

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE  
**9.0 - STAFF SAFETY**

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**9.0 STAFF SAFETY PROGRAM STATEMENT**

Social work professionals are dedicated, helping agents who work towards improving quality of life outcomes for all children and families within their communities. While the focus of helping professionals has not changed, the society has become increasingly detached, less personal, more violent and generally disrespectful of professionals in roles of authority. These societal changes have been experienced by all segments of society.

A child welfare agency employee can expect some client resistance because the focus for services entails an intensive, detailed view of many intimate family matters. Even though a degree of resistance to services is an accepted dimension of social work in a public agency, a clear distinction must be made between resistance and aggressive behavior which constitutes a danger to staff.

Agency administrators must be cognizant of the changing environment in which their staff now work and must proactively plan for staff safety. Agencies, to be effective and responsive, must actively collaborate with local citizens and systems to gain support for precautions that will safeguard staff. With enhanced involvement from the community, agency services to children and families are improved and the agency is able to fulfill its mission of child protection.

Ohio's public children service executives have joined together to endorse standards for effective practice to assist workers in their day to day activities and to provide safety and protection for Ohio's children and families. These standards are designed to:

- raise the consciousness of agencies as to the types of safety elements that must be addressed in agency policy and procedures to respond to the basics of staff safety;
- assist agencies that do not have a set of Worker Safety Standards in the initial thinking and drafting of a set of policies and procedures for their own agencies; and
- provide agencies that do have Worker Safety Protocols an opportunity to reflect and enhance their policies and procedures against a set of standards (herein) developed as a result of using the best thinking of agencies across the state.

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**9.1 STAFF SAFETY**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5.4 (Compliance with Health and Safety Codes and Regulations); G5.5 (Functional Safety); G5.6 (Facility Safety and Security); G5.8 (Contagious and Infectious Diseases); G5.9 (Special Health Precautions) and G11 (Administration and Risk Management) link to and support Standard 9.1 *Staff Safety*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-32 (PCSA Requirements for Assessments and Investigations) addresses Standard 9.1 *Staff Safety*.

**I. Philosophy**

Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) employees, both on-site and in the field, are vulnerable and at-risk of having their personal safety compromised. As the legally mandated public agency responsible to protect children alleged to be at-risk of abuse and neglect, CFSA staff are generally perceived as intrusive and threatening. This, coupled with the environments that direct service staff must enter, leaves staff highly visible and vulnerable. CFSA's have an obligation to be responsive to the personal safety concerns of all employees.

CFSA's are concerned with the personal safety of all staff both on-site and in the field. While all staff must use sound judgement to assess situations and client families that pose potential danger to the children in the home and/or to themselves, the CFSA also has an obligation to provide appropriate support to reduce the level of potential risk. Appropriate support in the form of safety training, written policies, procedures and checklists and equipment, such as cellular phones and preventative safety supplies, provide staff with a heightened level of security and assurance that their personal safety is being addressed and attended to by the CFSA.

**II. Outcome**

CFSA employees have knowledge and awareness of personal safety issues and take CFSA sanctioned precautions on-site and in the field.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the extent to which the recommendations herein are addressed;
- the extent to which worker safety incidents occur as a result of not following the Standards herein;
- the extent to which worker safety incidents occurred and the standards were followed.

#### **IV. Standards for Implementation**

##### **A. Preventive Measures**

The CFSA has an obligation to staff to provide policy, guidance and clear instructions on how to avoid and reduce potentially dangerous situations both on-site and in the field.

- 1) The CFSA should have in place, and routinely review and update, policies, guidelines, and procedures related to staff safety.
- 2) The CFSA should develop policies and procedures that address the transportation of children who have behavioral, medical, or other special needs that pose a potential threat to the safety of staff.
- 3) The CFSA should provide initial safety training for all newly hired staff before sending them into the field unaccompanied by a colleague.
- 4) The CFSA should provide annual training for staff to enhance assessment of personal safety risks and crisis intervention skills including de-escalation techniques.
- 5) The CFSA should interface with law enforcement to develop and maintain effective working relationships to promote staff safety and the protection of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

##### **B. Threatening Situations**

The CFSA should assist staff in preparing for potentially dangerous clients and situations through the use of assessment, action planning, preparation and close contact with the supervisor.

- 1) Staff, when assigned to a case, should assess the level of personal risk, geographic location of the family, and the situation based on available information before going out on the visit.
- 2) Whenever a client or high-risk situation poses a potential threat to staff, the supervisor should be notified immediately. The supervisor should discuss the danger with the staff who may be at risk and jointly establish a plan of action (e.g., staff safety plan, escape routes, etc.). Both the discussion and the plan should be flagged for future reference in the case record.
- 3) When entering a potentially dangerous situation, staff should provide their supervisors with a schedule of field activities including: client and/or activity, destination, and phone number (when available).
- 4) When there is an indication that staff may be physically threatened or attacked by a client, staff should schedule visits and conferences in the office when other staff can be present or when police are most available to respond.
- 5) The CFSA supervisor should remain closely involved with all aspects of case assessment and case management in situations of potential or actual physical threat to staff.

- 6) The CFSA should not require staff to enter high risk situations in which they do not feel reasonably safe without a plan of action.
- 7) The CFSA should consider the use of a "buddy system" for home visits where a potentially dangerous situation exists. When using this system, the CFSA should stress the need for role clarity of each "buddy" and use of action plans prior to the visit.
- 8) Based on the nature of the complaint, law enforcement should be requested to accompany staff who are responsible for handling night crises.
- 9) In every case where a substantial threat, accident or physical harm occurs, a critical incident report should be completed.
- 10) The CFSA should make supportive services available to staff who have been threatened or attacked or who may feel threatened. The CFSA should consider providing:
  - a. professional help and counseling through Employee Assistance Programs;
  - b. added training related to the specific problem area;
  - c. approved time off or temporary relief from specific duties.

**C. Self Protection**

The CFSA recognizes that situations may arise where staff may find it necessary to protect themselves using a wide variety of techniques from de-escalation to physical self-defense as allowable by law. The CFSA recognizes that the right to defend oneself is based on a person's reasonable belief that s/he faces immediate danger, even if that belief turns out to be mistaken.

- 1) The CFSA should have a written policy on self protection and provide training on staff self protection and the range of techniques to be employed from fleeing and calling key staff (as the first response), to de-escalation, to physical self-defense.
- 2) The CFSA should assure staff members receive training on a variety of self-protection techniques (see Standard 9.10 *Staff Safety Training*).

**D. The CFSA and Law Enforcement Partnership**

The CFSA, with local law enforcement, should work closely to provide staff with the assistance and protection needed in potentially dangerous situations. A partnership between the CFSA and law enforcement is critical to carrying out the agency's mission to protect children at risk of abuse and neglect.

- 1) The CFSA should strive to develop, with local law enforcement, a specific protocol that clearly defines those situations in which danger is imminent and when police assistance should be requested and made available. This protocol should be jointly reviewed on a periodic basis. The joint protocol may include the following:
  - a. assessment of danger to the child, staff or others by the assigned staff;
  - b. situations which may require immediate law enforcement assistance, for example, when:
    - i. the child's mental, physical health, or safety is in imminent danger;
    - ii. there are reasonable grounds to believe the child is suffering from illness or injury and is not receiving proper care;
    - iii. there is immediate danger from the child's surroundings;
    - iv. there is immediate or threatened physical or emotional harm from a non-family member;

- v. a client is out of control, posing a danger to self, child, staff or others at site;
  - vi. staff have been threatened with physical harm or are refused entry to assess a child's safety;
  - vii. the CFSA requests assistance for removal of a child from his/her caregiver, home or school;
  - viii. the visit is to an unsafe area, targeted for increased police cruiser and foot patrols by law enforcement personnel, who officially designate the area as "high crime";
  - ix. visiting a house or location officially designated by law enforcement as a "crack house" or area with drug related activities under surveillance;
  - x. visiting a home with a history of domestic violence; and/or
- c. assisting staff in filing assault charges with law enforcement.

**D. Blood borne Pathogens Management**

Staff who provide direct services that require intimate contact such as feeding, bathing, toileting, diapering and medical procedures are particularly vulnerable to the transmission of blood borne pathogens (microorganisms that are present in human blood that can cause disease) and diseases caused by them. The CFSA should provide these staff with training necessary to limit/avoid exposure to these.

- 1) The CFSA should include in their safety guidelines a section that addresses blood borne pathogens management. This may include:
  - a. work practice control (e.g., hand washing, disinfecting toys and equipment);
  - b. immunizations;
  - c. use of personal protective supplies (e.g., plastic seat covers, gloves); and
  - d. training on infection control.

**E. In-House Safety**

- 1) The CFSA should include in their safety guidelines a section which addresses the following in-house safety issues:
  - a. bomb threats;
  - b. building security;
  - c. fire prevention and safety;
  - d. general safety (e.g., electrical equipment, etc.);
  - e. hazardous materials (e.g., storage, handling, disposal);
  - f. natural disasters (e.g., tornadoes, floods) and emergencies;
  - g. emergency evacuation procedures; and
  - h. other.
- 2) The CFSA should attend to, and follow, the regulations on Safety as provided by the federal OSHA standards.

**V. Financial Implications**

There will be costs associated with providing training, equipment and supplies toward Staff Safety as a result of the strategies the agency puts in place.

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**9.2 FIELD SAFETY**

**Council on Accreditation Standard**

The Council on Accreditation Standard G5.5 (Functional Safety) links to and supports Standard 9.2 *Field Safety*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-71(The Child Abuse and Neglect County Plan of Cooperation) addresses Standard 9.2 *Field Safety*.

**I. Philosophy**

Addressing staff safety in the field is paramount to carrying out the agency's mission. The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) has an obligation to prepare and assist staff in being safe when in the field by providing safety training and preparation for fieldwork, policies and procedures for field safety, and field safety equipment.

**II. Outcome**

The CFSA has provided for the safety of its staff when working outside of the CFSA facilities.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the extent to which staff report worker safety incidents in the field in relation to the extent to which the recommendations herein are addressed.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

The CFSA should assist staff in preparing for potentially dangerous clients and situations through the use of assessment, action planning, preparation and close contact with the supervisor.

- 1) Staff should provide their supervisor with a schedule of field activities including client to be visited, activity to be conducted, destination and phone number (when available).
- 2) Staff, when assigned to a case, and prior to going out into the field or on a visit, should assess the level of personal risk, geographic location of the family, and the situation based on available information.



- 3) Whenever a high-risk situation is identified as a potential threat to staff, the supervisor should be notified immediately. The supervisor should discuss the danger with appropriate staff and jointly establish a plan of action. If there is an indication that staff may be physically threatened or attacked by a client, staff should schedule visits or contacts in conjunction with law enforcement (see Appendix A- Suggested Questions for Case Review Concerning Safety).
- 4) When going out into the field, staff should take communication devices with them (e.g., cell phone, two-way radio, digital pagers, etc.).
- 5) The identified case should be flagged in the case record and in the electronic data file (if one exists) for future reference and case planning.

## **V. Financial Implications**

There will be costs associated with providing equipment and supplies toward Field Safety depending on the equipment the agency makes available to staff when out in the field.

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**9.3 AFTER HOURS VISIT SAFETY**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5.5 (Functional Safety); G5.8 (Contagious and Infections Diseases) and G11 (Administration and Risk Management) link to and support Standard 9.3 *After Hours Visit Safety*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-34-32 (PCSA Requirements for Assessments and Investigations) and 5101:2-34-71(The Child Abuse and Neglect County Plan of Cooperation) address Standard 9.3 *After Hours Visit Safety*.

**I. Philosophy**

Child and Family Services Agencies (CFSA) should create a healthy, safe, supportive work environment for all staff members. CFSA's need to address safety with staff so that they have a way to deal with potential dangers that they will encounter in conducting after hours visits while protecting children and working with families. If staff must be trained to assess the risk of children on their caseload, then they should also be trained to assess the risk of their personal safety in performing agency related work duties. An after hours protocol is therefore essential and critical in assuring that agency staff are knowledgeable of the steps necessary to ensure their personal safety while protecting the safety of others.

**II. Outcome**

The CFSA has a specific after hours protocol that addresses safety in high risk cases or when preparing to work with unknown clients.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the extent to which the CFSA addresses the recommendations herein.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

The CFSA should provide an after hours protocol for all staff that perform after hours visits. All visits/interviews should be listed on an after hours whereabouts sheet for documentation. This should be located in a separate binder at the front office for scheduled visits. In addition, staff should inform respective supervisors of all scheduled after hours visits or, in the case of referrals, contact the "on-call" supervisor.

**A. High Risk/Unknown Clients**

- 1) When it is necessary to have a visit after hours (after 5:00 p.m.) with a high risk client or when an emergency visit is identified as necessary, staff should, whenever possible, access FACSIS for the prior family history and, when serious allegations have been made, should involve law enforcement as back up.
- 2) Staff should review current open cases to remain familiar with potential high risk clients.
- 3) Staff should telephone the "on-call" supervisor and notify the supervisor of the following information:
  - a. client name;
  - b. client address;
  - c. time start/end of visit; and
  - d. cell phone and beeper numbers where the staff person may be reached.
- 5) It may be necessary for these visits to be "team visits" with another staff member or law enforcement.
- 6) Staff should notify the "on-call" supervisor when the visit is terminated. If not reported within one hour of the projected ending, the following events should occur:
  - a. supervisor should beep staff person;
  - b. supervisor should call staff person at home- if staff person is not located, the supervisor should continue to attempt to locate for an additional hour and contact law enforcement to dispatch them to the address of the visit.

**B. After Hours Visit "On-Call Beeper"**

Staff should contact the after hours supervisor when an immediate response is deemed necessary and should consider a law enforcement escort when a referral requires face-to-face contact with the family. These issues should be discussed with the "on call, after hours" supervisor prior to going out in to the field.

**V. Financial Implications**

There may be costs associated with providing training, equipment and supplies for After Hours Visit Safety as a result of the strategies the agency puts in place.

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**9.4 HIGH RISK SITUATIONS AND DANGEROUS LOCATIONS**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5.5 (Functional Safety); G5.7 (Emergency Response); G11 (Administration and Risk Management) link to and support Standard 9.4 *High Risk Situations and Dangerous Locations*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-34-32 (PCSA Requirements for Assessments and Investigations) and 5101:2-34-71 (The Child Abuse and Neglect County Plan of Cooperation) address Standard 9.4 *High Risk Situations and Dangerous Locations*.

**I. Philosophy**

The work of child welfare places staff at high risk and often times puts them in dangerous locations and in dangerous situations. Because of this, the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) has the duty to provide training, tools, and protocols for staff when they are confronted with volatile situations. Providing for the safety of staff allows staff to work effectively with children at risk and their families. If staff do not feel safe in the protection of children, they will not be able to provide for the safety of the children and families served.

**II. Outcome**

Staff can demonstrate knowledge and skill of how to maintain personal safety.

Staff feel safe and have an increased sense of well-being.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- whether or not protocols have been established;
- the extent to which the recommended procedures are in place.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) Protocols should be developed for managing high risk situations and dangerous locations. The protocols should:
  - a. outline action steps staff will implement when involved in a high risk situation or in a dangerous location; and

- b. consider safety technology (e.g., cell phones, pagers, etc.) and the involvement of law enforcement when developing these protocols.
- 2) A plan of action for handling high risk situations and dangerous locations should be developed by the Safety Committee/administration (see Standards 9.2 *Field Safety*, 9.8 *Staff Facility Safety*, and 9.9 *Safety Committee*), reviewed by staff and incorporated into safety training.

**V. Financial Implications**

There will be cost associated with providing training, equipment and supplies as a result of the strategies the agency puts in place.

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**9.5 CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTS AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5.5 (Functional Safety); G11 (Administration and Risk Management); S37.4 (Documentation) link to and support Standard 9.5 *Critical Incident Reports and Employee Safety*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-71 (The Child Abuse and Neglect County Plan of Cooperation) addresses Standard 9.5 *Critical Incident Reports and Employee Safety*.

**I. Philosophy**

To comprehensively assess the ongoing personal safety of staff, the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) should implement a Critical Incident Tracking Form when there is a safety infraction/incident. Protocols should be established for the implementation, and maintenance of the form's use, as well as procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating the data to staff, the CFSA Safety Committee, and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO).

**II. Outcome**

Staff safety incidents are documented, aggregated and analyzed, and reports disseminated.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- whether or not Safety Incident Reports are completed for each infraction;
- whether or not the CFSA Safety Committee reviews and addresses completed incident reports as recommended herein;
- whether or not the reports are submitted on a quarterly basis to PCSAO;
- the extent to which the Safety Committee responds to the recommendations within this Standard.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) The CFSA should have, and use, a critical incident tracking form and structured process as recommended by the PCSAO (see Appendix B- Critical Incident Form).

- 2) The CFSA should have a Point of Contact responsible for ensuring that baseline data is collected, analyzed, and disseminated to appropriate agency personnel and the PCSAO.
- 3) The CFSA Safety Committee (see Standard 9.9 *Safety Committee*) collects and analyzes data involving incidents or threats to staff safety, and makes recommendations for policy formulation, program development, and staff training
- 4) The CFSA disseminates and discusses safety data with staff and key stakeholders (may be managed by Safety Committee).

## **V. Financial Implications**

There will be little to no cost associated with implementing and maintaining Critical Incident Reports and Employee Safety.

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**9.6 CRISIS MANAGEMENT INVOLVING STAFF SAFETY INCIDENTS**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5.7 (Emergency Response); G11 (Administration and Risk Management) link to and support Standard 9.6 *Crisis Management Involving Staff Safety Incidents*.

**Administrative Code**

There are no Ohio Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 9.6 *Crisis Management Involving Staff Safety Incidents*.

**I. Philosophy**

The environmental and personal stressors that lead to child abuse and neglect can also create a potentially volatile situation for staff. Agency employees both on-site and in the field are sometimes vulnerable and at-risk of having their personal safety compromised. The agency has an obligation to manage a crisis situation in a direct and immediate manner that recognizes the emergency nature of the situation, while at the same time, maintaining regular operations.

**II. Outcomes**

The agency has developed and implemented a crisis management worker safety policy and set of procedures.

Formal feedback indicates the extent to which the crisis was managed effectively.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- whether or not the CFSA has crisis management policies and procedures in place;
- the extent to which the standards herein are addressed;
- the extent to which the outcomes herein are executed.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) The agency should have a crisis management worker safety incident policy and set of procedures.
- 2) The crisis management procedures should include, but not be limited to:
  - a. types of situations which trigger the crisis management worker safety incident policy;



- b. identification of the individual(s) that will personally manage the crisis (strongly recommend it is the executive director or designee);
- c. designation of a media spokesperson;
- d. designation of an individual that prepares internal communications;
- e. supportive services for staff that have been threatened or attacked or who may be threatened, to include:
  - i. professional help and counseling through "employee assistance program" services;
  - ii. approved time off or temporary relief from duties; and
  - iii. assistance with appropriate court action;
- f. coordination with the police; and
- g. follow up procedures (e.g., debriefing, case review, training, etc.) and ongoing management of the post-event triggers.

## **V. Financial Implications**

There may be minimal expense involved with Crisis Management Involving Staff Safety Incidents based on the CFSA's decisions regarding support of in-house staff, and how it chooses to share information with public.

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**9.7 LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTORS**

**Council on Accreditation Standard**

The Council on Accreditation Standard G11 (Administration and Risk Management) links to and supports Standard 9.7 *Law Enforcement and Prosecutors*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-32 (PCSA Requirements for Assessments and Investigations) addresses Standard 9.7 *Law Enforcement and Prosecutors*.

**I. Philosophy**

The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) should work closely with law enforcement to provide staff with the assistance and protection needed in potentially dangerous situations. A partnership between the CFSA, law enforcement and the Prosecutor's Office is critical to carrying out the CFSA's mission to protect children at-risk of abuse and neglect.

**II. Outcome**

The CFSA has clearly defined protocols with local law enforcement that identify situations in which danger is imminent and police/sheriff assistance is available.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- whether or not a written agreement has been implemented regarding the CFSA relationship with law enforcement and the Prosecutor's Office;
- the percentage of accompanied visits with law enforcement as opposed to the number of requests made;
- the number of prosecutions as opposed to the number of requests made for a prosecutory response.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) The CFSA should, with local law enforcement, develop a specific protocol that clearly defines those situations in which danger is imminent and when law enforcement assistance should be requested and made available. This protocol should be included in the County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and be reviewed, at minimum, every two years.

- 2) The joint protocol may address the following:
  - a. danger to the child, staff or others by assigned staff;
  - b. situations which may require immediate law enforcement assistance;
  - c. immediate danger from the child's surroundings;
  - d. immediate or threatened physical or emotional harm from a non-family member;
  - e. client is out-of-control, posing a danger to self, child, staff or others at site;
  - f. staff have been threatened with physical harm or are refused entry to assess child safety;
  - g. CFSA requests assistance for removal of a child from his/her caregiver, home or school;
  - h. area to be visited is unsafe, has been targeted for increased police cruiser and foot patrols, or has been designated as a high crime area;
  - i. visiting a house or location officially designated by law enforcement as a "crack house" or area with drug related activities under surveillance; and
  - j. visiting a home with a history of domestic violence.
  
- 3) The CFSA should establish protocols with the Prosecutor's Office regarding how to address threats to staff safety. Protocols should address a range of prosecutory responses from warning letters and interviews, to criminal prosecution.

#### **V. Financial Implications**

There should be no additional cost associated with Law Enforcement and Prosecutors.

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**9.8 STAFF FACILITY SAFETY**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5 (Quality of the Service Environment); G5.1 (Environmental Quality); G5.5 (Functional Safety); and G5.6 (Facility Safety and Security) link to and support Standard 9.8 *Staff Facility Safety*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-71 (The Child Abuse and Neglect County Plan of Cooperation) addresses Standard 9.8 *Staff Facility Safety*.

**I. Philosophy**

Addressing building and office staff safety should be paramount to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) and is critical to staffs' success in carrying out the CFSA mission. The CFSA has an obligation to its staff to provide secure facilities where staff feel safe and comfortable in the work environment, and should implement mechanisms to guide safety practices on-site. The building facilities and office safety protocols should be regularly reviewed to assure that they remain current and responsive to changing times and the changing needs of staff.

**II. Outcome**

The CFSA facility is secure and safe.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the extent to which staff articulate feeling safe and secure in the office and when out in the field;
- the extent to which the standards are addressed herein.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) The CFSA should address staff safety in the agency's facilities through the development and implementation of a set of policies and procedures for building safety. To develop these policies and procedures, the agency can reference one or more of the following:
  - a. local police and fire departments, county engineer, bomb squad;
  - b. Weinger, Susan; Security Risk: Preventing Client Violence Against Social Workers, NASW Press. Washington D.C.; 2001; and/or

- c. Worker Safety for Human Services Organizations; American Human Association; National Resource Center on Child Abuse and Neglect; 1997.
- 2) Agencies throughout the state have Worker Building Safety Policies and Procedures. Contact PCSAO for a list of counties who may provide copies for local use.

**V. Financial Implications**

There will be costs associated with Staff Facility Safety depending on the type of, and extent to which, the agency invests in structural enhancements and facility safety equipment.

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**9.9 SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standard G11 (Administration and Risk Management) links to and supports Standard 9.9 *Safety Committee*.

**Administrative Code**

There are no Ohio Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 9.9 *Safety Committee*.

**I. Philosophy**

The safety of all Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) employees must be protected as they carry out the mission of the agency. In order to do so, regular review of issues affecting the safety of staff must be a CFSA commitment. The establishment of a Safety Committee is a vehicle for regular reviews of safety incidents, routine review and revision of safety policies and procedures, and for reporting safety data to the Executive Director, CFSA Board and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Whether a committee of one or multiple staff, the implementation of a Safety Committee is critical to the safe operation of the agency as staff endeavor to effectively protect children and work with families.

**II. Outcomes**

The CFSA Safety Committee assures that agency policies and procedures, tools and training are current and made available.

The CFSA Safety Committee identifies and communicates patterns and trends of safety risk to the agency administration and Board.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- whether or not a Safety Committee is in place and functional;
- the extent to which the Safety Committee executes the recommended procedures herein.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) The CFSA should convene a standing Safety Committee representative of the agency's size and composition.

- 2) The Safety Committee should meet on a regular basis, but no less than quarterly, to review any safety concerns that have occurred or any reported incidents that have occurred.
- 3) The Safety Committee may be asked to meet on an emergency basis to review any critical incidents that have occurred. Critical incidents include, but are not limited to:
  - a. any physical assault (whether a staff member is injured or not), personal/agency property damage, staff being stalked by a client;
  - b. any threat involving a weapon;
  - c. any critical incident meeting must involve the Executive Director or designee.
- 4) The Safety Committee may be asked to assist in making safety a regular part of unit meeting agendas by suggesting topics for discussion each month, such as building safety, de-escalation techniques, etc.
- 5) The Safety Committee will review and recommend policy and procedure changes as needed to the Executive Director.
- 6) The Point of Contact for safety incidents should be responsible for submitting a quarterly report to the Safety Committee and documenting aggregate data on safety incidents for the purpose of reporting to the executive director and CFSA.
- 7) The Safety Committee should be responsible for recommending any required action in response to aggregate safety incident data.
- 8) The Executive Director should share the aggregate data report with the CFSA board and other key community stakeholders.

## **V. Financial Implications**

There will little to no cost associated with implementing and maintaining an in-house Safety Committee.

CHILD PROTECTION  
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

**STANDARDS FOR STAFF SAFETY**

**9.10 STAFF SAFETY TRAINING**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G5 (Functional Safety); G7 (Training and Supervision); and G11 (Administration and Risk Management) link to and support Standard 9.10 *Staff Safety Training*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-71 (The Child Abuse and Neglect County Plan of Cooperation) addresses Standard 9.10 *Staff Safety Training*.

**I. Philosophy**

Child and Family Services Agencies (CFSA) can no longer rely on staff members' inherent knowledge for their own personal safety. The CFSA needs to be proactive and collaborate with staff in addressing the potential dangers that they will inevitably encounter in conducting their jobs in the field, at their own office sites, and/or at other facilities and sites. The CFSA sponsored Safety Training is therefore essential and critical in assuring that staff acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure that their own personal safety is not jeopardized in their work in protecting the safety in others.

**II. Outcome**

Staff have the awareness, knowledge and skills to provide for their safety when in the office and in the field.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- if queried staff would articulate being trained to manage safety in the agency and out in the field;
- the extent to which the standards are addressed herein.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) Upon completion of agency training on staff safety, staff will be able to demonstrate competency in the following areas:
  - a. identifying a variety of contexts in which safety and security may be jeopardized in the office, out of the office, or during home visits;
  - b. identifying effective basic techniques for recognizing, observing, interpreting and responding to volatile or threatening circumstances;
  - c. delineating practice methods for creating an affirming rapport, communication respect, and promoting family wellness through worker-client interactions;



- d. articulating inter-cultural differences and sensitivities as they may influence worker safety and security;
  - e. recognizing behaviors which may be symptomatic of mental illness;
  - f. practicing basic techniques for conflict resolution and therapeutic intervention;
  - g. discussing basic issues of law and order as they relate to child protection work;
  - h. identifying the four stages of the cycle of escalation of violence and meeting each stage with specific de-escalation/protection strategies;
  - i. recognizing and dealing with dangerous or hazardous situations within the office environment;
  - j. utilizing a risk rating scale and practicing critically analytical field situations; and/or
  - k. demonstrating specific techniques to deal with and control potentially dangerous behaviors and situations during client interviews.
- 2) The CFSA should have a mandatory safety training program during the orientation of all new staff members. At minimum, all new employees should attend the training provided by the Department of Job and Family Services, Maintaining Professional Safety, available on CD-ROM with a workbook to follow along with the lessons.
- 3) The CFSA should consider the following types of safety courses, offered through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program or Red Cross, when developing an agency worker safety program:
- a. Introduction to Safety;
  - b. Field Safety;
  - c. Office Safety;
  - d. Interviewing Safety; and
  - e. Adult, Child and Infant CPR.
- 4) By providing a solid base of safety information for new workers and adding updated training for ongoing, seasoned staff the agency will address the occupational hazards to personal safety that are inherent in the field of child protection. Offering annual training will enhance the awareness and skills of CFSA staff to guard against complacency while performing the functions of their respective positions.

## **V. Financial Implications**

The CFSA can access the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) to minimize the cost of providing safety training for staff, but should anticipate some cost resulting from training provided outside of the OCWTP.

CHILD PROTECTION  
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**STANDARDS FOR STAFF SAFETY**

**9.11 ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF SAFETY**

**Council on Accreditation Standard**

The Council on Accreditation Standard G11 (Administration and Risk Management) links to and supports Standard 9.11 *Administration and Staff Safety*.

**Administrative Code**

There are no Ohio Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 9.11 *Administration and Staff Safety*.

**I. Philosophy**

CFSA's are concerned with the personal safety of all staff, both on-site and in the field. While all staff must use sound judgement to assess situations and client families that pose potential danger to the children in the home and/or to themselves, the PCSA also has an obligation to provide appropriate support to reduce the level of potential risk. Appropriate support in the form of safety training, written policies, procedures and checklists and equipment, such as cellular phones and preventative safety supplies, provide staff with a heightened level of security and assurance that their personal safety is being addressed and attended to by the PCSA.

**II. Outcome**

The PCSA implements and maintains a set of Worker Safety policies and procedures.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- whether policies and procedures are in place for the targeted areas identified herein;
- whether, and to what extent, the policies are adhered to;
- whether there is a set of procedures in place to review Safety policies on a regular basis.

**IV. Standards for Implementation**

- 1) The PCSA has in place, at minimum, a set of the following policies and procedures:
  - a. Administration and Worker Safety;
  - b. Law Enforcement and Worker Safety;
  - c. Safety Committee;
  - d. Worker Safety Training;
  - e. Crisis Management Involving Staff Safety Incidents;
  - f. Critical Incident Reports;

- g. Staff Field Safety;
- h. After Hours; and
- i. Facility Safety.

2) The PCSA should routinely review and update policies, guidelines and procedures related to staff safety.

**V. Financial Implications**

There should be no additional cost associated with Administration and Staff Safety.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES  
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

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**ADDENDUM A - SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR CASE REVIEW CONCERNING SAFETY**

Case file and related documentation collateral resources should be reviewed to determine:

1. Extent of prior violent history including threats regardless of severity.
2. Criminal history including arrest, especially regarding domestic violence/disputes.
3. History of mental illness, including:
  - a. Axis 1 diagnoses
  - b. Axis 2 diagnoses
  - c. Global assessment of functioning score (GAF)
  - d. Patterns of delusion
  - e. Antisocial behavioral characteristics
  - f. Alcohol and other drug related usage/addiction
  - g. Potential for or assessment of dual diagnosis.
4. Developmental functioning level (i.e., IQ, ability toward conflict/dispute resolution).
5. All prior case history involving assessments/investigations for any reason, especially indications of control related incidents, such as sexual abuse and extreme physical discipline of children.
6. Ability of non-offending parent to provide protection to children.
7. Caseworker's dictation notes or other statements which convey safety concerns at any time.
8. Past threats made directly to any agency representative and the subsequent handling/disposition of those threats.
9. Any unusual disposition of those reports involving the family who within the agency served court documents and dictation concerning the infraction of that service.
10. The past conduct of the adults regarding visitation:
  - a. Had they ever requested the caseworker to visit their home?
  - b. Had unannounced visits ever occurred?
  - c. What was the behavior of the parents?
  - d. What was the interaction between the parents and the child (i.e., aggressive, verbally abusive, etc.)?
  - e. Had the parents ever been denied visitation? If so, for what reason? How did they respond?
11. Review all police reports related to the critical incident and attempts to ascertain if a second caseworker or security guard might have impacted outcome.
12. Review timing between permanent custody hearing date and incident.
13. Review workers training record, including date of last safety training and all training related to specific issues of compliance.
14. Discuss with unit members/supervisor if caseworker related safety concerns about the client at any time during his/her work with the family.
15. If possible, obtain, or at minimum, review, notes, transcripts, videotape of defendant.
16. Review worker's caseload, including:
  - a. Total number of cases;
  - b. Distribution of cases (i.e., voluntary/COPS/custody)
  - c. Total number of children on caseload;
  - d. Caseload analysis.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES  
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**ADDENDUM B- CRITICAL INCIDENT FORM**

**Public Children Services Association of Ohio  
CHILD WELFARE WORKER SAFETY - CRITICAL INCIDENT FORM  
Revised Form - 2003**

Thank you for completing this form, and forwarding it to your agency Safety Committee Point Person. They will return aggregate data, only, to PCSAO, at the fax listed below. PCSAO is committed to tracking all child welfare worker safety incidents, in an effort to develop sound agency policies and procedures, and positive statewide policies. All identifying information is confidential, and victim's name should not be included in aggregate data forwarded to PCSAO.

Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Report \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name / Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Incident \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Victim / Job Title (if different) \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

**Incident Description** (check all that apply)

- Verbal Aggression (w/ sense of danger)
- Verbal / Written Threats of Harm
- Personal / Agency Property Damage
- Sexual Harassment
- Stalked by Client
- Physical Assault - not injured
- Physical Assault - injured
- Use of Weapon (type) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Alleged Offender**

- Client - Adult
- Client - Youth
- Caregiver's Relative
- Client's Paramour
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident**

- Client Home
- Agency
- Provider Agency \_\_\_\_\_
- Victim's Home
- Phone / Email
- Court
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Incident "Trigger"**

- Visit as part of C/A, N investigation
- Removal of Children
- Routine Home Visit
- Custody Discussion, Pending Action
- Parent Visit with Child
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Post Incident Responses** (all that apply)

- Victim Received Medical Attention
- Type \_\_\_\_\_
- Law Enforcement Contacted (agency and victim's home jurisdictions)
- Incident Reported to Agency
- Employee Assistance Offered / Provided
- Warning Letter Issued
- Incoming Phone Calls to Victim Taped
- Offender Picture Posted w/in Agency for Security Purposes
- Law Enforcement Intervention
- Charges Filed Against Alleged Offender
- Offender Arrested
- Post Incident Training Scheduled/Conducted
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Incident Description - Please add any relevant and clarifying information (write on back if necessary):**

\_\_\_\_\_