

Arizona Department of Child Safety

When to Use Collateral Contacts

Intake Hotline Staff will make a collateral contact when

- it is unclear if report criteria is met or
- it is unclear what response time is needed to ensure child safety due to insufficient information.

The insufficient information will be obtained by contacting one or no more than two sources. The source shall be a professional mandated reporter. In rare instances a non-mandated reporter may be appropriate to contact. If a non-mandated reporter is being considered, a discussion needs to occur as to whether this contact would interfere with a DCS investigation.

Processing the Collateral Contact

Intake Specialists will consult with Intake Supervisors and consider the following items as needed in deciding how to complete the collateral contact.

- Intake Specialists or Intake Supervisors can contact collateral sources. Hotline Staff will take into consideration the call volume for the day to determine who should make the contact. If calls are in queue, a Hotline Supervisor will try to make the first attempt to contact the collateral source.
- Intake Specialists will inform a Intake Supervisor at the end of their work week if a collateral contact has not been completed. The decision needs to be made if it would be appropriate to assign the collateral contact to another individual for follow-up.
- During certain hours or times of the week (i.e., late night hours or weekends), it might not be possible to reach some mandated reporters. Intake Specialists will consult with a Supervisor to determine if it would be appropriate to assign the collateral contact to another individual during regular business hours for follow-up. If there is no Supervisor on duty, the Specialist will send an e-mail to the first Supervisor on duty the next day, the APM's, and the Specialist's Supervisor. A Supervisor or APM will make the follow-up arrangements.

Decision Making Process

When a Intake Specialist believes that a collateral contact is needed, the Specialist will consult with a Intake Supervisor and complete the Collateral Contacts Decision Making Tool to assess the following:

- Is there insufficient information to make an accurate, confident decision regarding child safety?

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- Were efforts made to gather sufficient information from the source? Was the source asked if there is a professional who may have additional information regarding the child or family? If no, the Intake Specialist will call the source back to ask additional questions in an attempt to gather the relevant information. If there is insufficient information on a mail or faxed document call the original source first.
- What additional information would assist in making an accurate decision regarding report criteria or response time?
- Are there professional mandated reporters who may have additional information?
- How quickly does the additional information need to be gathered? Discuss possible safety issues for the child and the urgency of the situation. If a decision needs to be made regarding response time, remember that the DCS report needs to be dispositioned to the field office as quickly as possible.

Upon completion, the Collateral Contacts Decision Making Tool and Hotline Safety Decision Tool will be submitted to the Specialist's Supervisor.

Interview

When contact is made with the collateral source, Hotline Staff will conduct the interview as follows:

- Provide Staff's name and agency name, Arizona Child Abuse Hotline.
- Explain the Hotline received information regarding a concern for a child(ren) and provide the name(s). Explain that the information is insufficient to make an accurate assessment about possible child maltreatment and the child's safety and additional information would help in making this assessment.
- Ask source if they would be willing to answer some questions to help assist in assessing possible safety threats to the child.
- If source is willing to participate in the interview, provide just as much information about the situation and family that is needed in order for the source to adequately answer the needed questions.
- If it appears the source has additional concerns about the child(ren), it may be necessary to ask questions within the six fundamental safety questions to assess for all possible safety threats.
- At the end of the interview if the collateral source provides information ask the following:
 - May I use your name for documentation as a collateral source?
 - Do you have concerns regarding substantial risk of harm if your name were to be released as a source? What are those concerns?
- Do not reveal the source of the original call.

Messages

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Messages can be left only for professional mandated sources. Never leave a message for non-mandated sources. When calling a professional mandated reporter and if a message needs to be left provide the following:

- Hotline Staff's name
- Arizona Child Abuse Hotline
- Hotline Staff's desk phone number
- Days and hours available
- Consulting Supervisor's name and Hotline backdoor number, (602) 530-1825. (Do not indicate on the message that the number is the Hotline's backdoor number.)
- Reason for the call; calling in regards to a family/child and state the child's or caregiver's name.

If the collateral source requests verification of Hotline Staff's identify and employment, ask source to call the Hotline backdoor number and speak to a Intake Supervisor. If the source requests verification in writing, fax the Letter of Employment Verification (located on the S drive).

Documentation

The information gathered from the collateral source will be documented in the following format:

- Collateral contact was made with (enter person's name, title and agency name, if applicable), and phone number on (date).
- Summary of the information gathered.
- Substantial harm statement.

If the communication has not been dispositioned in CHILDS, document the information at the end of the narrative under section header, "Information from Other Sources."

After initiating contact with the collateral source and a message had to be left the Intake Specialist will start entering the communication. If by the end of the Specialist's shift contact still has not been made with the collateral source **and** if the decision is made that it is **safe** to wait to gather the additional information, enter the original call as a Hotline communication.

Attempts to contact the collateral source will be documented in the "Note Comment" window off the narrative. Document the following information:

- Person's name, title, and agency name if applicable and phone number.
- Date and time of call.

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- Information needed from the collateral source.

After receiving the information from the collateral source and the decision is that the information **does not** meet report criteria, and the original call is documented as a Hotline communication, document the information gathered from the collateral source in the “Note Comment” window off the narrative.

After receiving the information from the collateral source and the decision is that the information **does** meet report criteria and the original call is documented as a Hotline communication do the following:

- Re-enter the first communication with the date and time of the phone call.
- Add the information collected from the collateral source at the end of the narrative under section header, “Information from Other Sources.”
- Do not re-enter the contact notes from the “Note Comment” window off the original narrative.
- The communication will be saved and dispositioned to the field on the date that it is re-entered.