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Revised: July 16, 2014

Structured Decision Making

Purpose

To provide guidelines for the completion of Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools and Orange County (OC) Safety Plans.

Approved

This policy was approved by Gary Taylor, Director of CFS, on July 16, 2014. *Signature on file*.

Most Recent Revision

This revision of the Policy and Procedure (P&P) clarifies the requirement for obtaining telephonic supervisory approval of the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453).*

Background

The California SDM Model brings structure and consistency to each decision point in the child welfare system through the use of evidence-based, objective, and comprehensive assessment tools. SDM tools aid in the assessment of families and provide structured response guidelines at specific decision points in the life of a case ranging from a report to the Child Abuse Registry (CAR) through the last service contact with Children and Family Services (CFS).

Orange County began using the California SDM Model in 1999 to:

- Provide structure for client interviews
- Ensure all major safety factors are assessed
- Promote consistency in decision making among staff
- Guide decisions to remove a child from the home based on an analysis of safety threats and available interventions
- Facilitate the goal of maintaining children safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate

- Target resources on families most at risk
- Facilitate the tracking of outcomes
- Identify training needs

Definitions

None.

POLICY

SDM Application

The California SDM Model utilizes a web-based application for tool completion. SDM receives data from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and includes the following tools:

- Hotline Tools (Screening Tool and Response Priority)
- Path Decision Tool (OC does not use)
- Safety Assessment
- Substitute Care Provider (SCP) Safety Assessment
- Risk Assessment
- Family Strengths and Needs Assessment
- Risk Reassessment (In-home cases)
- Reunification Reassessment

In addition, SDM includes:

- A user guide of how to navigate through the screens
- A policy manual on the proper usage of each tool
- Definitions utilized for each tool

SDM Tools

SDM tools will be completed in SDM at all key decision making points during the life of a referral/case. SDM tools require supervisory approval.

Note: Two county specific SDM-related tools, *Orange County (OC) Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* and *Orange County (OC) SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* are located in hardcopy form in the CFS Forms Room.

A. **Hotline Tools:**
- Screening Tool—Determines whether or not a referral meets the statutory threshold for an in-person response
- Response Priority Tools—Determine how quickly to respond for each type of abuse (neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse)

B. **Safety Assessment:**
Provides information concerning the danger of **immediate** harm/maltreatment to a child. Guides the decision of whether a child may remain in the home with no intervention, remain in the home with safety interventions, or must be protectively placed. If a safety threat is identified, and a child can remain in the home with safety interventions, see "OC Safety Plan" Policy section for further direction. **Note:** This tool is not used for allegations against out-of-home caregivers (see C. below, SCP Safety Assessment).

C. **SCP Safety Assessment:**
Provides information concerning the danger of **immediate** harm/maltreatment to a foster child by a SCP. Guides the decision to remove a foster child from the SCP's home based on whether threats to safety are present and whether interventions are available and appropriate to maintain placement. If a safety threat is identified, and a foster child can remain in the SCP's home with safety interventions, see "OC SCP Safety Plan" Policy section for further direction.

D. **Risk Assessment:**
Identifies families with low, moderate, high, or very high probabilities of **future** abuse or neglect. Provides an objective appraisal of the likelihood a family will abuse or neglect a child in the home in the next 18 to 24 months. Allows for resources targeted to higher risk families with the greater potential to reduce subsequent maltreatment.

E. **Family Strengths and Needs Assessment:**
Evaluates the presenting strengths and critical family needs in order to plan effective goals, objectives, and interventions in a case plan.

F. **Risk Reassessment (In home cases):**
Evaluates a family's progress toward case plan goals and guides whether to keep a case open or close a case.

G. **Reunification Reassessment:**
Structures critical case management decisions for children in placement who have a goal of reunification by:

- Monitoring critical case factors that affect goal achievement
- Structuring the case review process
- Expediting permanency for children in substitute care

The Reunification Reassessment guides decision making to return a child home, maintain out-of-home placement, and/or terminate reunification services and implement a permanency alternative.

For specific information on the purpose of each tool, when to use each tool, and the programs responsible for completion, see Attachment 5—SDM Tools.

Program specific tool completion guides are summarized in the following attachments:

- Attachment 1—SDM Completion Guidelines—Emergency Response
- Attachment 2—SDM Completion Guidelines—Family Maintenance Collaborative Services (FMCS)/Differential Response (DR)
- Attachment 3—SDM Completion Guidelines—Court Services and Specialized Family Services (SFS) Investigations
- Attachment 4—SDM Completion Guidelines—Continuing Family Services (ICS, PSP, SFS, FMCS)

Refer to CFS P&P Child Abuse Registry (CAR) (M-0109) for guidelines for assessing child abuse and neglect allegations and determining disposition, response time, and assignment of child abuse reports.

Overrides

The Hotline Tools, Risk Assessment, Risk Reassessment, and Reunification Reassessment allow overrides of the decision, risk level, or support level.

There are two types of overrides:

A. **Policy Overrides:**
When specific conditions pre-determined by CFS exist, a change in the tools finding is mandatory.

B. **<u>Discretionary Overrides</u>:**
Utilized when a Senior Social Worker (SSW) obtains information not captured in the tool or unique circumstances exist that suggest a change in the tool's finding is appropriate.

CFS staff will read each override option carefully as overrides differ for each tool and may allow for:

- An increase or decrease in the response time of a referral
- An increase or decrease in the risk level assigned to a family
- A change in the permanency plan for a child

OC Safety Plan

Safety plans allow for clear documentation of reasonable efforts to maintain a child safely in the home. CFS staff **must** complete an *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* when each of the following conditions apply:

- A safety threat is identified in a SDM Safety Assessment
- A safety intervention is specified in a SDM Safety Assessment
- A child will be left in the home

OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453) will be:

- Completed before the child is left in the home and prior to referral/case closure
- Designed to address specific, immediate safety threat(s) identified
- Completed in the family's declared primary language, if available
- Developed in collaboration with the family (e.g., parents, children, adults fulfilling a parental role, and extended family members) as available and appropriate

Contents of *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* will:

- Be written in simple, easily understood terms
- Be reasonable, achievable, time specific, and service specific
- Identify a follow-up mechanism to ensure completion of clearly identified activities and safety threats no longer exist

In addition, the following guidelines apply:

A. CFS staff will follow up with the family according to time frames agreed upon in the plan to ensure identified safety threats are being mitigated and the plan is being complied with.

B. CFS staff will seek supervisor consultation regarding the appropriateness of an OC Safety Plan while in the home. If supervisor consultation is unsuccessful while in the home, supervisor consultation and approval must be obtained within one business day of the development of the OC Safety Plan.

   Supervisors will review safety plans for accurate and thorough completion and provide signature upon approval. As applicable, supervisors will monitor to ensure follow-up contact occurs to verify successful completion of safety threat reduction.

C. If parent, legal guardian, or age-appropriate child refuses to sign an *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)*, or to implement a previously agreed upon plan, CFS staff will evaluate whether or not the refusal to sign jeopardizes the child's safety. The need for and use of other protective interventions may be considered as outlined in CFS P&P Abuse Investigations—Protective Interventions (A-0414).

   If it appears a parent or legal guardian will be protective despite refusal to sign an *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)*, a child may be left in the home and the referral or case may be closed as appropriate.

   CFS staff will document a parent's or legal guardian's reason for refusal to sign an *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* under the "Safety Plan" heading within CWS/CMS Investigation Narrative, in CWS/CMS Contact Narratives, and appropriate Court Reports.

   Note: If parents or legal guardians refuse voluntary services, after previously agreeing to accept services as part of an initial safety plan, the assigned SSW will reassess the child's safety in the home and complete a new *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* if necessary.

D. If domestic violence is a threat in the home or there is a current restraining order against one of the parents or legal guardians, CFS staff will meet separately with each parent or legal guardian to develop and sign an *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)*.

E. CFS staff will summarize the parameters and outcome of safety plans developed with a family under the "Safety Plan" heading within CWS/CMS Investigation Narratives, in CWS/CMS Contact Narratives, and appropriate Court Reports.

F. A child will not be left in a home, when an active safety threat exists and no safety intervention has been implemented that removes the imminent risk to the child.

OC SCP Safety Plan

Safety plans completed with out-of-home care providers allow for clear documentation of reasonable efforts to maintain a foster child safely in a SCP home. CFS staff **must** complete an *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* when each of the following conditions apply:

- A safety threat is identified in a SDM SCP Safety Assessment
- A safety intervention is specified in a SDM SCP Safety Assessment
- A foster child will be left in the SCP's home

SCP's include:

- Relatives
- Non-relative extended family members (NREFMs)
- Licensed foster parents
  - Certified foster family agency (FFA) providers
  - Small family homes
  - Adoptive parent if the adoption has not yet been finalized
  - Legal guardians where dependency remains open

OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549) will be:

- Completed before the foster child is left in the home and prior to closure of the referral
- Designed to address specific, immediate safety threat(s) identified

- Completed in the SCP's declared language, if available
- Developed in collaboration with the SCP's family (e.g., care provider, children, and extended family members) as available and appropriate

Contents of *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* will:

- Be written in simple, easily understood terms
- Be reasonable, achievable, time specific, and service specific
- Identify a follow-up mechanism to ensure completion of clearly identified activities and safety threats or concerns no longer exist

In addition, the following guidelines apply:

A. The investigating SSW will follow up with the SCP according to time frames agreed upon in the plan to ensure identified safety threats are being mitigated and the plan is being complied with.

B. CFS staff will seek supervisor consultation regarding the appropriateness of an OC SCP Safety Plan while in the home. If supervisor consultation is unsuccessful while in the home, supervisor consultation and approval must be obtained within one business day of the development of the OC SCP Safety Plan.

   Investigating SSW's supervisors will review safety plans for accurate and thorough completion and provide signature upon approval. As applicable, supervisors will monitor to ensure follow-up contact occurs to verify successful completion of safety threat reduction.

C. If a SCP or foster child refuses to sign an *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* or to implement a previously agreed upon plan, the investigating SSW will:

   - Assess the reason for refusal or lack of implementation
   - Seek supervisor consultation
   - Consider other protective interventions pursuant to the following CFS P&Ps:
     - Abuse Investigations—Foster Care (A-0101)
     - Abuse Investigations—Open Case (A-0402)
     - Abuse Investigations—Protective Interventions (A-0414)

D. Investigating SSWs will summarize the parameters and outcome of SCP safety plans developed with out-of-home care providers under the "Safety Plan" heading within the CWS/CMS Investigation Narrative and in Contact Narratives.

E. A foster child will not be left in a placement home when an active safety threat exists and no safety intervention has been implemented that removes the imminent risk to the foster child.

Supervisor Oversight and Approval

Senior Social Services Supervisors (SSSSs) will monitor the consistent and timely completion of all appropriate SDM tools, *OC Safety Plans (F063-25-453)*, and *OC SCP Safety Plans (F063-25-549)*. SDM tool assistance in referral and case decision making will be discussed in case conferences and case reviews.

SSSSs will approve or modify SDM tools within 30 calendar days of the date the tool is submitted for approval, with the following exceptions:

- CAR SSSSs will approve or modify the SDM Hotline Tool when the hard copy is received. For additional details, refer to CFS P&P Child Abuse Registry (CAR) (M-0109).

- For cases, SSSSs will approve SDM tools prior to, or on the same day, as electronic case plan approval within CWS/CMS.

SSSSs and SSWs may use the Safe Measures Application to monitor compliance of SDM tool completion. The Safe Measures application includes an instruction manual.

Documentation

A. **Case File:**
Any printed SDM tools are filed on *SDM Acco (F063-25-1122).*

B. **CWS/CMS:**
SDM data will be incorporated under the "Safety and Risk Assessments" heading of CWS/CMS Investigation Narratives and in CWS/CMS Contact Narratives. Factual elements from each tool (i.e., the identified safety threat, risk factor, strength, or final risk level) will be included.

C. **Court Reports:**
SDM data will be incorporated into court reports without identifying actual tools. Factual elements from each tool (i.e., the identified safety threat, risk factor, strength, or final risk level) will be included in appropriate sections of the court report.

REFERENCES

Attachments and CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards

Hyperlinks are provided below to access attachments to this P&P and any CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards that are referenced.

- Attachment 1—SDM Completion Guidelines—Emergency Response
- Attachment 2—SDM Completion Guidelines—Family Maintenance Collaborative Services (FMCS)/Differential Response (DR)
- Attachment 3—SDM Completion Guidelines—Court Services and Specialized Family Services (SFS) Investigations
- Attachment 4—SDM Completion Guidelines—Continuing Family Services ICS, PSP, SFS, FMCS
- Attachment 5—SDM Tools

Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on the link provided.

- CFS P&P Child Abuse Registry (CAR) (M-0109)
- CFS P&P Abuse Investigations—Protective Interventions (A-0414)
- CFS P&P Abuse Investigations—Foster Care (A-0101)
- CFS P&P Abuse Investigations—Open Case (A-0402)
- Safe Measures

Other Sources

Other printed references include the following:

None.

FORMS

Online Forms

Forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

Form Name	Form Number
California Hotline Tools	Via SDM
Step I Screening	Via SDM
Step II Response Priority	Via SDM
California Safety Assessment	Via SDM
California *SCP* Safety Assessment	Via SDM
California Family Risk Assessment	Via SDM
California Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (For Caregivers and Children)	Via SDM
California Family Risk Reassessment for In-Home Cases	Via SDM
California Reunification Reassessment	Via SDM

Hard Copy Forms

Forms that may be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms) are listed below. ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
SDM Acco	F063-25-1122
Orange County Safety Plan (English)	F063-25-453
Orange County Safety Plan (Spanish)	F063-25-453Sp
Orange County Safety Plan (Vietnamese)	F063-25-453VN
Orange County Substitute Care Provider (SCP) Safety Plan (English)	F063-25-549
Orange County Substitute Care Provider (SCP) Safety Plan (Spanish)	F063-25-549Sp
Orange County Substitute Care Provider (SCP) Safety Plan (Vietnamese)	F063-25-549VN

CWS/CMS Forms

Forms that may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS are listed below. ***For reference purposes only,*** links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
None.	

Brochures

Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this policy may include:

Brochure Name	Brochure Number
None.	

PROCEDURE

Actions—OC Safety Plan

The following actions will be completed when one or more safety threats are identified in a *SDM Safety Assessment* and a child will be left in the home.

Staff Responsible	Step	Required Action
Investigating Senior Social Worker (SSW)	**1.**	Complete relevant language *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* with the family, as follows: **Note:** If a restraining order is in place, or there is domestic violence in the home, meet separately with each parent or legal guardian to develop and sign *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)*. a. Record family and referral/case identifying information. Indicate prior safety plans and date range, as applicable. List name, gender, and date of birth of each child included in plan. b. List and describe all safety threats identified by number as noted on the back of the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453).* c. Using language the family understands, clearly identify actions to remedy the safety threat/issue, and the person responsible (e.g., the child, parent, or assigned SSW) for completing each action. Refer to the back of the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* for an example. d. Determine and record a specific due date for each action identified. Refer to the back of the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* for an example.

e. Indicate the person responsible for monitoring the completion of each plan action (e.g., assigned SSW, SSSS, subsequent SSW assigned to case). Refer to the back of the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* for an example.

f. List any resource agency, including a phone number, and the safety threat the resource is intended to address.

2. When possible, telephonically consult with SSSS while at the home for appropriateness of the safety plan.

a. If SSSS contact is successful, adjust the plan as necessary and use the *Telephonic approval of Safety Plan* check box.

b. If SSSS contact is unsuccessful, inform family that SSSS approval must be obtained, and the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* is subject to change. Obtain SSSS approval by phone or in person within one business day.

Note: If *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* is revised after consultation with SSSS, meet with the family again, as soon as possible, to review the changes.

3. If parent or legal guardian agrees with plan as completed or revised; obtain parent or legal guardian signatures on document.

4. a. If parent, legal guardian, or child agrees with the plan but <u>refuses to sign</u> and a determination has been made that refusal to sign does not jeopardize child's safety, write "*refused to sign*" on signature line.

b. If parent or legal guardian <u>refuse to develop</u> a safety plan, or indicate unwillingness and/or inability to comply with a safety plan, assess if child can be left in the home and respond accordingly.

5. Sign, date, and enter phone number on the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453).*

6. Give original copy of the *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* to parent or legal guardian.

Encourage parent or legal guardian to contact investigating or assigned SSW immediately, if:

- Assistance is needed with any aspect of the plan
- There are concerns regarding the safety or well being of the children

7. Document under "Safety Plan" heading within CWS/CMS Investigation Narrative the following:

- Safety plan was developed in collaboration or agreement with parent or legal guardian
- Parameters of the safety plan
- Parental signature or refusal to sign
- A copy of Safety Plan provided to parent

8. Submit completed *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* with referral packet for SSSS review and approval.

Investigating Senior Social Services Supervisor (SSSS)

9. Review *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* and referral packet. Confirm designated actions were completed and identified safety threat(s) were mitigated.

a. If in agreement with the completed safety plan, sign the document.

b. If revisions to safety plan are required:

- Consult with SSW
- Have SSW make agreed upon changes
- Sign revised *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)*
    - Have SSW complete additional home visit to review changes with family

Unit Clerk

10. File NCR copy of *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* in ER Referral packet for closed files.

11. If a case will be opened, file copy/photocopy of *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)* in ER Referral packet for new program.

Assigned SSW on Open Case	**12.**	Follow-up on any safety plan actions outlined in *OC Safety Plan (F063-25-453)*, as applicable.

Actions—OC *SCP* Safety Plan	The following actions will be completed when one or more safety threats are identified in a *SDM SCP Safety Assessment* and a child will be left in the home.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Investigating SSW	**1.**	Complete relevant language *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* with SCP, as follows: a. Record SCP and referral/case identifying information. Indicate prior safety plans and date range, as applicable. List name, gender, and date of birth of each foster children included in plan. b. List and describe all safety threats identified by number as noted on the back of the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*. c. Using language the SCP understands, clearly indicate actions to remedy the threat/issue, and the person responsible (e.g., the child, caregiver, or assigned SSW) for completing each action. Refer to the back of the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*. d. Determine and record a specific due date for each action identified. Refer to the back of the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*. e. Indicate the person responsible monitoring the completion of each plan action (e.g., investigating SSW, assigned SSW, Licensing SSW). Refer to the back of the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*. f. List any resource agency, including a phone number, and the safety threat the resource is intended to address.
	2.	When possible, telephonically consult with SSSS while at the home for appropriateness of the safety plan.

a. If SSSS contact successful, adjust the plan as necessary and use the *Telephonic approval of Safety Plan* check box.

b. If SSSS contact unsuccessful, inform SCP that SSSS approval must be obtained and the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* is subject to change. Obtain SSSS approval by phone or in person within one business day.

Note: If the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* is revised after consultation with SSSS, meet with SCP again, as soon as possible, to review the changes.

3. If SCP agrees with plan as completed or revised; obtain SCP signature on document.

Note: Foster children for whom one or more safety threats are identified will not be left in an SCPs home if the SCP:

- Refuses to develop a safety plan
- Indicates an unwillingness or inability to comply with a safety plan

4. Sign, date, and enter phone number on the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*.

5. Give original copy of the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* to SCP.

Encourage SCP to contact assigned SSW immediately, if:

- Assistance is needed with any aspect of the plan
- There are concerns regarding the safety or well being of the foster child

6. Within two business days, contact with the assigned SSW for the child or children identified on the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* to advise of the safety actions noted on the plan.

If the assigned SSW is not available, contact the assigned SSWs SSSS or back-up SSSS.

7. Document under "Safety Plan" heading within CWS/CMS Investigation Narrative the following:

- Safety plan was developed in collaboration or agreement with SCP
- Parameters of the safety plan
- A copy of Safety Plan provided to SCP

8. Submit completed *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* with referral packet for SSSS review and approval.

Investigating SSSS

9. Review *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* and referral packet. Confirm designated actions were completed and identified safety threat(s) were mitigated.

a. If in agreement with completed *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*, sign the document.

b. If revisions to safety plan are required:

- Consult with SSW
- Have SSW make agreed upon changes
- Sign revised *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*
- Have SSW complete additional home visit to review changes with SCP

Unit Clerk

10. Send photocopy of *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* to:

- Assigned SSW for victim child
- Licensing SSW (if SCP is a licensed foster parent)
- Relative Assessment Unit (RAU) Supervisor (if SCP is a relative/NREFM)

11. File NCR copy of the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* in referral packet.

Licensing SSW

12. Follow-up, as necessary, on actions outlined in the *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*.

13. File copy of *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* in Licensing file.

Assigned SSW	**14.**	Follow-up, as necessary, on activities outlined in *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)*.
	15.	File copy of *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* on *SDM Acco (F063-25-1122)* in service file.
Relative Assessment Unit (RAU) Designee	**16.**	File copy of *OC SCP Safety Plan (F063-25-549)* in RAU file.

Actions—Child Abuse Registry (CAR)	The following actions will be completed to verify completion of SDM tools by Child Abuse Registry staff.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
CAR SSW	**1.**	Complete all required Hotline Tools for each incoming telephone call leading to a referral.
	2.	Print completed tools, attach to referral and submit referral packet to Data Entry Technician (DET).
CAR Data Entry Technician (DET)	**3.**	Verify Hotline Tools are attached to referral. If Hotline tools are missing, remind social worker to submit them.
	4.	Give processed referral packet, with Hotline Tools attached, to CAR supervisor.
CAR SSSS	**5.**	Verify all required Hotline Tools have been completed and the assessments and response priority decisions are appropriate based on information in CWS/CMS Referral Narrative.
	6.	If necessary, return referral packet to social worker for modification of Hotline Tools and review again after changes are made.
	7.	Document the date of the review and approval of the Hotline Tools on the *Orange County Social Services Agency Child Abuse Report face sheet (F063-04-49A).*

Actions—ER/DR	The following actions will be completed to verify completion of required SDM tools in Emergency Response (ER) and Differential Response (DR) units.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Emergency Response (ER) and Differential Response (DR) SSW	**1.**	Complete all required SDM tools when investigating a referral and document in SDM. See Attachment 1—SDM Completion Guidelines—Emergency Response or Attachment 2—SDM Completion Guidelines—Family Maintenance Collaborative Services (FMCS)/Differential Response (DR) for additional information.
ER and DR SSSS	**2.**	Open SDM to evaluate assessment tools prior to closing referral.
	3.	Verify all required assessment tools have been completed and recommendations support conclusions reached and actions taken by worker. **Note:** If referring for Voluntary Family Services (VFS), verify an initial case plan has been created and is appropriate for the family based on SDM Family Strengths and Needs Assessment.
	4.	Make comments and/or modifications as appropriate and click "Approve" when ready to accept each assessment tool.

Actions—Investigations	The following actions will be completed to verify completion of appropriate SDM tools during the Investigation phase of each case.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Court Services and Specialized Family Services (SFS) Investigation SSW	**1.**	Complete required SDM tools **prior** to development of a case plan, case plan updates, and at any time safety conditions change. **Note:** If creating a case plan, submit case plan "pending approval" in CWS/CMS.

		See Attachment 3—SDM Completion Guidelines—Court Services and Specialized Family Services (SFS) Investigations for additional information.
Court Services and SFS Investigation SSSS	**2.**	Open SDM to evaluate assessment tools prior to approving initial case plans, case plan updates, or closing cases.
	3.	Verify all appropriate assessment tools have been completed and SDM tools support recommended case plan services as well as court report recommendation.
	4.	Make comments and/or modifications as appropriate and click on "Approve" when ready to accept each assessment tool. **Note:** If relevant, approve the case plan in CWS/CMS.

Actions—Continuing Court Programs	The following actions will be completed to verify completion of SDM tools every six months or as submitted.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Information Processing Technicians (IPTs)/ Court Typists—All Continuing Court Programs	**1.**	Check "SDM" column for each case requiring completion of SDM assessment tools on monthly Court Report Reminder list sent to staff.
	2.	Access case in SDM and log dates the assessment tools were completed.
	3.	Enter whether SDM was submitted on time or late on monthly Court Report Timeliness report.
SSWs—All Continuing Court Programs	**4.**	Complete required tools every six months, or sooner if conditions change, and **prior** to creation of a case plan or case closure. Use information from SDM to guide the development of a case plan and recommendation in court report. See Attachment 4—SDM Completion Guidelines—Continuing Family Services ICS, PSP, SFS, FMCS for additional information.

	5.	Notify supervisor SDM tools are ready for approval and submit report to clerical per program protocol. **Note:** If creating a case plan, submit case plan "pending approval" in CWS/CMS by the clerical date.
SSSS— All Continuing Court Programs	**6.**	Open SDM to evaluate assessment tools prior to approving case plans and signing status reviews:
	7.	Verify all appropriate assessment tools have been completed and tools support case plan and court report recommendation.
	8.	Make comments and/or modifications as appropriate and click on "Approve" when ready to accept each assessment tool. **Note:** If relevant, approve the case plan in CWS/CMS.

Actions—Family Maintenance Collaborative Services	The following actions will be completed to verify completion of SDM tools in the Family Maintenance Collaborative Services program.	
Staff Responsible	**Step**	**Required Action**
Family Maintenance Collaborative Services (FMCS) IPTs/Unit Clerks	**1.**	Obtain next review date by looking at CWS/CMS Case Plan ID page of each new voluntary case.
	2.	Enter date on reminder list–Notification of Required Case Plan Updates and SDM Tool Completion and send the list monthly to appropriate assigned social workers and supervisors.
	3.	File any printed SDM tools on *SDM Acco (F063-25-112)*.
FMCS SSWs—Ongoing Cases	**4.**	Complete required SDM tools **prior** to creating case plan updates, closing cases, or when changes in safety conditions occur to help guide case plan development and case management decisions.

See Attachment 2—SDM Completion Guidelines—Family Maintenance Collaborative Services (FMCS)/Differential Response (DR) for additional information.

5. Submit completed tools to supervisor with case plan update or case file as appropriate.

Note: If creating a case plan update, submit case plan "pending approval" in CWS/CMS.

FMCS SSSS

6. Open SDM to evaluate assessment tools prior to approving case plan update or closing case.

7. Verify all required assessment tools have been completed and recommendations support decisions made by SSW to either continue or close the voluntary case.

8. Make comments and/or modifications as appropriate and click on "Approve" when ready to accept each assessment tool.

Note: If relevant, approve the case plan in CWS/CMS.

FMCS SSWs—10-Day Referral Investigation

9. Complete all required SDM tools when investigating a referral.

See Attachment 2—SDM Completion Guidelines—Family Maintenance Collaborative Services (FMCS)/Differential Response (DR) for additional information.

10. Ensure SDM tools are completed and submitted to supervisor along with the referral packet within 30 days of the first face-to-face contact with child.

FMCS Supervisors

11. Open SDM to evaluate assessment tools prior to closing referral.

12. Verify all required assessment tools have been completed and recommendations support conclusions reached and actions taken by assigned SSW.

13. Make comments and/or modifications as appropriate and click on “Approve” when ready to accept each assessment tool.

LEGAL MANDATES

Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) §10601.2 mandates counties to conduct self assessments, cases reviews, and develop system improvement plans, which resulted in the implementation of a statewide safety assessment approach for evaluating and managing child safety.

California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP), Division 31, Chapter 125 outlines the emergency response investigation requirements to include the determination of safety and risk to a child.

CDSS MMP, Division 31, Chapter 201 describes the assessment and case planning process to include the completion of an assessment and identification of service needs.

CDSS All County Letter (ACL) 09-31 provides guidance on the consistent and accurate use of standardized safety and risk assessment tools for each child receiving child welfare services in all California counties.