

NWF Health Network Policy & Procedure

Series:	800: Quality Assurance & Improvement	
Policy Name:	Death Notification	
Policy Number:	808	
Origination Date:	02/02/2009	Revised: Board Meeting of 02/22/2024
Regulation:	65C-30.020, F.A.C. CFOP 175-17	

Policy

It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN), to fully comply and cooperate with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and law enforcement in their investigation and review of the death of any child who has died while in its custody or under the supervision of a partner Case Management Organization (CMO) regardless of whether there are allegations of abuse or neglect. This includes in-home and out-of-home programs and children in pre-finalized adoptive homes.

Procedure

A. General Provisions.

1. Any employee of the Department, the contracted service providers or sheriff's offices who conduct protective investigations, who has knowledge of a child's death and who has reasonable cause to suspect that the child died as a result of the abuse, neglect or abandonment shall immediately report the death to the Florida Abuse Hotline. A report is required even when there are no surviving children living in the home.
2. When a child dies during the course of an active child protective investigation or while involved in an open services case, a safety assessment and high risk designation, per CFOP 175-17, shall be conducted to ensure the safety of any surviving children regardless of whether or not abuse, neglect or abandonment appears to be related.

B. Notification Process.

1. Whenever a case manager learns that a child under supervision has died, that case manager shall immediately orally report the occurrence through the established chain of command to NWFHN Chief Executive Officer or designee.
2. Upon learning of the child death, the NWFHN Chief Executive Officer or designee shall immediately orally notify the regional managing director and regional child fatality specialist.
3. Written notice shall be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the death.
4. Biological parents whose rights have not been terminated will be notified of the child's death immediately by the appropriate party.
5. NWFHN and its CMOs will fully cooperate with the investigation and the local and state review teams, including responding to all requests for information, documentation or the presence of staff. NWFHN may choose to track child deaths; however, this responsibility is charged to DCF.
6. NWFHN or its CMO shall cooperate with any law enforcement requests related to an investigation of the child's death.

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7. NWFHN and its CMOs will fully cooperate the DCF Critical Incident Rapid Response Team and participate as needed on the Department of Health local Child Abuse Death Review team.
8. Whenever NWFHN, CMO, or DCM learns that a child under supervision has died, that employee shall follow *NWFHN OP 800-805, Incident Reporting and Client Risk Prevention*, for reporting of critical incidents.
9. NWFHN CEO or COO will provide written notification to the Regional Director of all child deaths alleged to have occurred as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment or of the deaths of children who are the subjects of an open abuse, neglect or abandonment investigation or currently ongoing services, regardless of whether there are allegations of death due to abuse, neglect or abandonment.

C. Grief Services for Staff and Caretakers.

1. Grief services will be provided for all NWFHN staff involved in the deceased child's case via the Employee Assistance Program.
2. Case management agencies and contract providers (licensing, facilities, etc.) are responsible for providing grief services to their staff.
3. Case management agencies are responsible for offering grief services and referrals to family members and caretakers of the deceased child.

D. Tracking.

1. NWFHN will maintain a log of all deaths and serious injuries resulting from abuse or neglect of a child in the care or custody of NWFHN and its CMOs.
2. The log will contain:
 - a. Name, date and cause of death;
 - b. Abuse report number, if applicable for the incident resulting in death;
 - c. Findings of abuse report, if applicable for the incident resulting in death (No Indicators, Some Indicators or Verified);
 - d. Number of prior abuse reports involving the child;
 - e. Service status at time of death (In-home, Foster Care, Relative/Non-Relative Placement, Post-Placement Supervision);
 - f. Date of internal death review;
 - g. Recommendation and actions taken by NWFHN as a result of the death review findings.