

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Number: HR-3-8

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Version: 1.0

POLICY TITLE: WORKER SAFETY

OVERVIEW: The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all staff, clients, and visitors.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Credible, immediate threat – a verbal or written threat, including that communicated by means of an electronic communication device, or a threat implied by a pattern of conduct or a combination of verbal, written, or electronically communicated statements and conduct, made with the intent and apparent ability to carry out the threat so as to cause the person who is the target of the threat to reasonably fear for his or her immediate safety

II. REFERENCES

- A. [Critical Response Unit](#): Administrative Letter
B. [The EASY Program](#) (Employee Assistance)
C. [State of Indiana Employee Handbook](#)
D. [Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy](#)

III. POLICY

- A. The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for staff, clients, and visitors.
- B. DCS believes that every staff member should practice good risk management because ultimately every individual is responsible his or her overall safety:
1. Good risk management and safety practices require that all staff be responsible for adhering to safety measures, practices and rules, and that they conduct themselves in a manner which will minimize risk to themselves and others, and
 2. DCS recognizes that risk management practices may vary based on the staff member's work setting (i.e., urban area vs. rural area; field staff vs. administrative staff; etc.). See [State of Indiana Employee Handbook](#) for more information.
- C. DCS will not tolerate violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, or other disruptive behavior in the workplace, with clients, or other stakeholders with whom the agency partners or interacts. All staff are responsible for notifying their Supervisor of any such behavior which they have witnessed or experienced. In the event of a credible, immediate threat to an individual's safety, the Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) should immediately be notified by either the employee or the Supervisor. See [Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy](#) for more information.
- D. DCS recognizes that the nature of its mandate requires daily activities which may expose staff to risk; however, staff members are not expected to place their own safety

in jeopardy. It is essential that all field staff use their training and personal skills to minimize potential safety threats that may be involved when interacting with families to ensure both their own safety and the safety of any child(ren) present in the home. Although risks to staff members cannot be completely eliminated, they can be dramatically reduced by increasing awareness. See [Home Visit Safety Protocol](#) for more information.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Each DCS Local Office Director will:

1. Establish reporting and check-in procedures for all office staff, and
2. Develop a procedure for “flagging” case files of families and individuals with a history of or suspected criminal activity, violence, or threats.

Note: Any potential Worker Safety concerns should be noted in ICWIS if they are known during Intake. Concerns that arise after intake should be noted using procedures established at the DCS local office.

B. The Supervisor will:

1. Discuss any safety issues as part of regularly scheduled unit meetings,
2. Investigate and report all safety concerns to the DCS Local Office Director or Deputy Director if the employee works in Central Office in a timely manner. Report concerns to LEA when necessary,
3. Be aware of the location of their staff while in the field, particularly if the visit(s) extend after normal office hours,
4. Report all injuries to DCS Human Resources whether or not medical care is required, and
5. Consult DCS Human Resources for assistance in dealing with injuries to employees.

C. All staff will:

1. Practice safe working habits,
2. Wear state issued identification at all times while working,
3. Take reasonable safety precautions when working,
4. Refrain from activities that jeopardize workplace safety and/or create unsafe working conditions,
5. Not carry a handgun or other weapons (i.e., knives, mace, etc.) while on duty. See [State of Indiana Employee Handbook](#) for more information,
6. Immediately report to their direct Supervisor if they feel that their work environment is unsafe. If the concern regards the staff member’s direct Supervisor, the staff member should report the concern to the Supervisor’s manager and/or DCS Human Resources. See the [State of Indiana Employee Handbook](#) and [Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy](#) for more information,
7. Report all safety incidents involving an injury or risk to safety to the Supervisor and DCS Human Resources. Examples include, but are not limited to: threats of injury (intimidation, harassing mail or phone calls, stalking, display of weapons); physical

assault (injured or not injured); hazardous field situations (high risk or unsafe housing conditions, gang or drug activities, threatening animals, vandalism, theft, etc.); sexual harassment; use of a weapon; verbal aggression which evokes a sense of danger. See [State of Indiana Employee Handbook](#) for more information,

Note: Working closely with children who experience child abuse and/or neglect is often very stressful and traumatic. Staff are encouraged to utilize both the [Employee Assistance \(EASY\) Program](#) and the [Critical Response Unit](#) as necessary.

8. Immediately inform their Supervisor and/or DCS Human Resources department of any work-related injuries or illnesses, no matter how minor. Staff members are subject to Indiana Workers' Compensation provisions. Failure to report a work-related injury or illness within 24 hours of the occurrence, may compromise an employee's eligibility for and ability to claim worker's compensation benefits, and

Note: If a staff member needs medical care after a work injury, DCS and the State's Workers' Compensation administrator will direct the care. Contact the DCS Human Resources department for additional information on obtaining medical care following a workplace injury. See [State of Indiana Employee Handbook](#) for more information.

9. Take threats from parents, children, and family members; staff members; and all other individuals seriously. Staff these concerns with the Supervisor and/or DCS Human Resources to determine how to proceed safely.

V. FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

[Indiana's Worker's Compensation First Report of Employee Injury, Illness \(SF 34401\)](#)

DATE: XX/XX/XXXX
James W. Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.