

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 3: Intake	Effective Date: May 1, 2009
	Section 9: Initiation Times for Assessments	Version: 3

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will initiate every Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) assessment within the appropriate timeframe as determined by Indiana Law.

An assessment will be considered “initiated” when:

1. The Family Case Manager (FCM) makes **face-to-face contact** with the alleged child victim and notifies, in-person or via phone, the parent, guardian, or custodian; and
2. The FCM has assessed, and is able to reasonably assure, the safety of the child.

Assessments will be initiated within the following timeframes:

1. Within **one (1) hour** if the allegations would cause a reasonable person to believe that the child is in imminent danger of serious bodily harm; or
2. Within **24 hours** if the allegations involve abuse but the conditions in item one (1) above do not apply; or
3. Within **five (5) days** if the allegations involve neglect and none of the conditions in items one (1) or two (2) above apply.

[NEW] For reports involving alleged domestic violence, DCS will initiate the assessment:

1. If a Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) is on the scene and has requested assistance, DCS will respond within **one (1) hour** to the scene;
2. Any reports where a parent, guardian, custodian, or child(ren) calls to report alleged domestic violence will be initiated within **24 hours**;
3. If the alleged domestic violence occurred in the past **48 hours** (regardless of the reporting source), DCS will initiate the assessment within **24 hours**; or
4. If the alleged domestic violence occurred more than **48 hours** ago and the child(ren) are not believed to be in physical danger, DCS will initiate the assessment within **five (5) days**.

For reports concerning children who voluntarily enter an emergency shelter or a shelter care facility without the presence or consent of a parent, guardian, or custodian, DCS must conduct an assessment within **48 hours** of receiving the report. DCS must notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child within **72 hours** of the child entering the shelter or a shelter care facility.

Response times are measured from the conclusion of the initial call from the reporter. This means for **one (1) hour** assessments, the FCM must make face-to-face contact with the child, notify the parents, and assure the safety of the child within **one (1) hour** of the conclusion of the initial call from the reporter.

Assessments will be initiated regardless of the time of day (or night), and regardless of weekends or holidays, in order to meet the appropriate timeframes.

DCS will request assistance from LEA when circumstances exist that prevent DCS from being able to initiate **one (1) hour** assessments in a timely fashion.

Code References

1. [IC 31-33-8-1: Investigations by local child protection service; time of initiation](#)
2. [IC 31-33-8-6: Investigatory duties of local child protection service; purpose](#)
3. [IC 31-36-3-3: Homeless Children](#)
4. [IC 34-6-2-34.5: Domestic or family violence](#)

PROCEDURE

The intake worker or Supervisor will:

1. Consider all known information about the CA/N allegations;
2. Make a determination about the appropriate initiation timeframe; and
3. Compare the selected timeframe to the one assigned by the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) and make any - appropriate overrides.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

RELATED INFORMATION

N/A