

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

NOTICE

1.8

November 21, 2019

TO: All Concerned Personnel

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSE,
REVIEW, DISPATCH AND CASE PRIORITIZATION

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Notice is to delineate appropriate handling and investigation of Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCAR) and child abuse calls for service. In light of recent tragic child deaths, this procedure will focus Department efforts on intake, triage, dispatch and on scene investigations of child abuse.

PROCEDURES: All SCARs are generated and received from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The initial intake for SCARs occurs during business hours at the Investigative Control Unit (ICU), Juvenile Division (JD). During non-business hours and weekends, the Department Operations Center (DOC), Communication Division (CD), are responsible for the intake of SCARs.

Thorough review and handling is critical at each stage of the SCARs intake process. Child victims are society's most susceptible and vulnerable population. Any flaw in the investigation process can result in tragedy.

Effective immediately, all SCARs shall be handled as high priority cases and investigated within 10 calendar days of physical receipt of the SCAR (e.g., email, fax, etc.).

OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Officers dispatched to or assigned to investigate a SCAR or a child abuse call for service should review and follow the Suspected Child Abuse Preliminary Investigative Checklist, Form 18.46.00, and shall:

- Notify their watch commander that they have been assigned a SCAR.
- When applicable, review the SCAR in its entirety prior to beginning their investigation.
- Attempt to interview all parties separately:
 - In the event separate interviews are not conducted, officers shall articulate the reason in writing.
- Attempt to determine the identity and location of other siblings living in the home and if they are at risk:
 - Conduct a separate evaluation for each child to determine whether they too are potential victims.

- Capture interviews on Body Worn Video;
 - Exceptions (per Department Manual Section 3/579.15): Officers are not required to activate and record investigative or enforcement encounters with the public when:
 - A witness or victim refuses to provide a statement if recorded and the encounter is non-confrontational;
 - In the officer's judgment, a recording would interfere with his or her ability to conduct an investigation, or may be inappropriate, because of the victim or witness's physical condition, emotional state, age, or other sensitive circumstances (e.g., a victim of rape, incest, or other form of sexual assault);
 - Situations where recording would risk the safety of a confidential informant, citizen informant, or undercover officer; or,
 - In patient-care areas of a hospital, rape treatment center, or other healthcare facility unless an enforcement action is taken in these areas.
- Document all SCAR investigations on an Injury Investigation, Form 03.15.00, or Investigative Report, Form 03.01.00; and,
- Notify the Watch Commander or the Juvenile Coordinator for investigative advice and/or reassignment of the SCAR if it is determined there will be a delay in the completion of the investigation.

Note: All SCARs shall be investigated and documented on an Injury Investigation or Investigative Report within 10 days of physical receipt of SCAR (e.g., email, fax, etc.).

JUVENILE DIVISION'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Juvenile Division shall:

- Review, triage and prioritize SCARs consistent with the Juvenile Procedures Manual Section 340;
- Dispatch SCARs as a priority call for service when immediate attention is required;
- Provide procedural and investigative advice to Department personnel upon request;
- Track all Citywide SCARs to ensure an Injury Investigation or Investigative Report is completed when warranted; and,
- Maintain liaison with the geographic Area Juvenile Coordinators on all matters concerning SCAR investigations.

DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTER, COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION'S, RESPONSIBILITIES. During weekends, holidays, and off hours, the DOC shall:

- Review all SCARs received; and,
- Dispatch SCARs as a priority call for service when immediate attention is required:

- Provide detailed and pertinent summaries of the SCAR within the comments of the call for service.
- When the SCAR is available, provide a copy to the responding officers via Department email.

JUVENILE COORDINATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY. The Area Juvenile Coordinator as designated by the Detective Commanding Officer, shall:

- Ensure all SCARs are assigned and investigated within 10 days of intake by the Department;
- Continuously monitor SCAR due dates and personnel assigned under their supervision:
 - If it is determined that the due date will not be met, ensure the SCAR is assigned to be investigated by patrol units for immediate investigation.
- Ensure all SCAR investigations are appropriately documented on an Injury Investigation or Investigative Report;
- Provide procedural and investigative advice to Department personnel within their commands upon request;
- Make available a copy of all completed Injury Investigations resulting from a SCAR investigation to the DCFS:
 - Investigative Reports should also be made available only if providing the report does not compromise the criminal investigation.

Note: Open lines of communication with our Department and the DCFS is a mandate and necessary to ensure child safety.

- When Juvenile Coordinators are made aware that a victim has moved from the City of Los Angeles, they shall notify the outside law enforcement agency of the open SCAR investigation, and if geographically feasible have Department personnel respond and complete the investigation:
 - If due to distance it is not feasible to complete the investigation the Juvenile Coordinator should request a courtesy report be taken by the outside agency and have all reports documenting their investigation forwarded to our Department.

WATCH COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITY. All Watch Commanders shall:

- Ensure that officers dispatched to or assigned to investigate a SCAR or radio call of child abuse, are aware that they should review and follow the Suspected Child Abuse Preliminary Investigative Checklist;

- Ensure patrol units are dispatched immediately to SCAR priority calls for service when immediate attention is required;
- Ensure all SCAR investigations are appropriately documented on an Injury Investigation or Investigative Report;
- If a patrol unit is unable to complete an assigned SCAR investigation prior to their end of watch, the Watch Commander shall ensure the SCAR is reassigned to another patrol unit, notify the next Watch Commander and document their actions in their Watch Commander's Daily Report, Form 15.80.00.
- If the investigation is not completed or reassigned, the Watch Commander shall seek the advice of the Juvenile Coordinator or the Detective Commanding Officer and document their action in the Watch Commander's Daily Report.

DETECTIVE COMMANDING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY. The Detective Commanding Officer is responsible for designating a supervisor as the Area Juvenile Coordinator and for ensuring that methods and systems are put in place to effectively confirm all SCARs are investigated and documented on an Injury Investigation or Investigative Report within 10 calendar days.

AREA COMMANDING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY. Area Commanding Officers shall:

- Ensure sufficient personnel are assigned to handle Area SCAR investigations to meet the 10 calendar days deadline;
- Ensure staffing requirements have been met for his or her Juvenile Car and School Car fixed post positions;
- Ensure all watch commanders and juvenile coordinators put in place methods and systems to confirm all SCARs are investigated and documented on an Injury Investigation or Investigative Report within 10 calendar days; and,
- Ensure all personnel within their commands adhere to this Notice.

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

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION "D"