

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



September 18, 2002

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-66-02

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION
OFFICERS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
 Federal Law or Regulation Change
 Court Order
 Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY
LAW AND CHILD FATALITIES

REFERENCES: ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 02-01 (SAFELY SURRENDERED
BABY) SENATE BILL 1368, CHAPTER 824, STATUTES OF 2000
ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 14-01 (CHILD DEATHS) SENATE
BILL 525, CHAPTER 1012, STATUTES OF 1999

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to remind county Child Welfare Services (CWS) Agencies of the reporting requirements for both the Safely Surrendered Baby Law and Child Death cases.

Reporting Safely Surrendered Babies Cases

Senate Bill 1368 requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to submit three reports to the Legislature on the effect of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law (formerly the Safe Arms for Newborns Law). These reports must include information about safely surrendered babies cases, as well as other cases involving abandonment. The reports are due to the Legislature on January 1, 2003, January 1, 2004, and January 1, 2005. Information to be included in the legislative report includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The number of children, one year or younger, who were not safely surrendered under the provisions of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, but who were found abandoned, dead or alive. This category includes, but is not limited to, those situations in which the infant was left in a dumpster, on a door step, or other location and the parent(s) failed to return for the child or otherwise make any provisions for the care of the child.
2. The number of infants, by approximate age, surrendered under the provisions of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

3. The number of medical information questionnaires that are completed for safely surrendered babies.
4. The number of instances where the surrendering person seeks to reclaim custody of the child, both during and after the initial 14-day time period, and the outcome of these requests.
5. Whether a person seeking to reclaim custody of a child is the same person who surrendered the child.
6. The number of children surrendered under this law that show signs of neglect or abuse and the disposition of those cases.
7. The number of parents or legal guardians who were eventually located and contacted by social workers.

The CDSS will develop the report based on data gathered from various sources, including Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data, as well as information from follow-up discussions with counties and hospitals. As a result, it is imperative that counties report safely surrendered babies cases to CDSS through CWS/CMS accurately and in a timely fashion.

Attachment A contains the most recent CWS/CMS data reporting instructions for safely surrendered babies cases. The CWS/CMS bulletin containing these instructions that was issued on May 9, 2002, superceded the instructions attached to All County Letter (ACL) No. 02-01 issued January 12, 2001.

Reporting on Abandonment Cases

As indicated above, an "abandonment case" is any case in which either a baby was left at a location or with an individual other than the location(s) or individuals specified under the Safely Surrendered Baby Law or the child was left without any means of support or care, the whereabouts of the parents are unknown and reasonable efforts to locate the parents have been unsuccessful. There is no special code or procedure for recording data on these cases. The data associated with these cases is, and will continue to be, collected through CWS/CMS when abandonment has been identified and documented as the allegation of abuse type and/or as an intervention reason.

Reporting Child Fatalities

ACL No. 14-01 requires that all county CWS agencies create a record in the CWS/CMS for all cases of child death suspected to be related to child abuse or neglect regardless of whether the deceased child has any known surviving siblings.

The CDSS is aware that CWS agencies may not be informed of all child fatalities when there is no current CWS involvement with a child. ACL 14-01 encourages CWS agencies to establish procedures with their local law enforcement agencies to obtain sufficient information about these cases to create a record in CWS/CMS. Please refer to ACL 14-01 and its attachment detailing the reporting process. Attachment B to this ACIN is a copy of the CWS/CMS reporting process for these cases that was included in ACL 14-01. The CDSS, as a member of the State Child Death Review Council, continues to work jointly with other state agencies to reconcile several existing databases in order to obtain accurate data about children dying as a result of child abuse or neglect in California.

It is important that counties continue to work with local law enforcement agencies and coroners' offices to develop protocols for cross-reporting that will ensure the data on child deaths is accurate and timely.

If you have any questions regarding the safely surrendered babies data reporting process, please contact the Case Management System Support Branch staff at (916) 445-2888. For questions regarding child deaths and the reporting of those cases, please contact the Children Services Operations and Evaluation Branch at (916) 445-3146. Other questions regarding the Safely Surrendered Baby Law should be directed to the Child Welfare Policy and Program Bureau, at (916) 445-2890.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Sylvia Pizzini

SYLVIA PIZZINI
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services

Enclosures

c: County Welfare Directors Association

Date of Bulletin: 5/9/02

Title: "Safely Surrendered Babies"

What is Impacted: Special Project Designation Change

Describe Impact:

SB 1368, Chapter 824, Statutes of 2000, established the law formerly referred to as "Safe Arms for Newborns". "Safely Surrendered Babies" is the new name of California's law that is intended to provide for the health and safety of unwanted newborn children. CWS/CMS has been updated to reflect the new title of this law. The "Special Projects" page can be found in Client Referral Case Information Notebook.

Counties should use the following process for recording the information on children abandoned under this law:

Step 1: In the Referral or Case Notebook of the CWS/CMS, go to the, "Special Projects" page. Select the Special Projects page tab and then the (+) button in the grid to enter a new Special Project for the focus child. Click the down arrow to display the available list of Special Projects. Select "Safely Surrendered Babies" indicator. Enter the date of referral opening or case state date (when referral goes to case, you will need to reenter the special project into the, "start date." Do not enter an, "end date, "as the system will populate this field when appropriate.

Step 2: The child's identification bracelet number should be entered into the client notebook under 10 number page, under the medical record type.

The information provided will be compiled into an annual report to the California State Legislature. It is therefore critical that all Safely Surrendered Babies case indicators are correctly entered into the system in order to meet the statutory mandate. Additional background information about these statutory changes can be found in the All County Letter (ACL) No. 02-01 dated January 12, 2001. A copy of that ACL can be found at the following Internet address: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.aov/aetinfo/acl01/cdf/02-01.cdf>

When:

- **Date: ASAP**
- **Start Time: N/A**
- **Duration: 12 months**

Who is Impacted: All County Child Welfare Agencies

Why: The title of the law had to be changed due to a trademark infringement.

Work Around: N/A

Contact: Richard Costa, LCSW, CDSS - CWS/CMS Support Branch, (916) 323-0465

January 2001

California Department of Social Services
Process for Recording Child Fatalities Related to Child Abuse and Neglect on Child Welfare
Services/Case Management System

Instructions for recording child fatalities:

- 1) Create a new referral.
- 2) Record appropriate information in the Referral "NB," ID, Reporter" and Assignment" pages.
- 3) Perform search(es) on the clients. Attach any matching search results to the new referral, and perform the relate clients. function.
- 4) If there are no matching search results, create the clients in the "Client Management" section and perform the "relate clients" function.
- 5) In the "Referral Management" section, create the new allegations.

In the "Deceased" grid, record the date and death circumstances type.

From the "Deceased" grid you have a box entitled Death Circumstance Type in which you can select:

Accidental
Confirmed Abuse
Natural Causes
Suicide
Suspected Abuse
Undetermined
Homicide

For cases confirmed to be due to parental abuse or neglect, select "Confirmed Abuse" in the "Death Circumstances Type" field. For cases confirmed to be not due to parental abuse or neglect, select the appropriate reason in the "Death Circumstances Type" field ("Accidental/", "Natural Causes," "Suicide," "Undetermined" or "Homicide" if not by parents)

If medical evidence or confirmation is pending, select "Suspected Abuse" or "Undetermined" as appropriate.

- 6) After the "Death Circumstances Type- field has been filled out, perform the "Determine Response- function:
 - From the "Menu" bar, select "Action,. .Determine Response."
 - Under "Decision Type,. select "Evaluate Out,."
 - Under "Agency Referred To," select "Other,"
 - In the "Rational Description. field, enter the appropriate information,
 - Select "Approval," "Pending approval," "OK."
- 7) Select "Yes." This will generate the Emergency Response document.

- 8) Save.
- 9) Submit to supervisor for review.

When confirmation of death reason is received, the death information on the Client Notebook may be updated in the closed referral by following the steps below:

1. *From the "Client services" section, search for the client.*
2. *From "Search Results", double click on "Client" to open the "Client Abstract.'*
3. *From the "Associated Menu," highlight "Open Associated Referrals" and select "Enter.'*
4. *From the "Open Associated Referrals" combo, highlight the appropriate referral and select "OK.*
5. *Open the referral and go to the "Client Management" section.*
6. *Highlight the client to be updated and select "OK.'*
7. *Go to the "Demographics" page.*
8. *the "Deceased" section, update the appropriate "Date" and "Death Circumstances Type" fields.*