

# The Role of the Law Enforcement First Responder

In order to minimize trauma and ensure an effective investigation, a first responder should follow these guidelines.

**NOTE:** Law enforcement may request DCYF assistance at any point during the investigation.

## **Determine whether the child needs medical care.**

Under the following circumstances seek immediate medical guidance:

- A child has an injury, is bleeding or seems unwell (vomiting, disoriented, etc.)
- An infant or toddler may have been physically abused
- There is a psychological emergency (suicidal, etc.)
- Suspected sexual abuse occurred within the past 72 hours
- An adolescent experienced non-consensual penetration within the past 5 days
- If concerns or questions seem urgent

## **Take a non-leading minimal facts statement.**

This statement should be gathered from sources **other** than the child and should not be done in the child's presence.

## **Minimal facts interview with the child.**

There will be times when it is necessary to conduct a minimal facts interview of the child. Under the following circumstances a minimal facts interview of the child should be conducted:

- When the child may be in imminent danger

- When you are unable to obtain basic information of the allegation from other sources
- When the child is your only source of information

**Both a minimal facts statement and interview should include:**

- **What** happened?
- **When** did it happen?
- **Where** did it happen?
- **Who** did this?

**Avoid why-type questions.**

## **Mandated reporting.**

**If law enforcement has reason to suspect that a child has been abused**

or neglected the responding officer **MUST** report to DCYF immediately.

**DCYF Central Intake**  
**Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
**1-800-894-5533**

- DCYF should be notified and law enforcement should arrange, without delay, for an in-depth interview of the child at the CAC
- DCYF Central Intake Office will determine if DCYF will be involved. If it is determined that DCYF will not be involved and law enforcement would like assistance from DCYF a request for such assistance can be made for any reason at any point during the investigation

- If a CAC is not available, law enforcement should continue a MDT response, in accordance with the *2008 Attorney General's Child Abuse and Neglect Protocol*

**REMEMBER:** When a child is in imminent danger, **law enforcement, not DCYF**, has the authority to remove a child from parental custody without a court order.

- When safety of a child cannot be assured it will be necessary to remove that child from the parent's custody
- In these situations the on-call Judge should be contacted in order to obtain a verbal order to remove a child at **1-800-552-3202**
- Placement of a child in these situations may then be arranged by calling the DCYF after hours provider **1-800-685-8772**

**NOTE:** This line is for emergency placement only.

## 5 Investigative Tips.

- Contact your supervisor.
- Follow the Attorney General's Child Abuse and Neglect Protocol for investigating cases of child abuse <http://doj.nh.gov/victim/docs/lawenforcement.pdf>

## 6 Next Steps.

- Contact the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) to set up a forensic interview
- Provide the family with the number to a local crisis center; assist in calling if needed

## CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS

### The Greater Lakes CAC

603-524-5497

### CAC of Carroll County

603-569-9840

### Monadnock Region CAC

603-352-0413

### CAC of Grafton and Sullivan Counties at DHMC

603-653-9012

### Hillsborough County CAC

603-889-0321 Nashua  
603-623-2300 Manchester

### CAC of Rockingham County

603-422-8240

### Strafford County CAC

603-516-8100



NEW HAMPSHIRE NETWORK OF  
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS

NEW HAMPSHIRE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S  
TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT