ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL

Effective Date: January 9, 1997 **Number: B-0209**
Revised: November 28, 2006

Red Flag Placement Cases

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PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for red flagging cases where the parent/guardian represents a serious threat of harm to the child and/or their placement.

Approved

This policy was originally approved by Michael Riley, Ph.D., Director of Children and Family Services (CFS), on January 9, 1997 and revised on November 28, 2006, with approval. *Signature on file*.

Background

To help safeguard children in out-of-home care, CFS developed a plan to identify cases in which parents/guardians of children are exhibiting hostile and unpredictable behaviors. When these behaviors are directed toward the child, child's caregiver, or service provider and place the child's safety at risk, the behavior is noted in the case record and information passed on to the caregiver, group home or service provider. In extreme cases, CFS may request Court to order a confidential placement. This court order prevents the parent/guardian from knowing where their child is placed.

Though parents have a legal right to know where their child is placed, Welfare and Institutions Code Section 362.1 (a)(1)(B) provides an exception when the child's safety is at risk. A court-ordered confidential placement may be needed to safeguard the child (and caregiver) from threatened harm.

Legal Mandates

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 362.1(a)(1)(B)

POLICY

Red Flag Placements

Red flag placements are to be considered when the parent/guardian's behavior is problematic and presents a safety risk to the child and/or child's placement. Red flagging will identify cases for staff who work with the child's placement or handle contacts with parents, caregivers or service providers.

Cases will be labeled as red flag placement cases when:

A. Court has ordered confidential placement.

B. There is reason to suspect that the parent may flee with the child.

C. The parent represents a serious threat of causing harm to the child, caregiver, group home or service provider.

Red Flag Identification

Cases with red flag placements will be identified by a:

A. Completed, signed *"Red Flag" Placement, Form F063-25-236*, filed on top of the Placement Acco, child's service file, which provides history and reason for the red flag status.

B. Case alert in the child's CWS/CMS case, ID page, Case Alert field, noting the reason for the red flag placement. Also, the Confidentiality In Effect box will be checked and an Effective Date entered **if** Court has ordered confidential placement.

C. *"Red flag" stamp* on the outside cover of child's service and legal files which indicates the type of red flag issue (stamp available with program secretary).

D. Copy of the completed *"Red Flag" Placement* form placed on the bottom, right side of the legal file for Court staff to access reasons for the red flag placement.

Communication

Notification of the red flag placement status will be given to all the following that apply:

A. Caregiver.

B. Group home provider.

C. Prior social workers who were closely involved in the case.

D. All service providers to whom the child and/or parents have been referred.

When a child has a court-ordered confidential placement, all efforts will be made by staff and resource persons NOT to disclose the placement address to the parent. When communicating the red flag status to the above parties, they are to be cautioned against releasing the confidential information to parents/guardians.

Court Reports

For cases with court-ordered confidential placements, all address information for the child's location will be omitted in court reports and replaced with "confidential placement."

Restraining Orders

Court-issued restraining orders may be considered if the parent/guardian poses a serious risk to child or placement. Staff will consult with County Counsel when considering this legal action.

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Duty to Warn

When SSA staff and SSA-contracted staff receive a threat of serious harm or violence to an identifiable third person or group, an assessment must be made as to whether the Tarasoff "duty to warn" the foreseeable victim has been triggered.

Factors to consider when determining if a "duty to warn" applies to a particular circumstance include:

A. An existence of a "special relationship" with the person making the threats or with the identifiable victim of the threats.

B. A foreseeable risk of harm to an identifiable victim.

Staff should follow the guidelines set forth in the SSA P&P Duty to Warn (D 1).

Rescinding of Red Flag Status

The red flag placement status may be rescinded when risk factors no longer exist. When this is appropriate action, the case files will indicate the change of status by:

A. Documentation on the lower portion of *"Red Flag" Placement* form, indicating the staff member who rescinded the red flag, date rescinded, and reason. The form will be moved to the bottom of the Placement Acco, child's service file.

B. The *"red flag" stamp* on the outside cover of service and legal files being crossed through.

C. Documentation in the child's CWS/CMS case, Case Management Section (green), ID page, Case Alert field, indicating the staff member who rescinded the red flag, date rescinded, and reason. If Court vacates a confidential placement order, the Confidentiality In Effect box will also be unchecked and the Effective Date will be updated.

In addition, all related parties will be notified of the red flag removal.

Red Flag Placement vs. Red Flag Alert

Red Flag placements are limited to out-of-home placement cases when the parent/guardian behavior is problematic and threatening the safety of placement.

Red Flag alerts are used in any case with known risk factors presenting a potential danger to anyone working with the family.

Some cases will need both types of red flagging. If so, staff will follow guidelines in each respective policy. For safety issues related to red flag alerts, see CFS Policy and Procedure Staff Safety and Responses to Threats (B-0213).

REFERENCES

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Hyperlinks Staff accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on them.

- CFS Policy and Procedure Staff Safety and Responses to Threats (B-0213)
- SSA Policy and Procedure Special Incident Report (F 13)
- SSA Policy and Procedure Duty to Warn (D 1)

REQUIRED FORMS

Hard Copy Forms Required forms listed below must be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms) and obtained in the CFS forms rooms. ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
"Red Flag" Placement	F063-25-236
Placement Acco	F063-25-106

PROCEDURE

Required Actions	The following actions must be completed when Court has ordered a child's placement be confidential.		
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**	
Assigned SSW	**1.**	a.	Complete *"Red Flag" Placement* form, indicating the court-ordered confidential placement and providing history and reason for the red flag.
		b.	Obtain approval signature from assigned supervisor.
	2.	a.	File original of *"Red Flag" Placement* form on top of Placement Acco, child's service file.
		b.	Distribute copies of form to all related parties, per above policy.
		c.	Caution all parties against disclosing child's address information to parents/guardians.
Assigned SSW or SSSS	**3.**	Using information from the *"Red Flag" Placement* form, enter child's red flag placement information into CWS/CMS:	
		a.	Case Alert Field: Enter date and reason for Red Flag placement.
		b.	Check the Confidentiality in Effect box and enter the Effective Date.

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See CWS Instructional Tip Sheet.

4. a. Stamp outside cover of child's service file and blue legal file with the *"red flag" stamp* (obtained from program secretary).

b. Indicate the red flag is for confidential placement.

c. Photocopy *"Red Flag" Placement* form; file on the bottom, right side of child's blue legal file.

5. Omit all address information for child in future court reports, noting a court-ordered confidential placement and date of order.

6. Assess need of further protection issues, including restraining orders and duty to warn others, per policy above.

Required Action	The following actions must be completed when there is reason to believe the parent/guardian may flee with the child or presents a serious threat to child, caregiver, group home or service provider.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Assigned SSW/SSSS	**1.**	Assess safety risk factors.
	2.	Consider the following protective measures: a. Red flag the placement to identify the specific safety issues. b. Request a court-ordered confidential placement. c. Request a restraining order, per above policy. d. Determine whether there is a duty to warn an identified victim of a threat, per above policy. Complete Steps 3 – 6 if identifying the child's placement as a red flag placement. See CWS Instructional Tip Sheet.
	3.	a. Complete *"Red Flag" Placement* form, indicating the history and reason for the red flag. Add information regarding confidential placement, if Court has ordered. b. Sign and date.
	4.	a. File original of *"Red Flag" Placement* form on top of Placement Acco, child's service file. b. Distribute copies of form to all related parties, per above policy.

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5. Using information from the *"Red Flag" Placement* form, enter child's red flag placement information in CWS/CMS:

a. Case Alert Field: Enter date and reason for Red Flag placement.

b. Check the Confidentiality in Effect box and enter the Effective Date **if** Court ordered.

See CWS Instructional Tip Sheet.

6. a. Stamp outside cover of child's service file and blue legal file with the *"red flag" stamp* (available with program secretary.)

b. Photocopy *"Red Flag" Placement* form; file on the bottom, right side of child's blue legal file.

Required Action	The following actions must be completed when rescinding a red flag placement.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Assigned SSW/SSSS	**1.**	a. Document on lower portion of *"Red Flag" Placement* form name of staff member rescinding, reason, and date of rescind action. b. Sign. c. Move form to bottom of Placement Acco, child's service file. d. Notify all related parties.
	2.	Using rescission information from the *"Red Flag" Placement* form, enter change of status in CWS/CMS: a. Case Alert Field: Enter date of status change, reason, and name of staff member rescinding red flag placement. b. Uncheck the Confidentiality in Effect box and enter the Rescission Effective Date **if** Court has vacated an order of confidential placement. See CWS Instructional Tip Sheet.
	3.	a. Cross through the *"red flag" stamp* on front covers of service and legal files. b. File copy of *"Red Flag" Placement* form documenting rescission on bottom, right side of child's legal file.

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