelines for Reporting Incidents

Reports must contain summary information and must contain specifics of the incident. Such specifics must include, but not be limited to:

- Injuries sustained;
- Individuals involved in the incident who are not otherwise specifically involved with DCS;
- Contact with outside law enforcement agencies;
- Contact with individuals associated with the media; and
- If there are any on-going investigations by the DCS Internal Affairs investigation or Child Protective Services Special Investigation Units.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question - Where is the YDC and Group Home incident reporting application located?

Answer: In the "incident reporting" section of TFACTS.

Question - Who should be included in the Addendum section of an incident report?

Answer – All youth referenced in the narrative portion of an incident should be included. If an employee is injured during an incident, or if an allegation of abuse is being made against an employee, the employee should also be included in the incident. When a YDC staff person transports a youth in mechanical restraints, the employee should be listed in the Addendum section of the incident report. Employees may also be added in the Addendum section at any other time that including them would seem to add to the value of the incident report.

Question - When should a report be labeled preliminary instead of final?

Answer - And the answer would include the above. When further action or investigation is needed or required in the incident such as in the above situations.

Terms and Definitions of Incidents

1. **Admission to Hospital** – A youth has been admitted to a hospital for any reason.
2. **Alleged Abuse By Staff** – A DCS or a contracted staff member is alleged to have physically, mentally, or sexually abused a youth.
3. **Alleged Impropriety** – A DCS or contracted staff member is alleged to have committed improper acts or to have participated in improper associations with a youth.
4. **Alleged Sexual Misconduct/Staff** – Allegations are made concerning the sexual misconduct of a DCS or contracted staff member at the facility/program. Does not include sexual abuse of youth. Refer to definition #2-“Alleged abuse by staff”
5. **Alleged Sexual Misconduct/Youth** – Allegations are made concerning the sexual misconduct of one or more youth.
6. **Arrest of Staff** – The confirmed arrest of a DCS or a contracted staff member.
7. **Arrest of Youth** – A youth has been arrested while in the custody of DCS and the arrest has been confirmed by a law enforcement agency.
8. **Arson** – A youth or any other individual has willfully and maliciously set fire, burned, or caused to be burned any property, building or structure and has caused, or has created the potential for, significant damage to persons or property. This definition applies regardless of whether the act involves the property of the DCS, the property of the youth, or the property of another person.
9. **Assault** – A physical attack on an individual by a youth that may or may not have necessitated medical attention.
10. **Assault by Youth on Staff** – A youth in DCS custody has physically attacked a staff member and the assault may or may not require medical attention.
11. **Assault by Visitor** – A visitor in a DCS facility has physically attacked another visitor, staff member or youth and the assault may or may not require medical attention
12. **Attempted Escape/YDC** – A youth has tried unsuccessfully to unlawfully leave the grounds of a youth development center, or the immediate supervision of YDC staff.
13. **Attempted Runaway/CRP**- A youth has attempted to flee the custody or supervision of a DCS community residential program or from someone to whom the youth had been entrusted. The attempt was unsuccessful and the youth did not leave the facility's

grounds.

14. **Attempted Suicide** – A youth has engaged in behavior that can be reasonably construed as an attempt to end his or her life.
15. **Automobile Damage** – Destruction intended or otherwise that has occurred to a motor vehicle.
16. **Bomb Threat** – Verbal or written statements have been made of a nature to cause fear of property damage or destruction, or personal injury or loss of life using explosives.
17. **Confinement, Use of** – The physical isolation of a YDC youth from the general population in a cell or room for control reasons,
18. **Confinement, Disciplinary, Use of** – The physical isolation of a YDC youth from the general population in a cell or room for disciplinary reasons.
19. **Contraband, Possession of** - A youth and/or any other individual has been discovered to possess, or to have gained or to be maintaining control over any item that is expressly prohibited by those legally charged with the responsibility for the administration and/or operation of the facility, and/or has caused any such item to be brought to the facility grounds.
20. **Destruction Personal Property** –Property other than state property has been damaged or destroyed.
21. **Death of a Youth** – Any life ending experience of a youth while in the care of DCS.
22. **Destruction State Property** – State property has been damaged or destroyed.
23. **Emergency Medical Treatment – Youth** – A determination has been made by a medical professional that immediate medical treatment is needed for a youth that cannot be provided at the facility where the youth is housed.
24. **Emergency MH Transfer** – A youth has been deemed to be in need of immediate mental health treatment and has been transferred to a mental health facility.
25. **Escape** – A youth has unlawfully departed from a youth development center, or secured transportation/custody.
26. **Failure to Return** – A youth on a pass has not returned to a facility at the scheduled time.
27. **Injury to Visitor** – A visitor has been reported injured while on facility premises.

28. **Injury of Staff** – A staff member has been injured or become ill on duty and the injury was treated on or off-campus.
29. **Mechanical Restraints-Use of** – The use of restraint devices to control the physical movement of a youth at a youth development center.
30. **Mechanical Restraints –Use of in Routine Transportation** – The use of restraint devices to control the physical movement of a youth or in route to a youth development center. Also applies to off-campus travel to destinations not including community residential programs or other less restrictive placements
31. **Medical Isolation/Confinement** – A youth's medical condition has made it necessary, as ordered by a qualified medical professional, for him/her to be confined to an area where there is limited contact with others.
32. **Medication Mistake** – An error has been made in control/dispensing of medication at a youth development center or community residential program.
33. **Notice of Apprehension** – Written notification that a youth previously classified as missing, AWOL or on runaway status has been returned to the custody of DCS either voluntarily or otherwise.
34. **Other Not Listed** – The occurrence of any significant incident that does not fit any of the definitions listed.
35. **Physical Plant Problems** – A DCS facility has experienced an electrical, plumbing or equipment failure that directly jeopardizes the safety, well being, and quality of life for youth and staff. These occurrences can include, but are not limited to, heating and air conditioning failure, failure or activation of emergency systems, water or sewage plant problems, etc.
36. **Physical Restraint-Use of** – Staff's use of physical contact and/or force to limit movement of a youth.
37. **Possession/Use Drugs/Alcohol** – A youth or other individual uses, possess, gains or maintains control over any illegal or unauthorized drug and/or causes such an item to be brought onto the facility grounds. These drugs may include, but are not limited to, narcotics, hallucinogens, cigarettes, barbiturates, stimulants, marijuana, beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages or any medication not properly prescribed by a physician for the specific individual.
38. **Possession of a Weapon** – A youth or any other individual, gains or maintains, without authorization, control over any firearm or other object capable of causing serious injury or death and/or causes it to be brought onto the grounds of a DCS facility.

- 39. Riot** – A serious incident of violence or disruption by youth that causes confusion and disorder and disrupts the normal operation of the facility. The acts of youth involved in a riot are intended to result in damage to property or injury to persons, to create a diversion for an escape, or to create an immediate danger to others.
- 40. Runaway-CRP** – A youth has unlawfully departed from an activity, work or the grounds of a community residential placement.
- 41. Stolen/Missing State Property** – Property that belongs to the state has been reported as lost or stolen.
- 42. Strip Search** – An examination of the naked body of a youth for weapons, contraband and physical abnormalities. This also includes a thorough search of all of the youth's clothing while it is not being worn.
- 43. Suicide Gesture/Threat** – Any act that might indicate a youth may have thoughts of taking his/her own life.
- 44. Theft** – The act or an instance of stealing or larceny.
- 45. Use of Law Enforcement** – Any situation for which law enforcement agencies, whether local or state, have been called to assist in addressing a problem situation at the facility or program.
- 46. Use of Chemical Defense Spray** – Mace or another chemical weapon has been used to control one or more youth.
- 47. Use of Emergency Vehicle** – Fire trucks, ambulances, or other life safety equipment have been summoned to a facility in response to a problem situation
- 48. Youth Disturbance** – Youth have actively participated in disruptive activities that require the intervention of staff members and the direction of their attention, for a significant amount of time, away from normal routines and that potentially affect the safety and security of youth and staff.