

# Hotline – Function and Procedure

(Revised 02/09/24)

[Forms](#)

[Policy](#)

[Function](#)

[Cross Reporting to Law Enforcement](#)

[Cross Reporting to the District Attorney’s Office](#)

[Cross Reporting to Community Care Licensing](#)

[Cross Reporting to Institutions and Evaluations Unit \(IEU\)](#)

[Cross Reporting to Complaint Investigations Unit](#)

[Cross Reporting - Other](#)

[Entering Special Project Codes in CWS/CMS](#)

[CSEC Special Project Code](#)

[Domestic Violence Special Project Code](#)

[Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Special Project Code](#)

[Safely Surrendered Babies Special Project Code](#)

[Procedure for Highly Vulnerable Children \(HVC\) Referrals](#)

[Procedure for Documenting Safe at Home](#)

[Procedure to Track Maltreatment in Foster Care](#)

[Procedure for Visitation Request from Incarcerated Persons](#)

[Referrals on Adopted Children](#)

[Anonymity of Reporting Party](#)

[Mandated Reporter Failure to Report](#)

[Health and Education Passport Faxed to Hospitals](#)

[Alignment with SET](#)

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## Forms

The following form is referenced in this file:

- 04-174A Failure to Report Letter (Mandated Reporter) (CWS/CMS Template)
- 04-51A Critical Incident Report

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## Policy

The Child Abuse Hotline processes all referrals for Child Welfare Services by:

- utilizing Hotline - Referral Screening Criteria to determine if an In-Person response is needed and
- utilizing Hotline - Priority of Referrals to determine the most appropriate response time.

To generate a Child Abuse Referral, the Hotline SW will Complete a Screening Intake/ a Screener Referral Form.

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**Function**

Hotline SWs will generate a referral in CWS/CMS upon receipt of a report alleging abuse or neglect of a youth under 18 years old.

When generating a referral, the Hotline SW is responsible for gathering the following information from the Reporting Party (RP) and documenting the following in the Emergency Response Document (ERD):

- All demographic information
- All available information regarding the abuse/neglect allegations
- Information regarding safety alerts, special/medical needs, cultural components, and family strengths.

While obtaining information from the RP, the Hotline SW will refer the RP to community resources and immediate services as needed.

Once all the information needed to generate a referral is obtained, the Hotline SW will follow the steps outlined in the table below.

Step	Action
1	Use Hotline - Referral Screening Criteria to determine if an In-Person response is needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if <b>no</b> go to step 2.</li> <li>• if <b>yes</b> go to step 3.</li> </ul>
2	Evaluate Out the referral.
3	Use SDM Hotline Tool to determine the most appropriate response time.  <b>NOTE:</b> If the reporter or screener has reason to know the referral is regarding an Indian child, the screener will also consult with the associated tribal representative regarding the Hotline Tool and response time.
4	Enter appropriate special project codes (SPC).
5	Determine if a cross report(s) is needed.
6	Complete a Critical Incident Report (04-51), if needed.
7	Consult with PSS, as needed.
8	Assign primary to the correct office/program
9	Assign secondary assignments, as needed.

**Cross-Reporting to Law Enforcement**

All referrals **except general neglect (Penal Code 11165.2)** are reported to Law Enforcement (LE) whether or not the case is assigned. The screener shall determine the location of the reported abuse to ensure that the cross-report is sent to the correct law enforcement jurisdiction.

Penal code [11166\(j\)\(1\)](#) establishes that the Child and Family Well-Being (CFWB)B Child Abuse Hotline SW will:

- Immediately, or as soon as practically possible, cross-report every known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect to the law enforcement (LE) having jurisdiction (see exceptions below).
- Provide the report via phone, fax or electronic submission.
- Send, fax, or electronically transfer a written report within 36 hours for any verbal report provided.

**Exceptions** - Cross-Reports to LE are not made for reports of:

- general neglect and/or
- a positive toxicology screen at the time of the delivery of an infant **and** which relates solely to the inability of the parent to provide the child with regular care due to the parent’s substance abuse.

**NOTE:** If a referral is generated that meets Hotline - Referral Screening Criteria due to maternal substance misuse or general neglect, an ER SW will assess the needs of the mother and child, and additional allegations are present that indicate risk to a child then a report shall be made to LE.

When a cross-report is made to LE, the Hotline SW will send the Emergency Response Document (ERD). The table below provides instructions on how to cross-report based on the law enforcement agency.

If the law enforcement agency is...	Then send the ERD by...
Carlsbad Police Department	fax
Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD)	emailing
Coronado Police Department	fax
El Cajon Police Department (ECPD)	fax or email  <b>NOTE:</b> In subject line type “CFWB Referrals”
Escondido Police Department	fax

**Cross-Reporting  
to Law  
Enforcement  
(cont.)**

If the law enforcement agency is...	Then send the ERD by...
San Diego Police Department (SDPD)	emailing
San Diego Sheriff's Department (SDSO)	emailing
La Mesa Police Department (LMPD)	emailing  <b>NOTE:</b> When the address number includes 5 digits and the city address is listed as La Mesa then cross-report is sent to SD County Sheriff's Department.
National City Police Department (NCPD)	fax
Oceanside Police Department (OPD)	emailing

**NOTE:** Refer to encrypted Email Policy.

Reports of the following nature will be **cross reported to law enforcement immediately** by phone and in no case later than 24 hours of receipt of the information:

- Reports which indicate serious physical abuse requiring medical treatment.
- All Hospital Holds for sexual or physical abuse.
- Reports of sexual abuse (this includes statutory rape) which indicate that **the last occurrence was within the past 72 hours or there is a possibility of collectible physical evidence.**
- Reports/incidents of staff at PCC (see IEU Investigations of Child Abuse Referrals at PCC) alleged to have abused a minor. The screener will call the PCC manager, who will immediately telephone the Child Abuse Unit at the San Diego Police Department to make the report.
- Reports that a child or youth who is receiving child welfare services has been identified as the victim of **commercial sexual exploitation**, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 11165.1.
- Reports that a child or youth who is receiving child welfare services and is reasonably believed to be a victim of commercial sexual exploitation is missing or has been abducted.
- **Law Enforcement Referrals:** when the alleged perpetrator or other family member is a member of law enforcement, the referral will be made sensitive. A Hotline PSS will then handle the cross reporting. Cross reporting to the applicable law enforcement agency will be made directly to the Sergeant for that agency. The Hotline PSS must ensure that the sensitive referral was received.

**Cross-Reporting to Law Enforcement (cont.)**

**NOTE:** For CSEC referrals, the appropriate law enforcement authority will ensure entry of this information into the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The table below outlines steps for documenting in CWS/CMS that a cross report was sent to LE.

Step	Action
1	Open Client Services (green section).
2	Click on Create a New Cross Report button (+) button below the cross-report notebook icon.
3	Complete the ID page.
4	Select the Suspected Child Abuse Report from the report type drop down list.
5	Complete all mandatory yellow fields. Be sure to enter the date and the Cross Report Type.

**Cross-Reporting to the District Attorney's Office**

Referrals involving sexual contact between minors under the age of 18 and adults 18 years or older who are at least 3 years and 1 day older than the minor are considered statutory rape and must be cross reported to the DA. Minors 14 and younger cannot consent to sex.

The definition of statutory rape falls under the definition of sexual abuse in the Sexual Abuse Protocol. Statutory rape is sexual intercourse between an adult and a minor. It is a violation of various Penal Code sections including 261.5, 288(a) and (c), 288a(b)(1), 288a(b)(2), 288a(c)(1), 289(h), 289(i) and 289(j).

Hotline screeners who receive statutory rape referrals will follow these steps:

Step	Who	Action
1	Hotline SW	Does the report meet DA's statutory rape requirements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If <b>no</b>, follow normal procedures.</li> <li>• If <b>yes</b>, go to step 2.</li> </ul>
2	Hotline SW	Cross-report the information to the DA via e-mail

**Cross-Reporting to Community Care Licensing (CCL)**

The Hotline SW shall cross-report to CCL when abuse is alleged to have occurred in:

- a family day care home
- child day care facility
- FFA home
- Any facility licensed by CCL to care for foster youth under 18 (ie. LGH, STRTP, Small Family Home)
- PCC

A cross-report to CCL will also be made if the alleged perpetrator is known to be employed as a licensed CCL provider or is an employee of a CCL facility. In the cross report include the facility address where the abuse occurred and/or where the alleged perpetrator is employed.

**DO NOT** report general neglect or any other DOJ non-reportable issue. See Processing DOJ Form BCIA 8583 for issues not reported to DOJ.

**The cross-report must be made to CCL within 36 hours of obtaining the information.**

**NOTE:** On perpetrator screen, select SCP.

To cross-report to CCL, the Hotline SW shall fax a copy of the child abuse report to:

- Fax # for abuse in a day care home, day care facility, or by a provider or employee in a day care home/facility.
- Fax # for abuse in a FFA home, a LGH/STRT, or by a provider or employee in a FFA home or a LGH.

**Cross-Reporting to Institutions Evaluation Unit (IEU)**

The Institutions Evaluation Unit (IEU) Monitor is responsible for coordinating investigations for a referral received on a child residing in:

- a **Licensed Group Home (LGH)/Short Term Residential Treatment Program (STRT)** and the alleged abuser is reported to be the LGH operator or a staff member,
- a **FFA home** and the alleged abuser is the FFA resource parent, the resource parents' family member/relative, or the FFA staff or,
- **Polinsky Children's Center (PCC)** and the alleged abuser is a volunteer or registry, contract and/or employee at PCC.

The Hotline SW will use **Referral Screening Criteria** to determine if the referral will be assigned for further investigation or evaluated out. The Hotline SW will follow the steps outlined in the table below:

Step	Action
1	Create a client notebook for the alleged perpetrator(s). <b>If the identity of the perpetrator is unknown at:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a STRTP, type "Group" for the first name and the facility's name as the last name; i.e., Group New Alternatives.</li><li>• an FFA, use "FFA" as the first name and use the facility name as the last name i.e., FFA Smith.</li><li>• PCC, use Facility Type of "Group" for the First Name and use the Facility Name as Last Name, i.e., Group PCC.</li></ul>

**Cross-Reporting to Institutions Evaluation Unit IEU (cont.)**

Step	Action
2	Select one of the following for the relationship of child to the perpetrator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child/Residential Facility Staff,</li> <li>• Daughter/Father (Group) or, Daughter/Mother (Group),</li> <li>• Son/Father (Group), or Son/Mother (Group),</li> <li>• Daughter/Father (FFA), or Daughter/Mother (FFA),</li> <li>• Son/Father (FFA), or Son/Mother (FFA).</li> </ul>
3	Indicate perpetrator type “SCP/Res Facility Staff” in the Allegation Notebook.
4	Assign secondary to the IEU PSS.
5	Assign primary to regional assignment clerk’s inbox based on the Hotline – Assignment of Referral policy.
6	The Hotline will immediately contact a PCC manager or Duty Officer to confirm they have been notified, if the Child Abuse report is generated by anyone other than PCC. <b>This will always be by an in-person phone call and not by message.</b>

IEU **does not** investigate if the alleged perpetrator is:

- someone other than the LGH/STRTP staff, or
- someone other than the FFA resource parent, the foster parents’ family member/relative, or the FFA staff, or
- not a PCC staff person and supervision by PCC staff was not a concern.

The Hotline SW **will consult with the IEU PSS** when a referral alleges the suspected perpetrator is an LGH/STRTP staff, a FFA resource parent, or a FFA staff or family member **and** the child/youth:

- Has a Juvenile Probation case.
- Has an IEP and receives mental health services (AB2726).
- Is a dependent youth from another county.

The IEU PSS will contact and inform the child’s assigned worker (SW, Probation Officer, etc., of the allegation) and will determine if there is a need for a primary or secondary assignment to an IEU SW.

For additional information refer to:

- STRTP Investigations
- FFA Investigations
- IEU Investigations of Child Abuse Referrals at PCC.

**Cross-reporting to Complaint Investigations Unit**

The Hotline SW will notify the Complaint Investigations PSS when a referral alleges abuse of a child placed in out of home care and the alleged perpetrator is:

- a relative or NREFM.
  - a licensed foster parent or family member.
  - a resource parent (approved or pending approval) or family member of resource parent.
  - another dependent placed in a licensed foster home or resource family home.
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**Cross-Reporting-Other**

In addition to cross-reporting described in sections above, Hotline SWs will cross-report as appropriate to:

- Adult Protective Services Hotline (800) 510-2020
  - San Diego Humane Society to Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse or Cruelty. District Attorney (see additional information below)
  - Juvenile Hall Superintendent, Fax, on allegations of abuse in Juvenile Hall
  - California Department of Public Health Licensing and Certification Program for abuse in mental health facility (psychiatric hospital or day treatment center)  
**NOTE:** The Licensing and Certification Program does not license all facilities mentioned above so Hotline SWs should call first and may be directed to another licensing agency
  - Office of the Ombudsman for fatalities and critical incidents
  - Other county and state child protection agencies
  - Provost Marshall Camp Pendleton, Attention: Military Police for abuse in day care on base
  - Trans-border/International Liaison – Trans-border referrals
  - Reporting Suspected Welfare Fraud.
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**Entering Special Project Codes in CWS/CMS**

Special Project Codes (SPC) must be entered for referrals regarding Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC), Drug Endangered Children (DEC), Domestic Violence, and Safety Surrendered Babies.

The table below describes the actions **to enter a SPC in CWS/CMS**.

Step	Action
1	Open referral. The screen should default to the <b>Referral Management Section</b> (green).
2	Click on the <b>Special Projects</b> page.
3	Click the (+) button in the <b>Special Projects</b> grid.

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**Entering Special Project Codes in CWS/CMS (cont.)**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
4	Select <b>S-CSEC referral</b> from the Special Project Name drop-down list.
5	Enter the <b>Start Date</b> as the date. <b>NOTE:</b> See type of SPC for information on entering accurate start dates.
6	Save to database.

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**CSEC Special Project Code**

Add the S-CSEC SPC whenever a referral is generated due to concerns that a child/youth may be or at risk of being sexually exploited. The Hotline SW will refer to SDM Hotline Tool for definitions of sexual exploitation. See CSEC Interagency Protocol and CSEC Response Team Protocol.

The **Start Date** for a S-CSEC SPC is the date the referral was received.

**NOTE:** For **duplicate or associated referrals**, enter the SPC “S-CSEC Referral” in the primary referral. If the referrals are unduplicated, create a new CSEC referral for each CSEC allegation for each child or youth, and apply the SPC “S-CSEC Referral” to each referral.

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**Domestic Violence Special Project Code**

Add the Domestic Violence Special Project Code (SPC) to any referral in CWS/CMS when current Domestic Violence (within the last 6 months) is reported as part of the referral. See Family Violence Protocol.

The **start date** is the date it becomes known that there is current domestic violence (within the last 6 months).

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**Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Special Project Code**

Enter DEC – Level 1 SPC for children found in settings where clandestine labs are present (indicated by the presence of a functioning lab, a “box lab” or the existence of precursor chemicals). See Drug Endangered Children and Law Enforcement Liaison Protocol.

Enter DEC – Level 2 for children found in settings involving the use, possession, or selling or transportation of drugs.

The **Start Date** for a DEC SPC is the date the referral was received.

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**Safely Surrendered Babies Special Project Code**

Safely Surrendered Baby provides for the health and safety of unwanted newborns and OCS is required to use the SPC because accurate data is required for mandated reports to the state. See Safely Surrendered Babies policy.

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### Procedure for Highly Vulnerable Children (HVC) Referrals

When a referral meets criteria for Highly Vulnerable Children (HVC) Protocol or a new referral is received for a child already determined in an open case/active referral as HVC, the Hotline screener will:

Step	Action
1	Identify referral/case as HVC in CWS/CMS in the Alert Text Box on the ID page of the Referral/Case.
2	If this is a new referral on an existing HVC case or referral, the Hotline SW will email or phone the SW and PSS informing them that a referral has been received on their HVC case/referral.

### Procedure for Documenting Safe at Home

[Safe at Home](#) offers abuse and stalking victims another layer of protection by providing a substitute mailing address to use whenever their home, work, or school address is required.

The client must enroll through an enrolling agency and be able to provide proof of the domestic violence or stalking. Refer to [Safe at Home](#) policy for additional information.

The following table outlines the procedure for documenting a confidential residential address in a referral by the Hotline screener:

Step	Action
1	Review prior notebooks to see if client is Safe At Home participant.
2	If yes, generate a Gram in the CWS/CMS referral with the residential address.
3	Put a note on the ER document that the client is a Safe At Home participant and SW should see Gram in referral for the residential address.

### Procedure to Track Maltreatment in Foster Care

To ensure that federal measures that track Recurrence of Maltreatment in Foster Care are accurate, while generating the referral, the Hotline SW will complete the “**Occurrence Information**” field on the **ID tab of the Allegation Notebook** for **all referrals** received on children/youth with an **open OCS case**.

**NOTE:** The ER SW will update and ensure that the Occurrence Information is complete and accurate prior to closing the referral.

**Procedure to Track Maltreatment in Foster Care (cont.)**

The table below explains the steps for entering Occurrence Information on the ID tab.

Step	Action
1	Click on Allegation Notebook
2	Locate Occurrence Information box on the ID page
3	Enter the Start and End Date for when the abuse occurred. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the exact date is <b>unknown</b>, an approximate date can be entered.</li><li>• If <b>multiple incidents</b> occurred over time, enter the approximate range of time when incidents began to occur and stopped.</li><li>• If the <b>abuse</b> has recently occurred enter the <b>date it started</b> and last known date it occurred.</li><li>• <b>Do not use</b> the referral date, unless the incident occurred on that date.</li></ul>
4	Enter the location of where the incident(s) occurred.

**Procedure for Visitation Request from Incarcerated Persons**

If the Hotline receives a referral pursuant to a “Petition for Hearing to Allow Child to Visit Incarcerated Person” stating that an incarcerated person convicted of any of the crimes listed below is seeking visitation with the child-victim of the offense or with any minor under the age of 18 years old, a child abuse referral will be created in CWS/CMS and all policies and procedures listed in the Incarcerated Parents policy will be completed. The offenses are:

- Rape (PC §261)
- Conspiracy to commit rape or sexual penetration against a victim’s will (PC §264.1)
- Inducing a person to engage in sexual behavior through false/fraudulent misrepresentation or pretense (PC §266c)
- Intermarriage among blood relatives, or adulterous or fornication behavior among blood relatives (PC §285)
- Sodomy (PC §286)
- Lewd or lascivious act on a child under the age of 14 years old (PC §288)
- Oral copulation (PC §288a)
- Sexual penetration (PC §289)

**Referrals on Adopted Children**

When a referral is received on a child who has been adopted, the Hotline SW shall enter only the child’s adopted name and not use or refer to the names of the birth parents or the birth name of the child.

**Anonymity of Reporting Party**

Penal Code [11167](#) requires that when a non-mandated reporter refuses to provide their name or telephone number, the Hotline SW will make efforts to determine the basis for that refusal and advise them of confidentiality laws; however, because of the possibility that a court may order disclosure, an absolute promise of anonymity cannot be given, even to the reporting party. In the ERD, the Hotline SW will document efforts made to collect the name and phone of the reporting party and the reason for their refusal.

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**Mandated Reporter Failure to Report**

When a SW knows or suspects a mandated reporter (MR) failed to comply with the law, the SW shall notify their supervisor who will send the Failure to Report Letter (04-147A, CWS/CMS Template) to that person. The PSS will then give a copy of the letter to the Hotline Manager’s Administrative Secretary to ensure there is a centralized tracking system of mandated reporters who fail to report. A copy of the letter will also be cc’d to the District Attorney.

If an MR (in the scope of their employment) calls the Child Abuse Hotline to report acquired knowledge of or a reasonable suspicion that a child was sexually abused by another clergy member and the victim is **now 18 years of age or older**, the Hotline SW will instruct the MR to notify local law enforcement.

**NOTE: All CFWB SW staff are mandated reporters within the scope of their employment. Outside of work hours, but there is not legal obligation to report.**

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**Health Education Passport faxed to Hospitals**

When a hospital, including a psychiatric hospital, contacts the assigned SW or Duty SW to request the medical history on a child who has been brought to the hospital for an emergency evaluation or treatment of an injury or illness by the SCP and the SCP fails to bring the HEP, the SW or Duty SW will fax a copy of the HEP to Hospital Staff. If the emergency arises after regular business hours, the hospital will call the Child Abuse Hotline and request Hotline Staff to fax over the child’s Health Education Passport (HEP).

The HEP may be accessed in CWS/CMS by following the procedure outlined in the table below (see Health and Education Passport).

Step	Action
1	Click on the <b>Client Management Section</b> (blue Button).
2	Click on the icon titled <b>Open Existing Document-Client</b> .
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select the <b>Health Education Passport</b> from the <b>Open Existing Document-Client</b> list.</li><li>• Click <b>OK</b>.</li></ul>
4	Click the <b>Print</b> icon.

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**Alignment with SET**

This policy aligns with the SET Practice Framework by supporting the following SET Values:

[SET Value 1](#): This policy supports the Agency practice to establish and maintain collaboration with schools, public health, public safety, and other community partners.

[SET Value 4](#): This policy supports the guiding principle of a shared responsibility with the community to ensure community resources are accountable, responsive, and culturally sensitive and the Agency practice that staff and community partners have a shared vision for safety, permanency, and well-being.

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