

1205 COLLATERAL CONTACTS

Chapter: **Child Protective Field Services**

Section: **CPS Family Assessments**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **08-03**

Effective Date: **May 2008**

Scheduled Review Date:

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maggie Bishop".

Maggie Bishop, Director

Related Statute(s): [RSA 169-C](#)

Related Admin Rule(s):

Related Federal Regulation(s):

Related Form(s): **FORM 2011**

Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

Purpose

To describe the process and requirements of assessing referrals of child abuse and neglect. The primary goal of the assessment process is to ensure the safety of the child(ren).

Policy

- I. To help in the determination of whether neglect or abuse has occurred, the CPSW must make at least two collateral contacts during the course of the assessment. A collateral contact includes a contact with any individual within the community who can furnish information about the family. They may include schools, medical staff, social service agencies, hospitals, clinics, police, relatives and personal contacts such as friends, neighbors or landlords. If a professional reporter initiated the referral, then contact with this reporter meets the requirement of one collateral contact. If a collateral contact is unable to be made then the CPSW must document in the Bridges contact log what efforts were made and why contact could not be established.
- II. Through making collateral contacts, the CPSW seeks to gain an understanding of:
 - A. Relationships within the family;
 - B. Patterns of behavior; and
 - C. Key insights into family functioning and dynamics.
- III. Both the DCYF Law Enforcement and the [DCYF Domestic Violence Protocols](#) address how collateral contacts with law enforcement and the courts are to occur when the subject of the assessment is alleged to be the victim of physical or sexual assault or of another crime, or if there is co-occurring domestic violence.
- IV. Public schools or other public institutions must provide assistance and information to DCYF in accordance with RSA 169-C: 34, III.
- V. The CPSW must attempt to obtain the parents' cooperation in identifying the names of collateral contacts via the "Authorization to Release Confidential Information" (Form 2011). Collateral contacts may be made without the parents' knowledge for reasons including, but not limited to the following:
 - A. The CPSW has reason to believe that a serious emergency exists, which endangers the health and safety of the child;
 - B. The CPSW has attempted to inform the parents of the intent to make collateral contacts;

- C. Based on the intake referral, the CPSW does not have enough information to evaluate the seriousness of the referral; and/or
 - D. The CPSW believes the safety of the collateral could be in jeopardy if the parents are informed.
- VI. The confidentiality of the family must be respected and collateral contacts are only to be given information regarding the family on a "need to know" basis.