

## CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

### NOTICE

8.3

JULY 30, 2020

**TO:** All Concerned Personnel

**FROM:** Chief of Detectives

**SUBJECT:** STANDARDIZED DISPOSITION OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTS (SCAR) WITHIN THE ELECTRONIC SCAR DATABASE

**PURPOSE:** This Notice provides guidance to Los Angeles Police Department (Department) personnel regarding standardized disposition of Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCAR) within the Electronic SCAR (ESCAR) database.

**BACKGROUND:** Suspected Child Abuse Reports are generated and sent to the Department by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The initial intake of ESCARs occurs during business hours at Juvenile Division (JUV). The Investigative Control Unit (ICU) reviews incoming ESCARs, triages, and if necessary, dispatches calls for immediate investigation of child abuse. The Department Operations Center assumes this responsibility off-hours.

A recent inspection of the ESCAR database for SCARs investigated and administratively closed as “No Investigation” was completed to ensure the appropriateness of the disposition. The inspection revealed a Department-wide lack of standardization for all disposition categories within the ESCAR database.

**GUIDELINES:** Special Order No. 26 (SO #26), dated August 28, 2006, Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse Investigations – Revised, established the guidelines for reporting SCAR investigations. This notice provides guidelines for the standardized disposition of SCARs within the ESCAR database.

**PROCEDURE:** The ESCAR database has five “Status Update” options to indicate the progress and/or disposition of a SCAR investigation.

#### **How to Enter A Status Update:**

Utilizing the ESCAR System, the ESCAR Coordinator should click the “LEA Action” expansion tab. Click the blue “Update” tab, and a secondary window, the “Status Update” box will appear. This box will be populated with the ESCAR referral number, a “Status” drop-down menu, and a LEA Comment field. Enter the information as follows:

1. **“LEA Report Number”:** Enter the DR Number (DR# 20-9912345).

2. **“Status”**: Click on the “Status” drop-down menu and select the appropriate investigative status or disposition (Pending, No Crime Suspected, Crime Suspected, Crime Suspected- No Child Abuse).
3. **“LEA Comment”**:
  - a) Enter the type of report (Injury/Missing/Crime Report);
  - b) The assigned unit designation (i.e. 1A12);
  - c) The assigned officers’ name and serial number (i.e. Smith, #12345/ Jones, #56789); and
  - d) Any pertinent information the ESCAR Coordinator wants to add.
4. **“Update”**: Click the blue “Update” tab. This action will save the disposition and closes the Status Update box.

#### **A. Status/Disposition Categories**

The following is the criteria for each status or disposition category:

##### **1. Pending**

All ESCARs received by the Department are initially reviewed by ICU and assigned a status of “Pending” within the ESCAR system. The ICU will either contact Communications Division to generate an immediate call for service or will place the ESCAR in a geographic Area’s queue for an investigation to be completed within 10 days. The “Pending” designation remains until the SCAR has been investigated and the appropriate report has been completed by Area investigative personnel. Any ESCAR with a “Pending” status is considered overdue if the investigation has not been completed within 10 days of its receipt by the geographic Area ESCAR Coordinator.

##### **2. No Crime Suspected**

Upon completion of an ESCAR investigation, it is determined that no crime occurred or if there is insufficient evidence to determine if a crime has occurred, a non-crime report, i.e., Injury Investigation Report or a Missing Report should be completed.

**Note:** Suicidal ideation or self-harming indicated in an ESCAR requires a complete investigation and documentation on an Injury Report, prior to close out.

After the DR number is obtained, the ESCAR Coordinator should place the incident information (required information is delineated above, procedure #3) in the “LEA Comments” section of the assigned “Status Update” drop box.

##### **3. Crime Suspected**

The disposition of “Crime Suspected” is only used if the investigation revealed that the crime of child abuse occurred. After the DR number is obtained for the Investigative Report (IR), the ESCAR coordinator should place the incident information in the “LEA Comments” section of the assigned “Status Update” drop box (report title examples include; Child Abuse/Simple Assault or Sexual Battery/Crime Against Child).

#### 4. Crime Suspected – No Child Abuse

The disposition “Crime Suspected – No Child Abuse” is only used if the ESCAR investigation determined that a crime occurred other than child abuse. After the DR number is obtained, the ESCAR coordinator should indicate the incident information in the “LEA Comments” section of the assigned “Status Update” drop box (report title examples include; Intimate Partner Abuse, Criminal Threats, or Assault with a Deadly Weapon).

- When the disposition “Crime Suspected – No Child Abuse” is selected, a second drop-down menu will appear with two options: “Domestic Violence” and “Other.” An option has to be selected before the user can click the blue “Update” tab to save the entry.

#### 5. No Investigation

The Department also receives ESCARs that are classified as Mental/Emotional Abuse or General Neglect. While both types of abuse are significant, they are not indicative of a crime. When a Mental/Emotional Abuse or General Neglect ESCAR is received, the ICU or the ESCAR Coordinator should evaluate the report to determine if a crime has occurred. The ESCAR coordinator should indicate the lack of the elements of a crime in the “LEA Comments” section of the assigned “Status Update” drop box and include the reviewing officer’s serial number.

**Note:** Any ESCAR with the designation “Evaluated Out” (sometimes listed as “E/O” in the ESCAR narrative) indicates that there will be no investigation completed by DCFS. The investigative responsibility for these ESCARs has been placed with LAPD and should not be closed as “No Investigation.”

- If an investigation results in a courtesy report for another agency, an appropriate Status Update **other** than “No Investigation” should be selected. When Department personnel have conducted the preliminary investigation, the ESCAR should be updated with the correct disposition. The disposition “No Investigation” is **not appropriate** if another agency has completed a courtesy report for LAPD. An applicable Status Update should be selected if a preliminary investigation occurred.
- If an ESCAR is received and the narrative indicates that it is a “Secondary,” “Companion,” or “Duplicate” ESCAR to another ESCAR with an older origination date, the narrative must be reviewed to determine if the latest ESCAR contains information previously not disclosed, i.e., additional allegations of abuse, victims, at-risk siblings or witnesses that were not contacted during the original investigation. If it is determined that the original ESCAR already addressed the new information listed on the additional ESCARs, a disposition of “No Investigation” should be used to close out that secondary, companion or duplicate ESCARs.

- If it is determined that the new/additional information has not been investigated, a new investigation should be conducted and the additional ESCAR should be closed out with the appropriate disposition other than “No Investigation”.

**GEOGRAPHIC AREA ESCAR COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:** The ESCAR Coordinator is responsible for reviewing and assigning, for investigation, all ESCARs assigned to the geographical Area. The ESCAR Coordinator must ensure that ESCAR investigations are completed within 10 calendar days of receipt, in accordance with the Office of the Chief of Police (OCOP) Notice, dated November 21, 2019, Suspected Child Abuse Report Investigative Response, Review, Dispatch and Case Prioritization.

**Note:** Any deviation from the 10-day rule should be explained in the “LEA Comments” section of the “Status Update” drop-down box, i.e. the 10-day rule was not met due to receipt on a weekend/holiday.

**JUVENILE DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES:** The ICU, Juvenile Division is responsible for oversight of all ESCARs received by the Department and tasks including:

- Monthly and yearly assessment of all ESCARs received by the Department and forwards these assessments to COMPSTAT Division. The ICU also provides the geographic Areas a list of all overdue ESCARs. The ICU also completes quarterly and yearly inspections of SCAR investigations to ensure appropriate and timely disposition of SCAR investigations.
- The routing of ESCARs to DCFS, between geographic Areas or other jurisdictions. The ICU is also responsible for the review and distribution of all ESCARs designated as “Sensitive.”
- Entering the Status/Disposition of “Child Fatality” and “Sensitive” ESCARs assigned to the Abused Child Section (ACS).

**Note:** Area ESCAR Coordinators should only close out Child Fatality ESCARS if their respective Bureau Homicide Team was assigned investigative responsibility for the incident.

**DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Department Operations Center (DOC) is responsible for review of ESCARs sent to the Department during off-hours and on weekends and holidays. Additionally, the DOC produces and emails a “Daily ESCAR Log” to ICU for secondary review of all ESCARs received during off-hours by the DOC.

**DETECTIVE COMMANDING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES:** The geographic Area Detective Commanding Officer is responsible for ensuring that a detective supervisor is trained and assigned as the ESCAR Coordinator to oversee the investigation of all ESCARs assigned to their geographic Area.

**AREA COMMANDING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Area Commanding Officer is responsible for the overall management of SCAR investigations assigned to the Area in accordance with SO #26, and the OCOP Notice dated November 21, 2019.

**AUDIT DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Commanding Officer, Audit Division, shall review this directive and determine whether an audit or inspection shall be conducted in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

Should you have any questions regarding this Notice, please contact the Investigative Control Unit, Juvenile Division, at (213) 486-0531.

APPROVED:



KRIS E. PITCHER, Deputy Chief  
Chief of Detectives



DOMINIC H. CHOI, Deputy Chief  
Chief of Staff  
Office of the Chief of Police

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