



County of Orange
C a l i f o r n i a

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

November 8, 2011

Honorable Thomas J. Borris
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Status Update on FY 10-11 Grand Jury Report Entitled Child Abuse Emergency Response Effectiveness

Dear Judge Borris:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find attached the County of Orange status update to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. The respondent is the County of Orange Social Services Agency. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Zink at (714) 834-7487 in the County Executive Office, who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

Attachment

cc: 2011-12 Orange County Grand Jury

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“Child Abuse Emergency Response Effectiveness”

Orange County Grand Jury Report 2010 – 2011

Social Services Agency Response to Findings and Recommendations

Updated Response to Recommendation: R.2

- R.2 Review and analyze procedures concerning the transportation of children in social workers personal automobiles in terms of liability and possible alternatives.

Original SSA Response: *The recommendation requires further analysis.*

CFS will examine the feasibility of implementing this recommendation over the next three months. Analysis will include: potential and perceived impact on staff, discussions with Risk Management regarding potential liability, and an exploration of possible alternatives.

Updated SSA Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

Social Services Agency's (SSA) Children and Family Services (CFS) division has reviewed procedures and examined alternatives to Emergency Response (ER) social workers using their own personal vehicles to transport children.

Existing SSA and CFS policies and procedures allow ER social workers to use their personal vehicles to transport minors when they are being brought into protective custody. It is CFS practice for the social worker to request that the police officer transport the minor(s). However, if the officer refuses to transport the minor, the social worker has the authority to do so under Welfare and Institutions Code 360 (a) and (b). Should a social worker have any concerns about transporting a child, per current policy, they are to discuss the issue with their supervisor and arrange for assistance, if needed.

ER social workers usually choose to use their own vehicles due to the inconvenience and logistical problems of checking a car out, and they do not typically know in advance that they will be bringing a child into protective custody. However, per current policy, if a social worker is uncomfortable using their own vehicle, they have the option of using a County car. There are five County cars available at the Eckhoff office and four County cars available at Orangewood Children and Family Center. Social workers also have the ability to check out cars at the County garage. These cars are available to all CFS social workers. In order to ensure social workers are aware of this option, the topic is frequently discussed with social workers at unit level meetings and CFS' Program Development Unit periodically emails dispatches of the current policy to staff. The cost of providing County cars to all ER staff in the current economic climate would be prohibitive, and is not required based on the current policy that already provides social workers with access to County cars.

According to Risk Management, the social worker's insurance carrier is the primary coverage for liability with the County's insurance as secondary, providing full liability coverage for social workers choosing to use their own vehicles to transport minors.