

SHERIFF'S QUALITY MANAGEMENT TOOL

REVIEW ELEMENTS AND GUIDELINES

INITIAL RESPONSE

1. Background Checks

Review Element – Required background checks were completed timely and the information was appropriately used to assess risk to each child.

Requirements – The investigator is required to determine the immediate and long-term risk to each child by conducting timely abuse history checks, local, state and federal criminal records checks, including Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, on all household members. Supporting documentation of completed checks must be reflected in the investigative file.

Instructions and Considerations – Assessing the timeliness in which background checks were requested and reviewed is important to show the information was considered throughout the course of the investigation. The date the background check was requested and obtained should be clearly documented in the investigative file. The required check must be completed timely (from the date of determining the demographics on the subjects - within 24 hours for prior abuse reports and within 72 hours for criminal histories).

Rating –

- Document '9' if the background checks were obtained timely and there was documentation that the information was utilized for decision-making.
- Document '7' if the background checks were not fully completed or obtained timely, and did not impact the safety decisions or the outcome of the investigation.
- Document '5' or '0' if background checks were not fully completed or obtained timely (or at all) on all household members, taking into consideration the impact on the safety decision and the outcome of the investigation.

Reference - F.S.S. 39.301 (10)(b) 3; F.A.C 65C-29.003 (j); 65C-29.009. Safety Outcome 1, Item 4.

2. Victim Contact

Review Element – Child victim(s) were seen either immediately or within 24 hours of report receipt or, if not, diligent attempts were made to locate the victim(s).

Requirements – The investigator is required to make unannounced, on-site face-to-face contact with the child victim(s) within 24 hours of report receipt. If the first attempt to locate the child victim(s) was unsuccessful, the investigative file reflects documentation that continued diligent attempts were made until the child victim(s) was seen.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer must assess compliance with the requirement to see the child victim(s) within 24 hours, or if not, that diligent attempts to locate the child victim(s) were documented in the investigative file.

Rating –

- Document '9' if all child victim(s) were seen within 24 hours, or if not, diligent attempts were made to locate the child victim(s).
- Document '7' if all child victim(s) were not seen within 24 hours and regular diligent attempts were made to locate all of the child victim(s).
- Document '5' if all child victim(s) were not seen within 24 hours, however, some diligent attempts were made to locate the child victim(s).
- Document '0' if all child victim(s) were not seen within 24 hours and no diligent attempts were made to locate the child victim(s).
- Document 'NA' if child victim(s) were not able to be located, i.e. runaway, out of state, in another county, or deceased.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.201 (10)(b) & (11)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.013; CF SR Safety Outcome 1, Item 4.

3. Contacts with Other Children

Review Element - All other children named in the report and/or residing in the home were seen timely.

Requirements - All other children named in the report and/or residing in the home must be seen timely.

Instructions and Considerations - The investigator must see all children in the household, not just those listed as victims in the report, in order to assess risk and ensure safety. The nature of the allegations, ages of the children, proximity to the alleged perpetrator, and risk to the other children must be considered to determine whether the response was timely.

Rating –

- Document '9' if all other children were seen within 3 days, or if the child was seen later and there is valid documentation why the child was unavailable; taking into consideration the nature of the allegations, ages of the children, proximity to the alleged perpetrator, and risk to the other children.
- Document '7' or '5' if children were seen later, taking into consideration the nature of the allegations, ages of the children, proximity to the alleged perpetrator, and risk to the other children; and if there was any valid documentation in the investigative file as to the delay.
- Document '0' if not all children were seen prior to closure of the investigation, and there is no valid documentation in the investigative file.
- Document 'N/A' if the child was a runaway, out of state, in another county, or deceased, or if there were no other children in the report.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.201 (10)(b) & (11)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (3)(b)–(d); CFSSR Safety Outcome 1, Item 4.

4. Interviews with Victims and Children

Review Element – An interview was conducted and all maltreatments were addressed with the child victim(s) and children named in the report and/or residing in the home.

Requirements – The investigator will conduct a face-to-face interview that addresses all maltreatments with the child victim(s) and other children.

Instructions and Considerations - The investigator must document that face-to-face interviews were conducted and that the allegations were addressed. The age of the child and their verbal ability should be taken into consideration when assessing this review element, however, timeliness should not be considered.

Rating –

- Document '9' if all child victim(s) and other children were interviewed, regarding each maltreatment.
- Document '7' or '5' if all maltreatments were not addressed or all child victim(s) and other children were not interviewed regarding the maltreatments, taking into consideration the impact on the safety decision and the outcome of the investigation.
- Document '0' if there was no documentation that all child victim(s) and other children were interviewed and/or no attempts were documented.
- Document 'NA' if the child victim(s) or other children were non-verbal, or the child victims or other children refused to answer any questions.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (10)(b) and (11)(b); F.A.C 65C-29.003; CFSR Safety Outcome 1, Item 4

5. Observations of all Victims and Children

Review Element – Specific and relevant observations of the child victims and other children were documented in the investigative file.

Requirements - The investigator must determine whether there is any indication that any child in the family or household has been abused, abandoned or neglected and the nature and extent of present or prior injuries.

Instructions and Considerations - The investigator is required to document specific and relevant observations of the children. Photographic evidence may substitute for written documentation.

Rating –

- Document '9' if specific and relevant observations are documented, or a photograph was included in the investigative file.
- Document '7' if specific and relevant observations are documented, or a photograph was included for some, but not all, of the children.
- Document '5' if observations lacked specificity or relevancy.
- Document '0' if there is no documentation of specific or relevant observations for all of the children.

Reference - F.S.S. 39.301 (10)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (3); CFSR Safety Outcome 1, Item 4.

6. Interviews with Adult Subjects and Household Members

Review Element – Interviews that addressed all maltreatments were conducted with all adult subjects and household members.

Requirements - The investigator will conduct a face-to-face interview that addresses all maltreatments with all adult subjects and household members.

Instructions and Considerations - The investigator must document interviews were conducted and that the allegations were addressed. The interviews should be face-to-face, or if not, there is documentation in the investigative file why a face-to-face interview did not occur. Timeliness is not a factor when assessing this review element.

Rating –

- Document '9' if all adult subjects and household members were interviewed, regarding each maltreatment.
- Document '7' or '5' if all maltreatments were not addressed or all adult subjects and household members were not interviewed regarding the maltreatments, taking into consideration the impact on the safety decision and the outcome of the investigation.
- Document '0' if there was no documentation that all adult subjects and household members were interviewed and/or no attempts were documented.

Document 'NA' if interviews were attempted, and the adult subjects and/or household members refused to answer questions, an attorney or law enforcement prohibited contact with the alleged perpetrator, or diligent attempts were made and the adult subjects and/or household members could not be contacted.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (10)(b) & (11)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003

7. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

Review Element – The investigative file contains documentation of a discussion with the parent(s) or legal custodian as to whether or not they are of American Indian/Alaskan Native descent.

Requirements – The investigator is required to document an inquiry in every investigation whether the child is of American Indian or Alaskan Native descent. No assumptions should be made about ancestry based on the child's or family member's physical appearance or surname.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer should find evidence of a discussion with the parent(s) or legal custodian in the investigative file (i.e. chronological note, signed document, etc.)

Rating –

- Document '9' if there is documentation that the question was asked.
- Document '0' if no documentation was found.

Reference - F.A.C. 65C-28.013 (1)–(7); 65C-30.001 (67)–(69) & (146); 65C-30.002 (1)(a) & (1)(e) 4.

8. Relevant Collateral Contacts

Review Element - Relevant collateral contacts were made during the course of the investigation.

Requirements - Relevant collateral contacts were made to assist the investigator in corroborating or refuting the allegations contained in the report.

Instructions and Considerations – Relevant collateral contacts are individuals who have contact with the child, or have pertinent knowledge about the child, the child’s condition, and/or the alleged maltreatment. A specific number of contacts is not required, but the relevancy of completed collateral contacts is critical.

Rating –

- Document ‘9’ if relevant collateral contacts were made.
- Document ‘7’ or ‘5’ if some, but not all, of the contacts made were relevant.
- Document ‘0’ if no relevant collateral contacts were made.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (11)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (9) & 65C-30.001 (28).

9. Contact with the Reporter

Review Element – The investigator contacted the reporter, or attempts were documented in the investigative file.

Requirements – The investigator contacted the reporter to validate and clarify the allegations as received from the Hotline.

Instructions and Considerations - There is documentation in the investigative file that the reporter was contacted, or attempts were made.

Rating –

- Document '9' if there is documentation in the investigative file that the reporter was contacted, or attempts were made.
- Document '0' if there is no documentation in the investigative file that the reporter was contacted, or if no attempts were made.
- Document 'NA' if the reporter was anonymous, or indicated to the Hotline that notification was not requested (i.e. law enforcement reports, court orders).

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (11)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (n).

10. Communication Between the Investigator and Case Manager

Review Element - When there is an active protective services case at the time of report receipt, timely and appropriate communication and collaboration between the investigator and case manager occurred.

Requirements – There will be documentation in the investigative file of timely communication between the investigator and case manager.

Instructions and Considerations – This review element is only applicable when there is an active protective services case at the time of report receipt.

Rating –

- Document '9' if there is documentation in the investigative file that communication occurred between the investigator and case manager, or attempts were made to contact the case manager.
- Document '0' if there is no documentation in the investigative file that communication occurred between the investigator and case manager, or no attempts were made to contact the case manager.
- Document 'NA' if there was no active protective services case at the time of report receipt.

Reference – F.A.C. 65C-30.015

11. Child Protection Team

Review Element – The child victim(s) was referred to the Child Protection Team and the referral was made timely when required.

Requirements – If an investigation met the criteria for a mandatory referral to the Child Protection Team, a referral was made timely. Criteria: 1) Injuries to the head, bruises to the neck or head, burns or fractures in a child of any age; 2) Bruises anywhere on a child five years of age or under, 3) Any report alleging sexual abuse of a child, 4) Any sexually transmitted disease in a prepubescent child, 5) Reported malnutrition of a child and failure of a child to thrive, 6) Reported medical neglect of a child, 7) Any family in which one or more children have been pronounced dead on arrival at a hospital or other health care facility, or have been injured and later died, as a result of suspected abuse, abandonment, or neglect, when a sibling or other child remains in the home; 8) Symptoms of serious emotional problems in a child when emotional or other abuse, abandonment, or neglect is suspected.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer must determine if the allegations or observations of the child victim(s) met the criteria for a mandatory referral to CPT. If required, there is documentation in the investigative file that a referral was made timely. Timeliness of the referral should be considered if an injury is present.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigation met the CPT referral criteria, and a referral was made timely.
- Document '0' if the investigation met the CPT referral criteria, and a referral was not made timely, or at all.
- Document 'NA' if the investigation did not meet the CPT referral criteria.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.303 (2); CFSR Safety Outcome 1, Item 4

12. Children's Legal Services Staffing

Review Element – A Children's Legal Services staffing was held when the investigator documented the risk to the child victim(s) as high.

Requirements – A Children's Legal Services staffing is required when an investigator has documented the risk to the child victim(s) as high.

Instructions and Considerations - A Children's Legal Services staffing may be documented through a request for CLS review, staffing form, petition, court orders, or in the investigative file (i.e. chronological notes, meeting, etc.)

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigative file contains evidence the investigation was staffed with Children's Legal Services when required, regardless of the outcome of the staffing.
- Document '0' if a CLS staffing was required, but did not occur.
- Document 'NA' if a CLS staffing was not required.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (9)

13. Safety Assessment Submission

Review Element - The initial safety assessment was submitted by the investigator within 48 hours from report receipt, or from contact with the child victim.

Requirements - Based on information obtained from available sources, the investigator must submit the safety assessment within 48 hours of report receipt, or contact with the child victim.

Instructions and Considerations - This review element specifically addresses the timeframe for submitting the initial safety assessment for review.

Rating -

- Document '9' if the safety assessment was submitted within 48 hours of report receipt, or from contact with the child victim.
- Document '0' if the safety assessment was submitted more than 48 hours from report receipt or contact with the child victim.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (10)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (5)-(6).

14. Supervisor Review of Safety Assessment

Review Element - The initial safety assessment was reviewed by the Supervisor within 72 hours of submission by the investigator.

Requirements – The supervisor must review the safety assessment within 72 hours of the submission by the investigator.

Instructions and Considerations - This review element specifically addresses the timeframe for the supervisor to review the initial safety assessment.

Rating -

- Document '9' if the safety assessment was reviewed by the supervisor within 72 hours of submission by the investigator.
- Document '0' if the safety assessment was reviewed by the supervisor within 72 hours of submission by the investigator.

Reference – F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (6).

15. Second Party Review of Safety Assessment

Review Element – The investigator and supervisor identified appropriate factors requiring the completion of a second party review and such review was completed within 72 hours.

Requirements – A second party review is required if: 1) The caregiver is responsible for the death or serious injury of another child and/or any two of the following conditions exist: a) Child victim is five or younger or non-verbal; and/or b) There are prior reports involving any of the subjects of the current report, regardless of the finding; or c) There is a current report of actual serious or severe injury, neglect, or threatened harm.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer must determine if a second party review was completed when required at submission of the initial safety assessment, and if the review was completed timely.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the report was appropriately identified as requiring a second party review, and the second party review was completed timely.
- Document '0' if the report was not correctly identified as requiring a second party, or the second party review was not completed, or it was not completed timely.
- Document 'NA' if the report did not meet the criteria for a second party review.

Reference – F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (6); 65C-30.001 (124)

16. Completion of Supervisory Direction

Review Element – The investigator completed all tasks identified by the supervisor and/or second party reviewer, or there was documentation that the supervisor waived specific tasks.

Requirements – There is documentation in the investigative file that the investigator completed all tasks identified by the supervisor and/or second party reviewer, or the supervisor waived specific tasks.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer must determine if all supervisory directives were completed, or that specific tasks were waived.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigator completed all supervisory directives, or there was documentation that specific tasks were waived.
- Document '7' or '5' if the investigator completed some, but not all, of the supervisory directives.
- Document '0' if the investigator did not complete any of the supervisory directives.

Reference – F.A.C 65C-29.003 (6)

17. Maltreatments

Review Element – All maltreatments were documented in the investigative file and findings were supported by the evidence gathered.

Requirements - The following guidelines for assigning findings will be followed: Verified – a preponderance of the credible evidence indicates that the maltreatment (injury, harm or threatened harm) was the result of abuse/neglect; Not substantiated - Some Indication findings – there is credible evidence, which does not meet the preponderance standard, to support the maltreatment was due to abuse/neglect. No indicator findings – there is no credible evidence to support the alleged maltreatment. Credible means offering reasonable grounds for being believed. Preponderance means superiority in terms of weight or quality/importance. Evidence in the investigative file should be sufficient to corroborate or refute the allegations.

Instructions and Considerations - Consider whether information obtained from the investigative activities supports the findings for each maltreatment. The reviewer will note if maltreatments were identified during the course of the investigation, but not added to the report.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigative file contained sufficient support for all maltreatment findings initially identified, as well as subsequently identified during the course of the investigation.
- Document '7' or '5' if the investigative file provided sufficient support for some, but not all of the maltreatment findings, or if additional maltreatment(s) were identified during the investigation, but were not added.
- Document '0' if there was no documentation in the investigative file of sufficient support for all of the maltreatment findings.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301 (10)(b); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (8)

18. Investigative Summary

Review Element - The investigative summary was completed with sufficient thoroughness to accurately reflect the overall investigation.

Requirements – The investigative summary should provide clear documentation to accurately reflect the overall investigation.

Instructions and Considerations - The investigative file and/or investigative summary should contain documentation to support the safety decision(s) that were made, the overall safety assessment, the implications of criminal histories, prior reports, finding, and recommended disposition. Timeliness is not a factor for this review element.

Ratings –

- Document '9' if the investigative summary was completed with sufficient thoroughness to support the safety decision(s) that were made, the overall safety assessment, the implications of criminal histories, prior reports, finding, and recommended disposition.
- Document '7' or '5' if the investigative summary was lacking in thoroughness to support the safety decision(s) that were made, the overall safety assessment, the implications of criminal histories, prior reports, finding, and recommended disposition.
- Document '0' if the investigative summary did not contain sufficient documentation to accurately reflect the overall investigation.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.301; F.A.C. 65C-29.003

19. Safety Decision

Review Element - The investigator must ensure an appropriate safety decision is made through the use of appropriate safety actions.

Requirements – The investigator will determine the protective, treatment and ameliorative services necessary to safeguard and ensure the child's safety and well-being and development.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer must consider if the child was living in a safe environment, a safety plan was needed and developed, the plan was adequate to ensure the child's continued safety, service needs were identified and appropriate referrals were made.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigative file contained documentation that the appropriate safety decision was made.
- Document '7' if the investigative file contained documentation that there were deficiencies or omissions and this did not seriously impact the safety decision.
- Document '5' if the investigative file contained documentation that there were significant deficiencies or omissions and this may have negatively impacted the safety decision.
- Document '0' if the investigative file did not contain sufficient documentation to indicate the appropriate safety decision was made and there is currently concern for the child's safety.

Reference - F.S.S. 39.301 (10); F.A.C. 65C-29.003 (6)

EMERGENCY PLACEMENT

20. Reasonable Efforts

Review Element – The investigator made reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal or continued removal of the child from the home.

Requirements – A child may not be removed from the home if, with the provision of appropriate and available services or intervention, the child could safely remain in the home.

Instructions and Considerations – The reviewer should find documentation of reasonable efforts in the investigative file (i.e. chronological notes, legal documentation, etc.)

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigative file contained documentation that reasonable efforts were made.
- Document '0' if the investigative file does not contain documentation that reasonable efforts were made.
- Document 'NA' if the child was not removed from the home.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.402; CFSR Safety Outcome 2, Item 3

21. Psychotherapeutic Medication

Review Element – A parent must authorize the continued use of psychotherapeutic medication if the child is removed from the home, and was prescribed psychotherapeutic medications prior to the removal.

Requirement - The investigator will inquire as to whether or not a child is currently prescribed psychotherapeutic medication(s) at the time of removal. The investigator will obtain parental authorization for the continued provision of the medication(s), and notify the court of the child's medication(s). In the absence of parental authorization, the investigator will seek court authorization to continue the provision of the prescribed medication(s).

Instructions and Considerations – The investigative file will contain documentation that the investigator inquired if the child was prescribed psychotherapeutic medication; and if so, that parental authorization was obtained and/or the court was notified, in order to continue the provision of the medication.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigator inquired as to the child's medications and obtained parental authorization and/or notified the court, in order to continue the provision of the medication.
- Document '7' or '5' if the investigator met some, but not all, of the requirements of this review element.
- Document '0' if the investigator had knowledge that the child was prescribed psychotherapeutic medication(s) and did not obtain parental authorization and/or notify the court, in order to continue the provision of the medication.
- Document 'NA' if the child was not removed from the home; or the child was not prescribed psychotherapeutic medication(s) at the time of removal.

Reference - F.S.S. 39.407

22. Placement Priority

Review Element – A parent, responsible adult relative/non-relative, or the adoptive parent of a child's sibling, shall be given priority for placement if it is in the best interest of the child.

Requirements – Once the decision has been made to shelter the child, the investigator is required to explore alternatives to licensed placement, and give placement priority to a parent, responsible adult relative/non-relative, or the adoptive parent of a child's sibling.

Instructions and Considerations – The investigative file should contain documentation that the investigator explored alternatives to licensed placement. The investigator should also explore placement alternatives with older child victim(s).

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigative file contained documentation that the investigator explored alternatives to licensed placement.
- Document '7' or '5' if the investigative file contained documentation that some, but not all, known relative/non-relative caregivers were explored during the removal process.
- Document '0' if the investigative file did not contain documentation that the investigator explored alternatives to licensed placement.
- Document 'NA' if the child was not removed from the home; or there was an open active protective services case where the investigator was not responsible for placement; or a parent or responsible adult was not available or able to provide any placement alternatives.

Reference - F.S.S. 39.401; CFSR Permanency Outcome 2, Item 15.

23. Home Study

Review Element – A home study is required prior to the placement of a child in a non-licensed placement.

Requirements – The investigator will complete background checks and an onsite assessment prior to the child's placement that evaluates the caregiver's capacity to provide a safe, stable, and supportive home environment, and to determine if the physical environment is safe and can meet the child's needs.

Instructions and Considerations – The investigative file must contain a home study, including all required background checks, a physical inspection of the home, and an evaluation of the prospective caregivers, for each non-licensed placement.

Rating –

- Document '9' if the investigative file contained documentation that home stud(ies) were completed for all non-licensed placement(s).
- Document '0' if the investigative file did not contain documentation that home stud(ies) were completed for all non-licensed placement(s).
- Document 'NA' if the child was not removed from the home; or the child was placed in a licensed placement; or there was an open active protective services case where the investigator was not responsible for placement.

Reference – F.S.S. 39.0138; 39.521 (2); F.A.C. 65C-28.012; 65C-30.001 (62)

SCORING RUBRIC

Score	Description	Definition
0	Requirement Not Achieved -	The specific elements of the requirement have not been met. A score of 0 will be assigned.
5	Requirement Partially Achieved +	The specific elements of the requirement have been met with some significant discrepancies or omissions which may have impacted negatively on the ultimate outcome of the cases or safety decisions made in the case. A score of 5 will be assigned.
7	Requirement Substantially Achieved +	The specific elements of the requirement have been met with some deficiencies or omissions. The deficiencies or omissions did not impact seriously on the ultimate outcome of the case or the safety decisions made in the case. A score of 7 will be assigned.
9	Requirement Achieved +	The specific elements of the requirement have been met. A score of 9 will be assigned.