

Critical Event Review and Assessment Guide Instructions

Basis:

Pursuant to Section 210.135, RSMo, “in a case involving the death or serious injury of a child after a report has been made under sections 210.109 to 210.165, the division shall conduct a preliminary evaluation in order to determine whether a review of the ability of the circuit manager or case worker or workers to perform their duties competently is necessary. The preliminary evaluation shall examine:

1. The hotline worker or workers who took any reports related to such case;
2. The division case worker or workers assigned to the investigation of such report;
3. The circuit manager assigned to the county where the report was investigated.”

Purpose:

The purpose of the Critical Event Review and Assessment Guide (CD-213) is to assess employee performance and ability to perform their duties following a fatality, near fatality, or serious bodily injury of a child when they and/or their caregiver is involved with the Children’s Division.

When to Use:

The Critical Event Review and Assessment Guide (CD-213) is optional. It may be used if, after the completion of the critical event preliminary evaluation, the Regional Director or their designee determines further review of the staff and/or the incident is warranted.

Timeframes for Completion:

If after the preliminary evaluation the Regional Director or their designee determines a further review and assessment is necessary, it shall be completed no later than three (3) days after the critical event, pursuant to Section 210.135, RSMo. However, a review and assessment can be completed at any time if information is revealed that would warrant one.

Instructions for Completion:

This form is only meant as a guide for use by Regional Directors, or their designee, and CANHU management to seek to understand any system barriers or influences that may have impacted case decisions. There may be instances where it is appropriate to consult with Human Resources.

The form includes capturing the name of the worker being evaluated, their assigned program area, circuit/county assigned, their direct supervisor, circuit manager, field support manager and regional director as appropriate.

1. Employee years of service: How many years has the employee been with the Children’s Division? What other experience do they have working in this or a related social service field?
2. Caseload Size of Impacted Worker: What was the worker’s caseload at the time of the critical event? Consider more than the number of cases assigned to the worker, but also the weight and time each of these cases carry. Was the worker regularly working outside normal business hours to make contacts and visits with families?

3. Summary of Case Review of Critical Event: Review the past three months of case history of the impacted family and consult with the supervisor (see supervisor review below). The following are questions to consider:
 - Are there patterns or trends noted in the casework?
 - If applicable, when did the staff member begin working with this family/child?
 - If applicable, what was the safety plan prior to the critical event?
 - What is the current situation? If applicable, how is current safety assured of victim and non-victim children?
 - Are their concerns of egregious, uncommon casework behavior? Examples of egregious outlying action could be something like:
 - Case closure occurring without speaking to any alleged child victims in spite of their accessibility and the parents' consent;
 - Case closure occurring without diligent efforts to locate or supervisory consult.
4. Case Review of Current Caseload: Review a small sample of the worker's current caseload. Are there patterns or trends noted in the casework? What is the overall observation of practice?
5. Previous Personnel Actions: Has the employee had prior disciplinary action or Employee Incident Reports (EIRs)? If so, is this incident similar in nature? Was a plan developed to address previous personnel actions or is the employee on a current plan of action that is relevant to the current incident?
6. Extenuating Circumstances: Consider if there has been a change in supervision, staff turnover, vacancies, caseload size, and any personal or professional influences.
7. Worker Interview: Consult with the caseworker(s) of any open cases or cases assigned associated with the family in the prior 3 months. Consider the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - What were your thoughts when you received the referral/case? About the family? Perpetrators? Children?
 - What were the pressures you faced, professionally and personally? How did that impact casework? How do you know when you are stressed?
 - What were the pressures you faced, professionally and personally, that contributed to fatigue? How did that impact casework? How much sleep had you received in the days preceding this incident?
 - Was there anything you learned from this case that you previously had not known? Were there items you felt unequipped to assess or address? Were any records (i.e., medical records) difficult to interpret?
 - What barriers existed in communicating with outside partners during this case? How often did you communicate? What barriers existed in internal communication while working this case?
 - What support was received from supervisors during this case? What is supervision generally like on this team? What was the supervisor's leadership style?
 - What case direction was received from supervisors during this case? Was case direction aligned with best practice?
 - How pushed were you by deadlines in this case? How many other cases did you have? What was happening in other cases during the time of this incident?

Additional questions to ask may address observed changes in behavior, work habits, or appearance. It is recommended that at least two people are interviewed (e.g., case manager and circuit manager, supervisor and field support manager) so there are multiple sources and no one is solely responsible for assessing his/her own coping abilities. Discuss the availability of Strive Employee Life and Family (SELF), formerly known as EAP. Offer to make a Secondary Trauma Consultation referral.

8. **Supervisor Interview:** What is the supervisor aware of regarding this family and events? Was the case appropriately assigned? Does the supervisor have concerns? (i.e. the caseworker may have been impaired, may be falsifying records, or engaged in criminal/illegal behavior) Have any prior concerns related to the impacted worker or family impacted been appropriately addressed by management, next steps/direction provided by management to aid the worker in critically thinking through the case?

Number of staff they are supervising, caseload size of workers within unit, turnover and vacancies are considered.

Refer to the questions in #7 to help guide the conversation with the supervisor as well.

9. **Circuit Manager Interview:** How are the staff member(s) and the Circuit as a whole coping in response to the recent event? What is the Circuit Manager aware of regarding this family and events? Was the case appropriately assigned? Were there any concerns regarding support and mentoring the impacted worker(s) was receiving prior to the event and after? Has the Circuit Manager directed and assisted with implementing appropriate training opportunities, dissemination of changes in policy and practice, program planning to meet the needs of their circuit? Have any prior concerns related to the impacted worker or family impacted been appropriately addressed by management, next steps/direction provided by management to aid the worker in critically thinking through the case?

Refer to the questions in #7 to help guide the conversation with the Circuit Manager as well.

10. **After reviewing the record and talking with others who are familiar with the employee's work, what is your assessment of the staff member and their case work?:** What impressions do you have of the critical event after your review and assessment? What improvement opportunities did you identify?

Recommendations Following Evaluation: After the evaluation is completed the Regional Director and/or their designee may feel the need for further action. Identify what, if any, next steps are needed.

Documenting and Retention:

All reviews with workers, supervisors and circuit managers should be documented. This documentation is to be retained by the Regional Director and uploaded to the CD-CriticalEventEvaluations folder on the CD-Common drive. Regional Directors and their designees will need to complete an ASAP Request for access to this folder to help inform improvement opportunities and the Critical Event process. If the incident that led to the review and assessment resulted in a fatality, the form should be completed fully by the Regional Director or their designee and sent to critical event program staff within three (3) business days of completion of the evaluation locally.