


**DHS-PB-2018-004**

<b>Policy Subject:</b>  <b>Process For Reporting Incidents Occurring In Shelters</b>	<b>Applicable To:</b>  All DHS Directly-Operated or Provider Facilities/Programs Serving Homeless Individuals and Families	<b>Effective Date:</b> <b>April 18, 2018</b>  (OBSOLETES PROCEDURE NUMBER 15-004)
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<b>Administered By:</b>  <b>Single Adults</b> <b>Adult Families</b> <b>Families with Children</b> <b>Street Solutions</b>	<b>Approved By:</b>  Joslyn Carter Administrator Department of Homeless Services
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**■ INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) is responsible for reporting all incidents involving residents and/or staff of directly-operated and contracted shelters for homeless singles and families, in accordance with all applicable provisions of the New York State Codes, Rules, and Regulations.

This procedure establishes uniform criteria for the timely and accurate reporting of incidents, as well as the steps necessary for notifying DHS, the Department of Social Services (DSS), and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

**■ CATEGORIZING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS OCCURING IN SHELTER**

To accurately report an incident that occurs at a shelter, staff must first categorize the incident by Priority 1, 2, or 3. Priority 1 Incidents are referred to as Critical Incidents.

**PRIORITY 1 - CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

Priority 1- Critical Incidents have a significant impact upon the safety and well-being of shelter residents and/or staff, and must be reported to OTDA. These incidents include:

- Accident or Health Issue leading to life threatening injury
- Arson
- Attempted Suicide

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- Bomb Threat (reasonable belief)
  - Child Abuse – resulting in immediate arrest of the guardian or removal of the child
  - Contagious disease that results in quarantine of client (e.g., chickenpox, Hepatitis A, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis, H1N1, Ebola, etc.)
  - Death – Natural/Accidental – Adult – On-site
  - Death – Natural/Accidental – Minor – On-site
  - Death – Suicide – Adult – On-site
  - Death – Suicide – Minor – On-site
  - Domestic Fights/Disputes (Between Intimate or Non-Intimate Partners) – Fight resulting in visible injury or weapon used
  - Domestic Fights/Disputes (Between Intimate or Non-Intimate Partners) – Fight resulting in visible injury or weapon used, resulting in removal from case, safety transfer, and/or DV referral
  - Drug Overdose
  - Drug Possession – Staff
  - Drug Sale – Staff
  - Drug use/intoxication – Staff
  - Environmental Hazard threatening general well-being of clients
  - Fight – resulting in visible injury, or weapon used
  - Fire that leads to evacuation
  - Fire that leads to relocation
  - Firearm Discharge – Staff or resident
  - Firearm Possession – Staff or resident
  - Heating/Water/Electrical Failure – more than 6 hours in duration
  - Homicide – Adult - On-site
  - Homicide – Minor – On-site
  - Hostage or Abduction
  - Missing Person (Minor – Under age of 13)
  - Rape/Attempted Rape/Sexual Assault

- Significant facility damage caused by a natural disaster or catastrophic event such as a hurricane, tornado, flood, winter storm, etc.
- Unscheduled on-site presence of press or elected official

## **PRIORITY 1 - CRITICAL INCIDENT IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

1. In the event of a Priority 1 - Critical Incident, the Shelter Director/on-site designee must notify the DHS Program Administrator by telephone within 30 minutes of becoming aware of the incident. On weekends (between 5:00 pm on Fridays and until 9:00 am on Mondays) and on holidays, the Shelter Director/on-site designee must telephone the on-call Program Administrator.

2. Upon gathering all pertinent information, the Program Administrator/on-call Program Administrator will immediately telephone the DHS Operations Desk (OPS Desk) regarding the details of the incident.

3. The 24-hour OPS Desk will immediately send an email to the *Critical Incident Notification Distribution List*, which includes the relevant DHS and DSS administrative offices, as well as the DSS Commissioner's Office. The OPS Desk report will include:

1. DHS Division
2. Incident type and category
3. Facility and address
4. Reporter Name (staff member making the report to OPS Desk)
5. Call back number of the Reporter
6. Description of the incident
7. Action taken
8. Emergency responders
9. Current status

4. The DHS Program Administrator/on-call Program Administrator will periodically update the DHS OPS Desk, as additional information is ascertained.

5. Within 30 minutes of receipt of any update from the DHS Program Administrator/on-call Program Administrator, the DHS OPS Desk staff will send an email to the *Critical Incident Notification Distribution List*, updating them.

6. A designee of Regulatory Compliance will email OTDA within 3 hours of receipt of the OPS Desk email notification the following concerning the incident:

- Date
- Time
- Facility
- Household Head Last Name
- Critical Incident Type
- Arrest - Y/N
- Death - Y/N
- DHS Contact for follow-up (Program Administrator/designee)

If the OPS Desk email notification occurs between the hours of 7:00 pm and 7:00 am, the Critical Incident Alert will be sent to OTDA by 10:00 am. If necessary, staff of Regulatory Compliance will verify the content of the Critical Incident Alert with the Program Administrator/designee, prior to sending the email.

### **PRIORITY 1 - CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS**

1. All shelter staff, including security, must report incidents to the appropriate Shift Supervisor or Program Director. The reporting process for any incident is dependent on the incident's priority categorization.
2. In the event of a Priority 1 - Critical Incident, after contacting the Program Administrator, the Shelter Director/supervisory designee will submit a *Critical Incident Report* in CARES within 4 hours of the incident.

If an incident occurs during the overnight hours or during a weekend, the *Critical Incident Report* must be submitted by 12:00 noon the next business day. The *Critical Incident Report* (see **Attachment A**) includes:

- a) Incident Type and Category,
- b) Date and Time,
- c) Facility name, building, and specific location where the incident occurred,
- d) All individual participants in the incident,
- e) Full description of the incident and immediate response,
- f) Indicators such as use of a weapon, NYPD response, ACS, arrest made, etc.,
- g) Documentation of the victim's statement/victim's refusal to provide one, and
- h) Any other relevant documentation.

3. The Program Administrator will receive an automated notification upon the submission by shelter staff of a *CARES Critical Incident Report* through the CARES system.

Within 24 hours of submission of the *CARES Critical Incident Report*, the DHS Program Administrator will review it to determine whether it has been correctly categorized and contains all requisite information.

4. In instances when the *CARES Critical Incident Report* requires updating, the Program Administrator will return it to the Shelter Director through the CARES reporting function, and will detail that which is missing, incomplete, or incorrect. The Shelter Director will update the report accordingly.
5. If the *CARES Critical Incident Report* is complete and correct, the Program Administrator will approve it and close it out in CARES.
6. Within 72 hours of the completion of a *CARES Critical Incident Report*, the dedicated program compliance staff will download an official *CARES Critical Incident Report* from CARES and email it to the NYS OTDA Division of Shelter Oversight and Compliance.

## **PRIORITY 2 INCIDENTS**

Priority 2 Incidents are those that do not represent a significant impact upon the safety and well-being of shelter residents or staff, but which must be reported promptly, so that Agency administrators can address them in a timely manner, as described below. The categories of Priority 2 Incidents are:

- Accident/Injury resulting in hospitalization
- Death – Notification of offsite death
- Death – Suicide – Adult Offsite
- Death – Suicide – Minor Offsite
- Drug(s) sale by client
- Fire alarm that leads to evacuation (no cause)
- Fire that does not lead to evacuation
- Homicide – Adult Offsite
- Homicide – Minor Offsite
- Notification of removal of child by ACS without incident onsite
- Psychiatric Hospitalization

- Theft – Greater than \$1500
- Unwanted sexual advances

## **PRIORITY 2 INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS**

1. In the event of a Priority 2 Incident, the responsible shelter staff shall complete an *Incident Report* in CARES and submit it to the DHS Program Analyst/designated staff within 24 hours of the incident.

If the Priority 2 Incident occurs during the weekend, a report shall be submitted by the close of business of the next business day.

2. The Program Analyst/designated staff will receive an automated notification upon the submission of a Priority 2 *Incident Report* in CARES. Within 1 week of the submission of the *Incident Report* in CARES, the DHS Program Analyst/designated staff will review it and determine whether the report has been correctly categorized, and whether it contains all requisite information.
3. If more information/correction is needed, the Program Analyst/designated staff must return the *Incident Report* to the shelter staff through the CARES reporting function, indicating what is missing, incomplete, and/or incorrect. The shelter staff must update the report accordingly.
4. If the *Incident Report* is complete and correct, the Program Analyst/designated staff will approve it and close it out in CARES.

## **PRIORITY 3 INCIDENTS**

Priority 3 Incidents are quality of life occurrences which require recording and review for possible corrective action. The categories of Priority 3 Incidents are:

- Accident/Health issue reported – no major injury or illness
- Alcohol possession or intoxication
- Disorderly conduct
- Dispute – No visible injury or weapon used
- Domestic Dispute (between Intimate or Non-Intimate Partners) – No visible injury or weapon used
- Domestic Dispute (between Intimate or Non-Intimate Partners) – No visible injury or weapon used, resulted in removal from case, safety transfer, and/or DV referral

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- Domestic Threat – threat of physical violence
  - Drug possession, use, or intoxication
  - Failure to comply with shelter rules
  - Fire alarm – No evacuation (no cause)
  - Health issue – Resulting in hospitalization
  - Heat/Water/Electrical Failure – Less than 6 hours
  - Mental health concern – not requiring medical response
  - Missing person (minor) – 13 years or older
  - Notification of other offsite incident
  - Property damage
  - Report made with ACS – No immediate removal
  - Theft – Less than \$1500
  - Threats
  - Warrant squad arrest/Arrest Notification

### **PRIORITY 3 INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS**

1. In the event of a Priority 3 Incident, the responsible shelter staff will complete an *Incident Report* in CARES and submit to the DHS Program Analyst/designated staff within 24 hours of the Priority 3 Incident.

If the Priority 3 Incident occurs during the weekend, the *Incident Report* will be submitted by the end of the next business day.

2. The Program Analyst/designated staff will receive an automated notification upon the submission of a Priority 3 *Incident Report* in CARES. Within 2 weeks of submission of the *Incident Report*, the DHS Program Analyst/designated staff shall review it, and determine whether the report has been correctly categorized, and whether it contains all requisite information.
3. If more information and/or correction is required, the Program Analyst/designated staff will return the *Incident Report* to the shelter staff through the CARES reporting function, indicating what is missing, incomplete, and/or incorrect. The shelter staff will update the report accordingly.
4. If the *Incident Report* is complete and correct, the Program Analyst/designated staff will approve it and close it out in CARES.

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## **INCIDENT FOLLOW-UP**

All client related incidents require case management follow-up with an Incident Follow-Up case note. Case management staff is responsible for documenting all engagement with the client after the incident, in order to understand the nature of the incident and determine whether follow-up services and/or supports are needed. Supervision must ensure staff is appropriately following-up and documenting these incidents.

Domestic Violence incidents require very specific follow-up action. All incidents between intimate partners, regardless of the incident priority level, must be responded to appropriately regarding client safety and risk. Specific follow-up procedures concerning these types of incidents are outlined in DHS Procedure #11-003 Responding To Domestic Violence Incidents In Shelter, as they may result in the removal of a family member from shelter, a safety transfer, or a referral to HRA ODVEIS. Staff must record Domestic Violence incidents and the requisite follow-up action in Case Notes for future reference.

## **LOGBOOK RECORDINGS**

All incidents must be recorded in the facility logbook, pursuant to DHS Procedure #16-403 Shelter Log Maintenance.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information concerning client-related incidents is governed by DSS Executive Order # 746 Confidentiality Policy and DHS Procedure #07-180 Media Policy, and may not be discussed/disseminated without a written release from the client and/or approval of the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA). All requests for/approvals of release of information (other than those involving the media, elected officials, and/or advocates) must be routed through OLA.

All inquiries involving the media, elected officials, and/or advocates must be forwarded to the DSS Deputy Commissioner of Communications, Marketing, and Legislative Affairs. Under no circumstances is any information to be released by any DSS/DHS/Contracted Agency staff without authorization from the DSS Deputy Commissioner of Communications, Marketing and Legislative Affairs.

*Effective Immediately*

## **REFERENCES:**

DHS Procedure # 07-180 Media Policy  
DHS Procedure # 11-003 Responding to Domestic Violence Incidents in Shelter  
DHS Procedure # 16-403 Shelter Log Maintenance  
DSS Executive Order #746 – Confidentiality Policy  
P-2010-007 – Reporting and Documenting Security Incidents



**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Attachment A** - NYC Department of Homeless Services Incident Report



**Department of Homeless Services**

**NYC Department of Homeless Services Incident Report**

Priority Code:

Date:

Day of Week:

Time:

Facility Name:

Facility Code:

Facility Class:

Facility Type:

Incident Category:

Incident Type:

**PERSONS INVOLVED:** O=Other S=Staff C=Client V=Victim W=Witness Ob=Observer P=Perpetrator O=Other

O-S-C	V-W-Ob-P-O	Last Name	First Name	Sex	CARESID	SSN	Age	DOB

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:** (Who, what, where, when) Attach additional sheet if necessary

Created by:

**IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN:** (By on-site staff responding to the incident)

**EMERGENCY RESPONDERS:** (NYPD - DHSPD - EMS - FDNY - ACS) List all that apply

Responder	Time Called	Time Arrived	Name	Badge	Unit

**INJURIES:**



DOC\INCIDENT\_REPORTS



**Department of Homeless Services**

Name	Type of Injury	Removed to Hospital	Hospital

**RESIDENT STATEMENT ATTACHED, WHEN APPLICABLE. (See Part 491.7(d)(15))**

- Resident statement attached.
- Resident refused but offered.
- Resident unable to provide statement due to medical or related emergency reason.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Report Prepared By/Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Report Reviewed By/Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Security/Peace Officer Report Attached

**REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION: *To be completed by DHS Staff***

**INDICATORS: *To Be Completed by DHS Staff***

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of DHS Program Analyst Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DISPOSITION/FINAL ACTION TAKEN: *To be completed by DHS Program Administrator***

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of DHS Program Administrator Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE REPORT RETURNED TO FACILITY (CLIENT SUSPENSIONS ONLY): \_\_\_\_\_



## Department of Homeless Services

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

- Homicide, suicide, or death on site attempted homicide, attempted suicide, assault resulting in life-threatening injury, or accident resulting in life-threatening injury (including drug overdose) Use of a firearm Rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault Arrest for alleged child abuse or emergency transport of child for medical treatment due to suspected child abuse 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 FDNY response Riot, bomb threat, hostage taking/abduction, or missing children Unscheduled on-site presence of the press or elected official Assault or threatening behavior that results in life-threatening injury or accident resulting in life-threatening injury (including overdoses) Arrest of DHS staff on site Heating, water, electrical failure, or other environmental issue (i.e. asbestos, lead, radon), that is expected to last more than 4 hours Domestic violence that results in the victim pressing charges, arrest of the assailant and/or the relocation of the victim

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**Priority Two Incidents** include problems that are not immediately 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

- Physical fights that do not result in arrest
- Allegations of: rape, attempted rape or sexual assault that do not result in arrest
- 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)
- 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
- Child abuse that is reported and results in the removal of children by ACS, but no arrests are made
- Theft or vandalism of property valued at \$1500 or more
- Intentional fire setting or damage to facility equipment by a client
- Possession, use, or sale of drugs or alcohol on premises resulting in suspension of a client
- Possession of a firearm

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**Priority Three Incidents** include unusual occurrences that need to be recorded and reviewed for possible corrective action:

- 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
- 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
- Removal, via EMS, of any client for any reason other than a Priority One or Priority Two event

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**Special Cases:**

- 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 Assistant Commissioner for guidance and assistance
- In confirmed or suspected cases of contagious disease (i.e. chickenpox, Hepatitis A, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis), the Assistant Commissioner should alert the Agency Medical Director immediately