

Child Protective Services: Investigation

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2104.10 Meeting Response Time

Requirement

Interview all alleged maltreated children within the assigned response time (immediate - 24 hours or 5 work days). When children are too young to interview, observe for physical indicators of maltreatment. Justify reasons for not meeting the response time on [Form 453 \(Child Abuse / Neglect Intake Worksheet\)](#).

Procedures/Practice Issues

Reasons for changing an assigned 24-hour time frame are:

- A situation where a child might be at greater risk if the child or family are contacted prior to developing an investigation strategy with knowledgeable others: The team approach, which may include law enforcement personnel, medical personnel and other program staff, is an effort to determine and coordinate steps of the investigation. This approach is especially helpful in foster care and Factitious Disorder (FDP) / Munchausen Syndrome (MBP) investigations. The team approach may only be used when the child is known to be protected, and it requires the supervisors approval. The team response must begin within 24 hours of receipt of the report.
- A situation where law enforcement is involved with a pending criminal investigation and requests CPS to stay away from the location: Make law enforcement aware of CPS concerns and maintain contact with law enforcement until such time as the investigation can begin; or,
- A situation where a child is under four years of age **only** when the child is known to be in a safe environment, e.g., the alleged maltreater is out-of-state, the alleged maltreater is in jail, the child is in a protective home and safely away from the alleged maltreater: What may appear to be a safe environment often changes quickly. A hospital does not automatically provide a safe setting for a child, as the hospital cannot always monitor who has access to a child, and the hospital is not a legal custodian of the child. Other "safe environments" frequently do not remain safe, as alleged maltreaters often get bailed out of jail and return to the child's location, and alleged maltreaters also return to the state. Consider carefully a decision to reassign the time frame for any child under the age of four.

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The investigation supervisor provides signed documentation on [Form 453 \(Child Abuse/Neglect Intake Worksheet\)](#) of the reasons for changing an assigned 24-hour response time. The report is assigned at intake according to intake response-time requirements. The supervisor's decision to make an exception to the response-time requirement is made at investigation, after assignment.