

ER - Protection Timelines

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Related Policies

Additional information can be found in the following policies

- Hotline - Assignment of Referrals
- Staff Expectations- Senior Protective Services Worker

Policy

Protection time in Emergency Response is an allotted amount of time given to a worker that pauses assignment of referrals. Protection time is an important strategy in Child Welfare operations to ensure that safety is assessed timely and staff have equitable workloads.

Protection time can be used to:

- close referrals
- enter contacts
- file a petition or a protective custody warrant (PCW)
- promote to a Voluntary Services (VS) case
- attend trainings
- prepare for trial
- provide time for Senior Protective Services Workers (SPSWs) to support their unit while the Protective Services Supervisor (PSS) is unavailable.
- ensure contacts are entered and referrals are closed prior to staff vacation time

Protection Timelines

Protection requirements are in the table below and any exceptions to the approved protection times will require CWS Manager's approval.

Note: Throughout the table SW is intended to cover both PSW and SPSW classifications.

Type of Protection Vacation/Approved Paid Time Off (PTO)	
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection covers the days leading up to the approved time off (i.e. 3 business days of vacation will mean workers will be on protection the day before the vacation starts).• Each business day will be counted as 8 hours regardless of the SW working an alternate schedule.

**Protection
Timelines (Cont.)**

Type of Protection Vacation/Approved Paid Time Off (PTO) (cont.)											
Description (cont.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Day referrals may be assigned to SWs on vacation if the SW will have at least 5 business days to make contact with the family. PSS must ensure there is adequate coverage in regions and units prior to approving vacation time. <p>NOTE: For major holidays, when multiple staff are requesting time off, protection time may vary or not be given, to accommodate operational needs.</p>										
Approved Protection Time	<table> <tr> <th>Length of PTO</th><th>Approved Protection Time</th></tr> <tr> <td>3 Days</td><td>1 Day.</td></tr> <tr> <td>4-6 Days</td><td>2 Days and the first day returning to work.</td></tr> <tr> <td>7-13 Days</td><td>5 Days and the first day returning to work.</td></tr> <tr> <td>14+Days</td><td> 7 Days and the first day returning to work. NOTE: SWs require both Deputy Director and CWS Director approval when requesting 15 or more days of PTO. </td></tr> </table>	Length of PTO	Approved Protection Time	3 Days	1 Day.	4-6 Days	2 Days and the first day returning to work.	7-13 Days	5 Days and the first day returning to work.	14+Days	7 Days and the first day returning to work. NOTE: SWs require both Deputy Director and CWS Director approval when requesting 15 or more days of PTO.
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Filing Petitions											
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWs will receive protection when screening a Protective Custody Warrant (PCW) and filing any type of petition (including WIC §329 petitions). Protection time only covers assignments of 24-Hour/IRS referrals including any new 24-Hour referrals on existing referrals in the SW's case load. 										

**Protection
Timelines (Cont.)**

Filing Petitions (cont.)	
Approved Protection Time	<p>Protection time for filing/screening petitions will cover 24-Hour/IRS protection for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 days prior to the screening date of the PCW/Petition, and • Through the detention hearing date, and • Up to 1 day after the detention hearing. • Once the SW transfers the case they will no longer be on protection. • If the screening date is delayed the SW has only up to 2 days of protection to write the PCW/Petition and will not be provided with additional protection time prior to the screening date unless approved by a manager. <p>NOTE: 10 days may be assigned during the time SW is filing a petition.</p>
Investigative Search Warrants (ISWs)	
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWs will receive protection for the time it takes to write and serve an ISW. • Protection time only covers assignments of 24-Hour/IRS including 24-Hour referrals on any existing referrals on the SW's caseload. 10 days may be assigned.
Approved Protection Time	SW will be on protection during the time it takes to write and serve an ISW.
Promoting/Transferring a Referral to Voluntary Services (VS)	
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWs will receive protection when promoting a referral to a VS case. • The protection time is intended to be used for the time it takes to dispo the referral, promote it to a case, and transfer it to the VS unit. • Protection time will cover 24-Hour/IRS assignments. 10-Days can continue to be assigned.
Approved Protection Time	1-Day of protection time.

**Protection
Timelines (Cont.)**

Trials	
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A SW will be given protection for a trial when the SW has been noticed that they are required to provide testimony at a trial. This includes any type of trial such as a hearing at criminal court, family court, grievance hearings, etc. • Protection time will end when the SW has been dismissed from trial and are no longer needed to provide additional testimony. • Protection will cover any 24-Hour/IRS assignments only. 10-Days can continue to be assigned.
Approved Protection Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-Hours of protection the day before the trial date. • Protection on the date the trial is scheduled to provide testimony until the SW is dismissed from court.
Trainings	
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWs will receive protection time when attending trainings if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training was approved by a PSS prior to the date the training is scheduled for, and ○ Training is required, or the training is optional but SW has yet to complete the 20 hours of required training per fiscal year. • Protection may be approved but is not guaranteed for optional trainings when the SW has completed 20 hours of training during the fiscal year on a case-by-cases basis and depending on operational needs. • Protection will cover any 24-Hour/IRS assignments only, 10-Days can continue to be assigned. • A 24-Hour referral will not be assigned before the training if it will prevent the SW from attending the training.
Approved Protection Time	SW will receive protection for the duration of the training (e.g. a 2-hour training is equivalent to 2 hours of protection).
SPSW Protection	
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSW will receive protection when they are providing PSS coverage for a PSS approved time off or RDO <p>NOTE: A PSS must have another PSS provide coverage for approved RDOs or obtain manager approval for SPSW to receive protection time for RDO coverage. If approved, the SPSW will be given protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This excludes coverage for PSS's Regular Day Off (RDO). PSS must have another PSS provide coverage for approved RDOs.

**Protection
Timelines (Cont.)**

SPSW Protection (Cont.)									
Description (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection covers actual days the SPSW is providing PSS coverage only (e.g. PSS is on vacation Wednesday and Thursday SPSW will be on protection those same days and no additional days). SPSWs will continue to be responsible for any referrals assigned to them including new referrals on open referrals. If there is more than one SPSW in a unit, only one SPSW will receive protection at time. PSS will ensure a plan for coverage will be made prior to any time off. A SPSW may receive a 24-Hour/IRS due to operational needs. <p>NOTE: See the Staff Expectations- Senior Protective Services Worker policy for SPSW expectations and responsibilities.</p>								
Approved Protection Time	<table> <tr> <th>Length of days providing PSS coverage</th><th>SPSW will receive protection from:</th></tr> <tr> <td>1-3 Days</td><td>24hr/IRS (Immediate Response Services) referrals.</td></tr> <tr> <td>4-7 Days</td><td>24-Hour/IRS referrals and protection from any referral that is due to be seen during the time SPSW is providing coverage.</td></tr> <tr> <td>8+ Days</td><td>All referrals including any referrals that will be due to be seen during the time SPSW is providing coverage.</td></tr> </table>	Length of days providing PSS coverage	SPSW will receive protection from:	1-3 Days	24hr/IRS (Immediate Response Services) referrals.	4-7 Days	24-Hour/IRS referrals and protection from any referral that is due to be seen during the time SPSW is providing coverage.	8+ Days	All referrals including any referrals that will be due to be seen during the time SPSW is providing coverage.
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Miscellaneous									
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miscellaneous protection can include but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing referrals Entering contacts Investigating fatalities Education Release Time CWS Manager approval is required to approve miscellaneous protection time. 								
Approved Protection Time	SW's approved protection time length will be determined by a CWS Manager.								

**Centralized
Referral Team
(CAT)**

Effective April 1, 2022, CWS began piloting a centralized system for the assignment of referrals from the Child Abuse Hotline. The Centralized Assignment Team (CAT) began a staggered implementation, with North Coastal and North Inland regional staff participating first, and other regions continuing to be added. CAT consists of a PSS and clerical staff who are responsible for sorting and logging referrals each day before assigning them to the appropriate program/region based on the [Hotline - Assignment of Referrals](#) policy. The protection guidelines above are also used by regional staff to communicate to CAT the available staff for the assignment of referrals. CWS managers and PSS staff participating in the CAT pilot, email the CAT all protection time approved.

Exceptions to the protection guidelines and any approved miscellaneous protection types must be approved by the regional CWS Manager. Approved protection time will be e-mailed to the CAT unit by the PSS and the regional manager will be cc'd.

Regions/programs not yet participating in CAT will not be required to email the CAT unit. Regions/programs will be notified, training will be provided, and support given prior to and during the implementation of CAT into their region/program.

**Alignment with
SET**

This policy aligns with [SET Value 6](#), by using real time data to support workload equity, and assignment fidelity amongst staff members, units, and regions.
