




**Department of
Homeless Services**

PROCEDURE NUMBER 15-004

Subject	Applicable To	Effective Date
Criteria for Reporting Incidents	All DHS Directly Operated or Provider Facilities/Programs Serving Homeless Individuals and Families	April 17, 2015 (Replaces Criteria for Reporting Incidents 08-003)

Administered By	Approved By
Deputy Commissioners for Administration, Adult Services, Family Services, Capacity, Planning and Development (CPD), and Security; Associate Commissioners for Operations, and Transitional Services; Program Administrators in Adults Services and Family Services	 Commissioner, Gilbert Taylor

PURPOSE

This procedure outlines the expectations and requirements for the timely and accurate reporting of priority incidents and emergencies that occur in Department of Homeless Services (“DHS” for Agency) directly operated and contracted facilities. This policy outlines the required steps for notifying Agency personnel of incidents affecting clients, staff, and guests and establishes uniform criteria and formats for reporting incidents.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Homeless Services is responsible for reporting incidents involving residents of DHS Directly Operated or Provider Facilities in accordance with all applicable provisions of Title 18, including Parts 491.8(f) (6), (7) and (8), and 900.11(a) (5) and (6) of the New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations. This policy sets uniform criteria for what is reported as well as when and how reports are made and distributed.

PROCESS

In order to accurately report an incident, the following priority definitions (one, two and three) must be followed. The subsequent definitions relate to the incident reporting procedure for all DHS operated or funded programs.

1. Priority One Incidents are the most serious and urgent and include:

- a. Homicide, suicide, or death on site
- b. Attempted homicide, attempted suicide, assault resulting in life-threatening injury, or accident resulting in life-threatening injury (including drug overdose)
- c. Domestic Violence that results in the victim pressing charges, arrest of the assailant, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) being called for one or more victims, and/or the relocation of the victim/family
- d. Use of a firearm
- e. Rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault
- f. Arrest for alleged child abuse or emergency transport of child for medical treatment due to suspected child abuse
- g. Fire, disaster, or other environmental concern that involves a life-threatening injury or the evacuation of an entire site as directed by emergency personnel or the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) response
- h. Riot, bomb threat, hostage taking/abduction, or missing children
- i. Unscheduled on-site presence of the press or elected official
- j. Arrest of DHS staff on site
- k. Heating, water, electrical failure, or other environmental issue (i.e. asbestos, lead, radon), that is expected to last more than 4 hours

1.1 An E -mail Alert will be sent out by the 24-hour Operations Desk (“OPS Desk”) in the event of Priority One situation. The E-mail Alert should include the following information.

- i. Division
- ii. Incident Type
- iii. Facility and address
- iv. Borough
- v. Reported by (staff member making the report to OPS Desk)
- vi. Call back number for staff person
- vii. Description of Incident
- viii. Actions Taken
- ix. Emergency Responders
- x. Current Status

1.2 Contact Tree for Priority One Incidents:

- i. Commissioner
- ii. First Deputy Commissioner
- iii. General Counsel

- iv. Chief of Staff
- v. Deputy Commissioner(s)
- vi. Associate Commissioner(s),
- vii. Assistant Commissioners
- viii. Agency Medical Director
- ix. Any other relevant senior staff (e.g. CPD)

1.3 Priority One Reporting Process

- i. All shelter staff, including security, are responsible at all times for reporting all incidents to the appropriate Shift Supervisor or Program Director
- ii. DHS and provider staff must call the DHS Program Administrator within 30 minutes of becoming aware of a Priority One incident.
- iii. DHS Program Administrator will decide whether the incident is appropriately categorized.
- iv. DHS Program Administrator must contact the DHS OPS Desk within 30 minutes of receiving notice of a Priority One incident occurring.
- v. The DHS Program Administrator shall periodically update the DHS OPS Desk, as necessary. Within 30 minutes of receipt of an update from the DHS Program Administrator, the DHS OPS Desk staff will send an updating email to the contact list as described above.
- vi. DHS and provider staff must fax or email the completed incident report to the DHS Program Administrator within 24 hours of the incident.
- vii. The Program Administrator will ensure that incident reports are entered into CARES within 24 hours of receiving notice of the incident, and will notify the DHS OPS Desk of the incident.

2. Priority Two Incidents include problems that are not life-threatening or dangerous, but still must be reported promptly, so that agency administrators are informed of the incident and can resolve the matter within appropriate time frames. The following definitions are deemed priority two incidents:

- i. Physical fights that do not result in arrest
- ii. Allegations of: rape, attempted rape or sexual assault that do not result in arrest
- iii. Arrest of a client, staff, or visitor for criminal activity occurring in the facility, including harassment, intimidation or victimization (i.e. stealing, extortion, loan sharking)
- iv. Incidents that occur off shelter premises (including client deaths) and/or involve persons known to be current shelter clients and that would otherwise be classified as Priority One
- v. Child abuse that is reported and results in the removal of children by the Administration of Children's Services (ACS), but no arrests are made
- vi. Theft or vandalism of property valued at \$1500 or more
- vii. Intentional fire setting or damage to facility equipment by a client
- viii. Possession, use, or sale of drugs or alcohol on premises resulting in suspension of a client
- ix. Possession of a firearm

2.1 Priority Two Reporting Process

- i. DHS and funded agency staff must fax or email Priority Two Incident Reports to the DHS Program Administrator within 24 hours of the incident occurring.
- ii. DHS Program Administrator will decide if incident is appropriately categorized.
- iii. DHS Program Administrator shall notify the Associate Commissioner within 24 hours of receiving notice of the incident, if appropriate, and the Associate Commissioner will use his/her discretion on whether to call the appropriate Deputy Commissioner or other appropriate staff.
- iv. The Program Administrator will ensure that incident reports are entered into CARES within 48 hours of receiving notice of the incident, and will notify the OPS Desk of the incident.

3. Priority Three incidents include unusual occurrences that are required to be recorded and reviewed for possible corrective action. These incidents include the following:

- a. On-site incidents that are not classified as Priority One or Priority Two, but occur in the shelter involving clients, staff, visitors or property, including: thefts, physical fights, personal injury, minor property damage, and/or evacuations
- b. Off-site incidents involving clients and/or staff that affect community quality of life, including: thefts, physical fights, personal injury, minor property damage, and/or evacuations
- c. Removal, via EMS, of any client for any reason other than a Priority One or Priority Two event.

3.1 Priority Three Reporting /Communication Process

- i. DHS and funded agency staff must fax or email Priority Three Incident Reports to the DHS Program Administrator within 24 hours of the incident occurring.
- ii. DHS Program Administrator will decide if incident is appropriately categorized as a Priority Two or Priority Three.
- iii. DHS Program Administrator shall notify the Associate Commissioner within 24 hours of receiving notice of the incident, if appropriate and the Associate Commissioner will use their own discretion on whether to call Deputy Commissioner or other appropriate staff.
- iv. The Program Administrator will ensure that incident reports are entered into CARES within 48 hours of receiving notice of the incident, and will notify the OPS Desk of the incident.

4. Special Cases

- a. If NYPD, FDNY or EMS has been called, and is not responding within a reasonable time, immediate notification must be made to at least the appropriate Program Administrator for guidance and assistance.
- b. In confirmed or suspected cases of contagious disease (i.e. chickenpox, Hepatitis A., tuberculosis, measles, meningitis, H1N1, Ebola), the Associate Commissioner of Family or Adult Services must alert the Agency Medical Director immediately.

5. Roles and Responsibilities for all Priority Incidents

DHS staff and funded provider agency staff are responsible for reporting incidents that occur a) within and in the immediate vicinity (on the grounds) of the facility, and b) off-site when staff or clients are involved.

Program Administrators are responsible for monitoring the reporting process. They will assign follow-up as necessary and ensure that corrective action plans are developed and implemented. Program Administrators will ensure that facilities under their purview have taken the following appropriate actions:

- *Log Recording*: All incidents should be noted in the facility logbook, pursuant to the Log Recording Procedure, where applicable.
- *Case Recording*: Case notes and copies of Incident Report's must be placed in the files of clients involved in incidents.
- *M-100* must be filed in the case of all thefts of Department property from Department facilities.
- *Suspension of Services*: For Adult Shelter clients, all necessary approvals have been obtained and the suspension has been entered into CARES.
- *Reporting to NY State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA)*: OTDA notification must be made in accordance with governing regulations. (State notifications will be reviewed by the Associate Commissioner/Chief of Staff monthly.)

Family and Adult Program Administrators should be the primary communicator with the OPS Desk Program Analysts and field staff should not contact the OPS Desk directly.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about client-related incidents is governed by DHS rules of confidentiality and may only be discussed/ released with a written release of information from the client and/or approval of DHS Legal. All requests and approvals for release of information (other than media) will be channeled through DHS Legal. All inquiries from the media will be forwarded by the Associate Commissioner to the Director of Communications. All inquiries from elected officials and/or advocates will be forwarded to the Assistant Commissioner of Government and Community Relations. Under no circumstances is any information to be released by any DHS or funded agency staff without authorization from the Legal division or the Director of Communications.

ATTACHMENTS

- Log Recording Procedure
- M-100