



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • MSC 2408 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2408
Courier # 56-20-25

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director
(919) 733-3055

March 17, 2009

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: SAFE SURRENDER

Recently the Division has received several requests for information regarding the application of North Carolina's Infant Homicide Prevention Act (Safe Surrender), the DSS response, and our data tracking process. While responding to these requests for information, some concerns surrounding policy and practice were raised. Anecdotal reports indicate that there have been 11 instances of safe surrender in North Carolina, however there is only 1 documented in the Central Registry.

Policy regarding Safe Surrender is located in the Family Services Manual, Volume I, Chapter VIII, [Section 1411](#). Current policy requires that a report alleging an infant 7 days old or younger has been safely surrendered, accepted, and assigned an immediate response time. A thorough CPS assessment must be completed regardless of whether or not the identity of the parents is known. Absent additional allegations, the case decision shall reflect a finding of dependency. If additional allegations of abuse or neglect are substantiated, all findings shall be incorporated into the case decision.

The CPS assessment is to be documented in the Central Registry via the [DSS-5104](#). When completing the [DSS-5104](#) there are some special considerations that must be taken into account and the instructions for completing the [DSS-5104](#) are located in [Section 1411](#). Recent changes to the Central Registry and the [DSS-5104](#) now allow counties to document that a safe surrender report was received: this is reflected in field #29 Maltreatment Type Reported. This will allow for an increased ability to track cases of safe surrender and the outcome of these cases. Of particular significance are the instructions regarding Field 31, Maltreatment Type Found. In cases of dependency that do not involve safe surrender, this field is left blank. However, in cases of safe surrender it is required that the "safe surrender" option listed in the neglect column under "abandonment" be selected. If additional allegations of abuse or neglect are also substantiated it is still necessary to indicate that this was a safe surrender.

If you believe that your county has had a safe surrender please review the corresponding [DSS-5104](#) to ascertain if it was documented correctly. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Terri T. Reichert, CPS Policy Consultant, at (919) 334-1106 or by email at terri.reichert@ncmail.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charisse S. Johnson".

Charisse S. Johnson, Chief
Child Welfare Services

cc: Sherry Bradsher
Jack Rogers
Sarah Barham
Hank Bowers
Children's Program Representatives
Child Welfare Services Team Leaders
Local Business Liaisons
Work First Representatives

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