

10A NCAC 70A .0105 RECEIVING INFORMATION: INITIATING PROMPT INVESTIGATIONS OF REPORTS

(a) The county director shall receive and initiate an investigation on all reports of suspected child abuse, neglect, or dependency, including anonymous reports:

(b) The county director shall to the extent possible obtain the following information from the person making the report:

- (1) The name, address, and actual or approximate age of the juvenile(s);
- (2) The names and ages of other juveniles residing in the home;
- (3) The name and address of the juvenile's parent, guardian, or caretaker;
- (4) The name and address of the alleged perpetrator;
- (5) The present whereabouts of the juvenile(s) if not at the home address;
- (6) The nature and extent of any injury or condition resulting from abuse, neglect, or dependency;
- (7) Other information that the reporter has which might be helpful in establishing the need for protective services, including the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other individuals who may have information about the condition of the juvenile(s); and
- (8) The name, address, and telephone number of the person making the report.

(c) When a county director receives a report of suspected abuse or of criminal maltreatment of a juvenile by a person other than the juvenile's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker, the director shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency in accordance with G.S. 7B-307. The county director shall provide the law enforcement agency with any information obtained from the person making the report as outlined in Subparagraphs (b)(1) through (b)(7) of this Rule. The name, address, and telephone number of the individual making the report, included as Subparagraph (b)(8) of this Rule, may be shared with law enforcement when this information is necessary for law enforcement to perform their duties as related to the report.

(d) The county director shall initiate an investigation of suspected abuse, within 24 hours after receiving a report. The county director shall initiate an investigation of suspected neglect or dependency within 72 hours after receiving a report, except that investigations of all accepted reports of child abandonment shall be initiated immediately. Initiation of an investigation is defined as having face-to-face contact with the alleged victim child or children. If there is not such face-to-face contact within the prescribed time period, the case record shall contain documentation to explain why such contact was not made and what other steps were taken to assess the risk of harm to the child or children.

(e) When the director is unable to initiate the investigation within the prescribed time period, as indicated in Paragraph (d) of this Rule, because the alleged victim child or children cannot be located, the director shall make diligent efforts to locate the alleged victim child or children until such efforts are successful or until the director concludes that the child or children cannot be located. Diligent efforts shall include, but not be limited to, visits to the child's or children's address at different times of the day and on different days. All efforts to locate the child or children shall be documented in the case record.

(f) When abuse, neglect, or dependency is alleged to have occurred in an institution, in addition to the procedures described in Paragraphs (a) through (e) of this Rule, the county director shall notify the individual who is administratively responsible for on-site operation of the institution in order to solicit the cooperation of the administration of the institution. Notification shall occur within the time frames required in Paragraph (d) of this Rule, and prior to contact with the alleged victim juvenile(s) if the director determines that such notice would not place the alleged victim(s) at risk of further harm.

(g) The county director must have an internal two level review, including at a minimum the worker and the worker's supervisor, prior to making a decision that information received does not constitute a report of abuse, neglect, or dependency.

(h) The county director must establish a process by which the person providing this information may obtain a review of the agency's decision not to accept the information as a report of abuse, neglect, or dependency. The process shall include:

- (1) informing the person providing the information that the agency will not conduct an investigation, the basis for that decision, and their right to and the procedures for obtaining such a review; and
- (2) designating the persons by whom and the manner in which such reviews will be conducted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 7B-301; 7B-302; 7B-306; 7B-307; 143B-153; Eff. January 1, 1980; Temporary Amendment Eff. July 10, 1991, For a Period of 180 Days to Expire on January 5, 1992; Amended Eff. April 1, 2003; September 1, 1994; July 1, 1993; June 1, 1992; December 1, 1991.