

Chapter 3

INVESTIGATION RESPONSE TIMES

3-1. Definition. Response time refers to the assigned timeframe for commencement of the investigation by the child protective investigator. The commencement timeframe begins at the point the Hotline either assigns the report to the local Receiving Unit or makes contact with an “on-call” investigator.

3-2. Determining Response Time. The Hotline is responsible for determining initial response times based on their assessment of present or impending danger, as indicated by the information provided. Based upon having more complete or up-to-date information than initially collected by the Hotline, the supervisor may change the response time established by the Hotline.

a. An **Immediate Response** time established by the Hotline requires the investigator to attempt to make the initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim as soon as possible but no later than four (4) hours following assignment by the Hotline.

b. A **24 Hour Response** time established by the Hotline requires the investigator to attempt to make initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim as soon as pre-commencement activities are completed but no later than 24 hours following assignment by the Hotline.

c. If the investigator is unable to make contact with the family after timely commencement of the investigation, the investigator must make diligent attempts to re-visit the home or visit other known or suspected locations of household members (e.g., school, work, etc.) and attempt contact at different times of the day (e.g., early morning, evening hours, etc.), including weekends until contact has been made. All visits to the home should be unannounced until the initial contact with the alleged child victim and caregivers has occurred. To help maintain the family’s right to confidentiality, unannounced visits to a caregiver’s work site or other non-household location are discouraged unless concerns about a child’s safety justify contacting a subject of the report in a public location.

3-3. Supervisory Approval to Change Response Time.

a. A Supervisor may downgrade an immediate response report to a “24 hour response” time when:

(1) Additional information is obtained from the reporter or other reliable collateral source which indicates the “real time” circumstances have changed as initially reported to the Hotline and the present danger threat is no longer active (e.g., a parent has returned to the home and an infant is no longer left unsupervised, etc.).

(2) The investigator has reliable information that the alleged child victim has been threatened or warned by a parent or alleged maltreater not to talk with or disclose personal or family information to child protection services and waiting to interview the child at a different location away from the source of threats would significantly enhance disclosure of information by the child. In regards to allegations of sexual abuse or other severe maltreatment, this would include consideration of waiting until the alleged perpetrator leaves the premises where the child is currently located to facilitate the interview process.

b. A Supervisor may upgrade a report to an “immediate response” time when it is determined after sufficient review of the report that the allegations contain present danger threats to the child **or** the local unit has additional information on the family circumstances to warrant an upgraded response time priority.

c. A present danger threat is defined as an immediate, significant, and clearly observable family condition that is occurring in the household.

3-4. Documentation. If the Supervisor determines that the response time should be changed, the Supervisor will complete the following documentation in a case note within one business day:

- a. Record the revised response time.
- b. Document the rationale for the change.

