



# WASHOE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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**DATE** May 15, 2023  
**To:** Children’s Services  
Licensed Foster, Enhanced and Specialized Foster Care Homes  
**From:** Amy Sandvik, Children’s Services Coordinator  
**Subject:** Incident Reporting

**Purpose:** To describe the requirements for caregivers in reporting a serious incident, accident, or injury via the use of an Incident Reporting Form or a runaway involving a youth in the custody of Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA).

**Authority:** Legal:  
• [NRS 424; NAC 424; NRS 432B](#)  
• Public Law (P.L.) 117-348 – The Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2022  
Statewide Policies:  
• [0210 Reporting, Locating and Responding to Missing Children](#)  
WCHSA Policies:  
• Runaway Protocol  
• Bed Hold Policy  
• Quality Parenting Standards for Foster Homes

**Definitions:**

Care Provider: Any person that the child is placed with (foster parent, relative, parent, etc.).

Incident Report: A document detailing a serious incident, accident, or injury involving a child in a foster home.

Runaway: A child whose whereabouts are currently unknown and who is believed to have left his or her placement voluntarily.

**Incident Reporting Requirements for Serious Incidents:**

- A. Incident reports are required anytime there is a serious incident, accident, or injury involving a child in a foster home as outlined in [NAC 424.476](#). When caregivers are uncertain if an incident report is necessary, caregivers should contact their assigned foster care licensing worker for guidance. In instances where a behavior routinely occurs or is ongoing, an incident report must be submitted for each occurrence.
- B. Examples of a serious incident include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. The death of a child.
  - 2. The ingestion of a poison or drug overdose by a child.



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3. A traumatic event involving a child, including, without limitation, near drowning, suffocation, or shock.
  4. Threats of harm to others or self.
  5. Any actions involving self-harm or attempted suicide.
  6. A discovery that the child is or has been involved in sex trafficking.
  7. Physical aggression or physical altercation between any household members.
  8. Injuries to a foster child.
  9. Any incident that requires medical or psychiatric intervention and/or hospitalization.
  10. Sexualized behavior.
  11. Criminal activity, law enforcement involvement, or arrest of a foster child or caregiver.
  12. Damage to property.
  13. Medication errors or refusal.
  14. Physical restraint of a foster child.
  15. Runaway or missing foster child (see below, Incident Reporting Requirements for Runaway or Missing Children).
  16. An occurrence in the foster home of an illness or disease that presents a significant risk to the health of the child.
  17. Any condition or situation that causes the foster home to close and requires a child to be moved out of the foster home.
  18. Any physical damage to or failure of a necessary electrical, heating, cooling, smoke- or fire-detection system, or any physical damage to or failure of any plumbing on the premises of the foster home, which may affect the safety of a child or the habitability of the foster home and which cannot be repaired within 24 hours after the damage or failure is discovered.
  19. A fire on the premises of the foster home which requires a response by a fire-fighting agency.
  20. A motor vehicle accident if a foster child was in the vehicle.
  21. Any change in the foster home which affects compliance with any licensing requirement, including, without limitation, any member of the household or staff who suffers a major illness or injury or who is arrested.
  22. Any other significant event that may affect the safety, health or well-being of a child or any other person in the foster home.
- C. Incident Report Content:
1. Confidentiality of foster children must be maintained in incident reports. Therefore, only one foster child may be named in an incident report.
    - a. Each incident Report will reference one child by name and the subsequent child (if applicable) by age and gender.
    - b. If two youths are involved in an incident and incident reports are needed for both, each youth requires their own incident report.
  2. Incident reports should include:
    - a. Demographic information and an identified incident category as outlined in section 1 of the incident reporting form.
    - b. A detailed description of the event or incident, including the location, nature of the incident, events that led up to the incident, efforts made to de-escalate the situation, interventions used.
    - c. Names of all parties involved in and witness to the incident.

- d. A detailed explanation of what immediate action was taken, including persons contacted, such as the child's assigned caseworker, caregiver(s), foster care licensing worker, child's family, or others; the date and time the person was contacted; and if an injury occurred what was the immediate response.
- e. A detailed description of the follow-up action, including the outcome or resolution of the incident, consequences given to the child, and the steps taken to prevent reoccurrence.
- f. If applicable, photos of any injuries, property damage, etc. should be provided with the incident report.

D. Incident Reporting Requirements:

- 1. Family Foster Caregivers must provide email notification on all incidents as outlined in section C.2., Email Notification. Additional immediate verbal notification is required when a child's immediate safety is affected, see examples of a serious incident above, numbers 1-5.
- 2. Enhanced and Specialized Foster Care providers are required to complete all steps of the Incident Reporting process outlined below.

E. Incident Reporting Process:

- 1. Verbal Notification: If any situation threatens the immediate safety of any child in a foster home, Caregivers, Enhanced and Specialized Foster Care Agencies will notify WCHSA as soon as reasonably practicable but not more than 30 minutes after the incident. Examples of situations in which verbal notification is required are examples 1-5 of serious incident examples above. Verbal notification should occur via phone call to the child's assigned caseworker or supervisor during business hours, and to the on call clinical supervisor or intake at 1-833-900-7233 (SAFE) after business hours.
- 2. Email Notification: The caregiver must email a brief summary of the incident as soon as reasonably practicable after the event but not later than 24 hours. This email satisfies the requirement for written notice within one business day per NAC 424.476(2). The email should be sent to [HSA-IncidentReports@washoecounty.gov](mailto:HSA-IncidentReports@washoecounty.gov) and the child's assigned caseworker and will include:
  - a. A brief description of the incident, including:
    - i. Who was involved (youth, staff/caregiver), including if law enforcement was called.
    - ii. A description of any immediate action taken to ensure the safety of all household members.
    - iii. Whether or not injuries occurred for any involved party.
    - iv. Whether or not a restraint occurred.
- 3. Incident Reporting Form: A completed incident reporting form HSACS 630 must be emailed to [HSA-IncidentReports@washoecounty.gov](mailto:HSA-IncidentReports@washoecounty.gov) and the child's assigned caseworker. The form must be submitted as soon as reasonably practicable but not later than 2 business days following the occurrence, even if the Agency was previously notified via phone or email.
- 4. The foster home or specialized foster care agency should have a designated person responsible for notifying the Agency and submitting incident reports within the required timeframes.

## Incident Reporting Requirements for Runaway or Missing Children:

- A. When the child runs away:
1. Licensed foster homes and caregivers are required by NAC 424.476(5) to verbally notify WCHSA and law enforcement **immediately** upon determination that a child is missing, runaway or suspected to have been abducted or been a victim of sexual exploitation. The foster parent should obtain the law enforcement report number and provide it to the caseworker.
  2. A child is determined to be missing when the location of the child is unknown and there has been no contact with the child for three (3) hours despite multiple attempts to make contact (in person, electronic, social media, etc.). Note: The three (3) hours timeframe does not apply when a child is five (5) years of age or under, when a child that has a cognitive delay, when a child that is vulnerable due to medical needs, or when it is clear that a child has runaway or abduction is suspected. In these cases, verbal notification to WCHSA and law enforcement must occur immediately.
  3. If a child is at school and/or another activity and is determined to have gone missing and/or runaway the timeframe for reporting begins immediately upon discovery of youth's whereabouts being unknown.
  4. When reporting a missing child to WCHSA, the caregiver should speak directly to an Agency staff member. Leaving a voicemail message is not sufficient.
  5. Upon determining a youth has runaway the care provider will immediately begin active efforts to locate youth, including:
    - a. Continue to seek information from the parents, relatives, adult mentors, child attorney, friends, and others, who may have information about the child's whereabouts while the child is missing or on runaway status.
    - b. Ask the other children in the home if they have heard from or know where the child may be.
    - c. Check past locations the child has been known to frequent or where they were previously found.
    - d. Check all of the child's contacts (i.e., local family members, friends, teachers, significant others, etc.) to ask if they have heard from the child and if they know of his/her whereabouts.
    - e. If at any time new information is obtained on the child's location, all law enforcement agencies and other agencies notified that the child was missing must be contacted immediately.
    - f. Check social media of the youth, friends, and family.
    - g. Continue to call or text youth directly on their cell phone.
  6. Licensed foster homes and caregivers are required by NAC 424.476(5) to provide written notice as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 24 hours. The caregiver will complete and submit the Runaway or Missing Child Reporting Form for Caregivers HSACS 322B to WCHSA as instructed on the form.
    - a. Complete Section 1 of the form and submit when the child runs within 24 hours.
    - b. Complete Section 2 of the form and submit it along with the previously completed Section 1 when the child returns.
  7. Upon notification of a missing/runaway child, WCHSA will follow the WCHSA Runaway Protocol.

8. If determined a child has runaway, the caregiver can request a bed hold after 24 hours by emailing [HSA-BedHolds@washoecounty.gov](mailto:HSA-BedHolds@washoecounty.gov). Refer to the Bed Hold Policy for additional information.
- B. When the child returns from a runaway:
1. Licensed foster homes and caregivers must verbally notify WCHSA and law enforcement *as soon as reasonably practicable but no later than three hours* upon determination that a child has returned from a runaway incident.
  2. Within 24 hours, the caregiver must complete and submit the Runaway or Missing Child Reporting Form for Caregivers HSACS 322B in its entirety to WCHSA as instructed on the form.
  3. Interactions with the child should include:
    - a. Welcome the child back. Ensure the child knows and is aware of the concerns expressed regarding his/her safety and wellbeing by friends, family and others who have significant relations with the child.
    - b. Assess and meet the child's immediate physical and health needs.
  4. Any immediate needs for the child should be communicated to the caseworker.