

Policy or Procedure Name / Subject:	Falsification of Child Welfare Records
Policy or procedure Number:	2408-521
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Online location:	DHS Hub
Policy Writer:	Erin Stremming, Keith Crosson, Nicole Abeyta, Katie Smith, and Erin Mays
Executive Director Approval Date:	<i>Anne-Marie Braga</i> 08-27-24

Background

Accurate documentation of caseworker contacts with clients is crucial for effective functioning of a child welfare system, and helps to ensure that Denver Human Services caseworkers are meeting the high standards of quality engagement and contact with children, youth, and families. Denver Human Services (DHS) has zero tolerance for falsification of child welfare records. Accurate record-keeping in the comprehensive child welfare information system, known as Trails, is essential to meeting our duty to provide trustworthy and accountable child welfare assessments and services. In addition to regular quality assurance measures, DHS will investigate every allegation of falsification. When an instance of falsification is confirmed, DHS shall follow the following protocol in ensuring notification to the impacted individuals and accountability for the responsible employee.

Definitions:

“Confirmed Incident of Falsification” of child welfare records is an incident where, after an investigation by the county department, the county department establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that a person knowingly or intentionally made a false entry or falsely altered information in Trails. (7.601.81, A)

“Director” means the Denver Human Services Child Welfare Division Director

“Statewide database” means Trails

Policy or procedure

1) Quality Assurance:

- a. Routine monitoring shall be conducted as follows:
 - i. The Performance, Improvement and Accountability Division (PIAD) Quality Improvement (QI) team will conduct monthly internal reviews of contacts for child welfare records and verify information in a record when necessary.
 - ii. Child welfare supervisors will engage in field supervision with caseworkers including, but not limited to, attending court hearings, group supervision, and Family Team Meetings (FTM), as needed. These actions will be documented according to rule and in supervision notes.
 - iii. Child welfare leadership will have ongoing conversations with staff at all levels about the importance of accurate documentation and the consequences of falsifying documentation. These conversations will be documented in supervision notes.
- b. Child welfare supervisors shall notify the PIAD QI team any time they suspect that a record does not accurately reflect the recorded activity or contact. This includes records that appear to have been cut-and-pasted from other records, as well as inaccuracies or inconsistencies in the record itself that would lead a supervisor to question the veracity of the record.
- c. Any DHS staff who becomes aware of a suspected falsification shall report the matter to their supervisor or administrator immediately.

2) Investigation/Verification Process:

- a. Upon discovery of a suspect record, the PIAD QI team shall initiate a preliminary investigation within one (1) working day by verifying the suspected record through contacting individuals involved and consulting any other available records, such as calendars, mileage reports, phone records or visitor logs.
- b. If the suspected record cannot be verified after conferring with individuals involved and available records, the following actions shall be taken to preserve evidence and the integrity of a comprehensive investigation:
 - i. the employee shall immediately be placed on leave pending

- further investigation,
- ii. CDHS shall be contacted to suspend the employee's access to state systems within one (1) working day from the date the employee is placed on leave,
 - iii. Technology Services shall be contacted to suspend the employee's access to the City's network and systems, including the employee's email account and building access.
- c. The PIAD QI team shall review and verify a sample of contacts from the employee's caseload for the prior 3 months. If additional incidents of falsification are discovered, the review will be extended to cover an additional 3-month period (to encompass the 6 months prior to the employee's suspension).
 - d. An investigation shall be completed even when the employee subject of the investigation resigns, is terminated, or is no longer employed by DHS at the time the suspected falsification of records becomes.

3) Confirmed Finding of Falsification:

- a. For each record that the county cannot verify, the Director shall decide as to whether the record amounts to a confirmed incident of falsification.
- b. The Director shall decide whether the assessment, or case requires reassignment, except that the Director shall reassign any assessment, or case where the falsification may have impacted a child's safety.
- c. The DHS Executive Director will be notified of all confirmed incidents of falsification within the same working day.
- d. The Director shall partner with the Office of Human Resources in proceeding to discipline the employee. Any employee found to have falsified public records shall not be allowed to continue in a position responsible for entering or managing public records. The Director shall pursue termination for any employee believed to have endangered child safety.

4) Notification

- a. The Director, or their designee, shall notify the CDHS Division of Child Welfare of a confirmed incident of falsification of child welfare records within three (3) working days of the confirmation.
- b. The Director, or their designee, shall refer confirmed incidents of falsification of child welfare records to the appropriate law enforcement agency or the district attorney within ten (10) working days of the confirmation. The referral to the appropriate law

enforcement agency or the district attorney shall be documented by the county department in the employee's personnel record.

- c. The Director, or their designee, shall correct the Trails record when an incident of falsification of child welfare records is confirmed and shall make notice to all individuals with the state approved notification letter which shall be mailed by first class U.S. mail to the last known address of each individual specified in section (4)d within ten (10) working days.
- d. If the falsified record relates to an assessment, referral, or case for which there is no corresponding dependency and neglect or juvenile delinquency case, the county department shall notify the parents and guardians of the child/youth who was alleged or found to be the victim of abuse or neglect or a youth in conflict, the person found or alleged to be responsible for the abuse or neglect, and the child/youth where it is determined to be age appropriate, that a child welfare record has been corrected if that individual would be entitled to access the corrected record pursuant to C.R.S. § 19-1-307 and any other applicable state or federal privacy requirements. Notice to the individuals shall be made through any preferred contact method for the individuals documented in Trails.
- e. If the falsified child welfare record relates to an open Dependency and Neglect or Juvenile Delinquency case, the county department shall notify the court, parties to the case, and guardian ad litem that a record in Trails has been corrected within ten (10) working days of making the correction. The Director shall notify the parents and guardians of the child/youth who was alleged or found to be the victim of abuse or neglect or a youth in conflict, the person found or alleged to be responsible for the abuse or neglect, and the child/youth where it is determined to be age appropriate, that a child welfare record has been corrected if that individual would be entitled to access the corrected record pursuant to C.R.S. § 19-1-307 and any other applicable state or federal privacy requirements. Notice to the individuals shall be made through any preferred contact method documented in Trails.
- f. To the extent permitted by C.R.S. § 19-1-307 and any other applicable state or federal privacy requirements, the notice shall include a description of the corrections made to a child welfare record.
- g. Any notice of a corrected child welfare record issued pursuant to this rule shall be documented in Trails.

Related Policies or procedures

CODE OF COLORADO REGULATIONS 12 CCR 2509-7. et seq.



7.601.81 – Protocol and Notification Requirements for Falsification of Child
Welfare Records

18-8-114(1)(a) C.R.S.

Refer Questions To:

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Denver Human Services
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Attachments

List any documents that are needed to be attached to the policy or
procedure or state not applicable

Key Words

List any key words that will help a person find this policy or procedure

Example:

Policy

Procedure