Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) Procedures

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TO: ALL PERSONNEL
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SUBJECT: SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT (SCAR) PROCEDURE MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE 04-02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Management Directive is to establish procedures for completing and processing a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR), per Field Operations Directive 03-04.

PROCEDURE

Field personnel may be involved with a SCAR incident in the following ways.

1. **Family Crimes Bureau receives a completed SCAR and forwards it to the appropriate patrol station.**

   Watch Deputy's Responsibilities:

   After 1200 hours, Monday through Friday excluding holidays, the Watch Deputy shall open the station's folder on the SDN and print the SCAR report. For each SCAR incident, the Watch Deputy shall enter a routine call for service in the CAD system, and the dispatcher shall assign the call for service to a patrol deputy. After the call has been assigned a tag number, the Watch Deputy shall rename the SCAR in the station's folder with a designated three digit tag number which shall be added to the immediate right of the victim's name. No spaces, hyphens or other identifiers are to be included. See the below example for a SCAR that had been assigned a tag number of 5:

   Example: NWK071203SMITH**005**.TIF

   If the Watch Deputy believes the SCAR incident does not warrant a call for service, the Watch Deputy, after assigning the SCAR incident a tag number and renaming it as set forth above, may present the SCAR to the Watch Commander. If the Watch Commander determines that no call for service should be issued, the Watch Deputy shall clear the call with the Watch Commander's name and reason for not issuing a call for service. Every SCAR incident shall be assigned a tag number and renamed as set forth above regardless if it is dispatched.

   If Family Crimes Bureau forwards a SCAR to a patrol station wherein the incident did not occur in that station's jurisdiction, but the child lives in that station's area, the Watch Deputy shall proceed as above, and the patrol deputy shall be directed to take a courtesy report.

If Family Crimes Bureau forwards a SCAR to a patrol station wherein the incident did not occur in that station's jurisdiction and the child does not live in that station's area, the Watch Deputy shall notify Family Crimes Bureau [REDACTED TEXT] indicating the above. Family Crimes Bureau will be responsible for reassigning the SCAR to the appropriate station folder.

Responding Deputy's Responsibilities:

A deputy who receives a call for service shall respond to the station to get a copy of the SCAR. The deputy shall thoroughly investigate the allegation and document the findings. Upon suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected, the deputy is obligated to complete an incident report (SH-R-49) which must include the following:

- The Suspect Child Abuse Report (DOJ form SS 8572) referral number.
- The names and dates of birth of all siblings and residents within the location.
- The names of other people present during the child's interview.

The deputy shall attach the SCAR to the incident report and write the Uniform Report Number (URN) on the upper right hand corner of the SCAR. The URN requires a 4 retention and appropriate statistical code. See list below for examples:

059 - CHILD BEATING - FELONY = 273a(a) or 273d P.C.
149 - CHILD BEATING - MISDEMEANOR = 273a(b) P.C.
418 - SUSPICIOUS CIRCS - POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE
120 - LEWD ACTS UPON A CHILD = 288(a) P.C.
121 - UNLAWFUL INTERCOURSE = 261.5 P.C.
172 - NEGLECT/FAILURE TO PROVIDE = 270 P.C.

The above procedure also applies to Suspicious Circumstances reports. If the deputy can articulate that no child abuse occurred, an incident report is not necessary. However, a log entry is required detailing the findings, and the names and birth dates of everyone at the location. Any clearance of a call for service that is related to alleged child abuse shall include an additional clearance code of 831. When only a log entry is made, the upper right hand corner of the SCAR shall contain a URN with statistical code 419 and 1 retention, SCAR referral number, and tag number, which shall then be submitted to the Watch Sergeant with a copy of the deputy's log entry.

Watch Sergeant's Responsibilities:

The Watch Sergeant shall ensure that the Watch Deputy completes their responsibilities as described above. When reviewing reports, the Watch Sergeant shall ensure that incident reports regarding all SCAR incident contain the required information as described above and that the SCAR is attached to the incident report.

Assign the incident report as directed by Department policy.

Write "ATTACHMENT" on the SCAR and any other document submitted with the incident report.

If a deputy submits a SCAR, but not an incident report, the Watch Sergeant shall ensure that an URN number was obtained using a statistical code of 419 and a retention of 1, and that the URN number, the

SCAR referral number, and tag number are on the upper right hand corner of the SCAR. The Watch Sergeant shall write the word “inactive/120" in the lower right corner and initial and date the SCAR.

Assign all non-workable SCAR reports to “Patrol.”

1. **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) notifies the station directly.**

If DCFS places a call for service directly to the station, the responding deputies do not have to complete a SCAR. DCFS will already have completed the SCAR.

Responding Deputy’s Responsibilities:

For responsibilities of the responding deputies, refer to section number 1 above.

Watch Sergeant’s Responsibilities:

For responsibilities of the Watch Sergeant, refer to section number 1 above.

1. **Mandated reporter reports incident to a station.**

When a mandated reporter reports an incident of suspected child abuse to a station, the responding deputy shall follow the below procedures.

Responding Deputy’s Responsibilities:

For responsibilities of the responding deputies, refer to section number 1 above. In addition, responding deputies shall do the following:

The deputy shall ascertain if the mandated reporter has contacted DCFS and obtained a SCAR referral number. If the mandated reporter has not contacted DCFS and obtained a SCAR referral number, the deputy shall provide the mandated reporter with a SCAR form to complete and have the mandated reporter contact DCFS at the Child Protection Hotline, (800) 540-4000, to obtain a SCAR referral number.

Whenever possible, the deputy shall obtain the original SCAR (white copy), leave the mandated reporter with the yellow copy and offer to forward DCFS (blue) and DA (green) copies. The mandated reporter has thirty-six hours to submit the SCAR. If the mandated reporter is unable to immediately complete the SCAR, the responding deputy must document in their incident report the reason why, and that they advised the mandated reporter that the SCAR must be received within thirty-six hours.

Watch Sergeant’s Responsibilities:

For responsibilities of the Watch Sergeant, refer to section number 1 above.

1. **Routine call for service or observation by deputy personnel.**

Watch Deputy’s Responsibilities:

If a citizen advises the station of an incident of child abuse or neglect, the Watch Deputy shall ensure that a call for service is assigned to a patrol deputy. If it is determined that the crime occurred in another jurisdiction, the desk deputy will initiate a call for service and a courtesy report shall be taken (per M.P.P. Section 4-01/020.35).

If it is determined that the crime occurred in our jurisdiction but the involved minors or parties reside outside of our jurisdiction, it is the Watch Deputy's responsibility to either send a car to the residence or call the local station/agency and ask that they take a courtesy report.

Responding Deputy's Responsibilities:

The patrol deputy shall thoroughly investigate the alleged abuse or neglect and document his/her findings in the following manner:

Upon suspicion that a child has been abused or neglected, a deputy is obligated to complete an incident report (SH-R-49). The incident report must include the following:

The Suspect Child Abuse Report (DOJ form SS 8572) referral number. (SCAR #)

The names and dates of births of all siblings and residents within the location.

If another person(s) is present during the child's interview, the name of the person(s) present.

Date and time the Child Protection Hotline was notified by the deputy.

The name of the person at DCFS the deputy spoke with.

If the receiving Children's Social Worker refuses to take the information and does not issue a SCAR referral number, the name of the person the deputy spoke with at the Child Protection Hotline and the reason the person refused to take the information.

The deputy must attach the SCAR to the incident report and write the URN number on the upper right hand corner of the SCAR.

Pull URN using 4 retention and appropriate statistical code. See list below for examples.

059 - CHILD BEATING - FELONY = 273 a (a) or 273d P.C.
149 - CHILD BEATING - MISDEMEANOR = 273a (b) P.C.
418 - SUSPICIOUS CIRCS - POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE.
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The above procedure also applies to "Suspicious Circumstances" reports. For "Suspicious Circumstances Possible Child Abuse" reports, use a statistical code of 418.

If the deputy determines there is neglect to the child, but the neglect does not qualify as a crime, the

deputy shall complete a SCAR and obtain a SCAR referral number from the Child Protection Hotline.

Example: The deputy responds to a 273.5 P.C. call; the child has not been abused, but is emotionally upset. Department of Children and Family Services considers this reportable and a SCAR shall be completed.

If a deputy completes a SCAR, but not an incident report, the deputy shall obtain an URN number with a statistical code of 419 and a retention of 1, placing the URN number, SCAR referral number, and tag number on the upper right-hand corner of the form. The deputy shall submit the SCAR to the Watch Sergeant with a copy of the deputy's log entry.

If the deputy can articulate beyond a reasonable doubt that no child abuse occurred, an incident report is not necessary, however, the deputy shall make a log entry stating in detail their findings, including the names and dates of birth of all persons at the location. Any clearance of a call for service that is related to alleged child abuse shall also include a clearance code of 831.

If a deputy only makes a log entry, the deputy shall obtain an URN number with a statistical code of 419 and a retention of 1, placing the URN number, SCAR referral number, and tag number on the upper right hand corner of the SCAR, and submit it to the watch sergeant with a copy of the deputy's log entry.

The responding deputy shall contact the Child Protection Hotline (800) 540-4000 as soon as possible or by the end of their shift.

The deputy should be prepared to answer the questions in the "Intake Questions" form attached as Attachment "A".

Upon completion of the referral, the Child Protection Hotline will provide the deputy with the name of the Children's Social Worker taking the information and the SCAR referral number.

Watch Sergeant's Responsibilities:

For responsibilities of the Watch Sergeant, refer to section number 1 above.

DUE DILIGENCE

Watch Deputy's Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the Watch Deputy to retrieve and print the SCAR sent to Norwalk Station via SDN as close to 1200 hours as possible and enter them in the SCAR log book .

SCAR reports to be handled during the DAY shift shall be immediately entered into the CAD and dispatched to field units.

SCAR reports to be handled during the PM shift shall be set aside and given to the PM Watch Deputy, who will immediately have the SCAR reports entered into the CAD and dispatched to field units.

Assignment of a SCAR to a filed unit shall not be delayed any longer then necessary and in no case longer

then the PM shift of the same day as it is received.

If field units are unable to contact parties involved in the SCAR they are directed to return the SCAR to the Watch Deputy for re-assignment on the next shift.

Every SCAR shall be handled to conclusion no later then two days from first assignment.

Responding Deputy's Responsibilities:

Deputy personnel shall make every effort possible to investigate fully the accusation reported in the SCAR.

Deputy personnel should be guided by their sense of responsibility for the safety of the children.

If a deputy is assigned a SCAR and is unable to contact any concerned parties, a brief explanation shall be attached to the face page and returned to the Watch Deputy.

Watch Sergeant's Responsibilities:

While approving SCAR reports, Watch Sergeants should be aware of the dates the reports where assigned and any notations made on the face page of the reports which shows an excessive amount of time handling a SCAR.

Sergeants should regularly review the SCAR log to monitor the number of reports outstanding.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF'S RESPONSIBILITIES

For non-workable SCAR reports, the professional staff shall be responsible for the following procedures:

Enter basic LARCIS information using LARCIS clearance code 120.

Send the original SCAR to Records and Information Bureau.

Create a station file with a copy of the SCAR for station records.

For workable SCAR reports in which an incident report was written, the professional staff shall process the SH-R-49 in the normal manner dependent on the nature of the crime.

SCAR information shall not be entered into LARCIS if an SH-R-49 is written to report a crime.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

When interviewing a child at school, a deputy must advise the child that they have a right to have a school staff member (adult) with them while being interviewed. For further information refer to Penal Code Section 11174.3.

The identity of all persons who report child abuse or neglect is confidential. Deputies shall not release to the child or the child's parents/guardians the name of the person who reported the alleged abuse or neglect.

In all cases of actual, suspected, and alleged family abuse incidents, clearance code 831 shall be used in conjunction with other appropriate codes to clear the call (see FOD 02-02).

STATION RESPONSIBILITIES

If the deputy completes the SCAR, or receives a SCAR from a mandated reporter, the station shall be responsible for distributing the duplicate copies as follows:

White copy - Station copy (if an incident report is written, this copy is attached to the incident report).

Blue copy - Mail to:
Department of Children and Family Services
[REDACTED TEXT]

Green copy - Mail to:
Los Angeles District Attorney's Office
Family Violence Unit
[REDACTED TEXT]

Yellow copy - Mail copy to reporting party only if they are a mandated reporter, otherwise, this copy shall be filed with the station copy.

DCFS HOTLINE QUESTIONS

Have the below Information ready for Child Protection Hotline, (800) 540-4000

- Mother's name, date of birth, address and telephone number.
- Father's name, date of birth, address and telephone number if different than mother's.
- Child's name, date of birth, address, phone number, school child attends, current location of child.
- Does child have other siblings? Names and date of birth.
- Other relatives?
- Suspected perpetrator's name, age, address, telephone number, if known.
- What are the allegations?
- Location of incident?
- Who, what, when, where, and how.
- Frequency of abuse? How many times?
- Any visible marks, bruises, lacerations, etc.

Deputies need to note in their first report:

The time the call was made.

The 19 digit Hotline referral (SCAR) number

The name of the Children's Social Worker (CSW) receiving the information