



LAKE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Subject:	<b>UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE / SENTINEL EVENT REPORTING</b>
Applicable Programs:	All Programs
Effective Date:	07/01/2005 ( <i>as II.F-1</i> )
Revisions:	06/09/17; 9/09/21
Approved by Todd Metcalf, Behavioral Health Services Director	

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## PURPOSE

This policy outlines the process for reporting sentinel events that threaten the health or safety of Lake Behavioral Health Services (LCBHS) clients, staff, or providers.

For staff work-related injuries and other workplace incidents that may require Worker's Compensation reporting or liability, contact the LCBHS Administrative Analyst.

For the steps necessary to protect potential victims please see Policy#223 Duty to Protect Potential Victims: "Tarasoff" Warnings and Others.

*References: California Evidence Code 1040, 1157, 1157.5, and 1157.7.*

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## POLICY

### ***Sentinel Events related to LCBHS***

A "sentinel event" is defined as any situation or event related to LCBHS that threatens the health or safety of LCBHS clients, staff, or providers. Such incidents include:

1. Death of a client for any cause (suicide, homicide, natural), even if the death did not occur at an LCBHS site;
2. Any LCBHS site-related client injury that requires medical treatment;
3. All cases of communicable disease discovered by LCBHS;
4. Incidents involving LCBHS clients and weapons, including events when staff are working in the field;
5. Elopement of a client placed on a WIC 5150, or placed in another acute locked facility;
6. Suspected or alleged client abuse by staff or provider;
7. Medication or treatment error;
8. Threats or verbal abuse by clients or staff;
9. Poisonings related to or impacting LCBHS;
10. Natural disasters impacting LCBHS;
11. Fires or explosions which occur in or on LCBHS property;

12. Any matter that may be of public interest to the news media, Advisory Boards, Grand Jury, licensing bodies, Board of Supervisors, Legislature, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), or others.

LCBHS requires that all sentinel events be immediately reported orally (in person or by phone) to the LCBHS Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer may designate an individual who is authorized to receive and address the report.

- The oral report is followed up in writing by completing (LCBHS Unusual Occurrence Form LCBHS0002).

As warranted, the Compliance Officer or their designee will contact the LCBHS Director for guidance and mitigation activities. In addition, the Compliance Officer or their designee may contact law enforcement and/or other authorities, depending on the nature and threat of the event.

Client confidentiality must be maintained to the extent allowed by law. Staff will share the minimum necessary to properly report the event.

### ***State Reporting Requirements***

LCBHS must also report the following specific events to DHCS:

1. Death of a client for any cause (suicide, homicide, natural), even if the death did not occur at an LCBHS site;
2. Any LCBHS site-related client injury that requires medical treatment;
3. All cases of communicable disease discovered by LCBHS;
4. Poisonings related to or impacting LCBHS;
5. Natural disasters impacting LCBHS; and
6. Fires or explosions which occur in or on LCBHS property.

The Compliance Officer or their designee must orally report these types of events to DHCS within one (1) working day of the event. The completed DHCS Form 5079- Unusual Incident/ Injury/ Death incident report is also faxed or emailed to DHCS within seven (7) calendar days of one of these events.

### ***Documentation***

LCBHS maintains a confidential copy of the Unusual Occurrence report (LCBHS0002 form) and supporting documenting for at least one (1) year after the event date.

A sentinel event directly related to an LCBHS client is also documented in the client's chart.

### ***Quality Management Activities***

The LCBHS Compliance Officer or their designee presents a report on unusual occurrences/sentinel event reporting to the Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) for

review, monitoring, and oversight to ensure the timely implementation of corrective action, if necessary.

### ***Other Required Reporting***

Filing DHCS Form 5079 as part of this policy does not exempt staff or providers from filing other legally-mandated reports, including police reports, child or elder abuse reporting, and reports that may be required by human resources/risk management.

Staff will contact the Compliance Officer or management if they have questions about other reporting requirements.

## **PROCEDURES**

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### ***A. Internal and State Reporting Requirements***

1. LCBHS staff who witness a sentinel event must immediately report the event to the Compliance Officer in person or by phone.
  - a. NOTE: Orally reporting the incident is not a billable activity.
2. As warranted, the Compliance Officer or their designee contacts the LCBHS Director.
  - a. Potential impacts, mitigation activities, and follow-up actions are discussed and documented.
3. If the case involved an incident that requires reporting to the state, the Compliance Officer or their designee reports the event to DHCS by phone within within one (1) working day of the event.
  - a. Call the DHCS Medi-Cal Oversight Division at (916) 322-2911.
    - i. NOTE: See the most current DHCS Form 5079 for up-to-date contact information.
  - b. Client confidentiality must be maintained to the extent allowed by law. Staff will share the minimum necessary to properly report the event.
  - c. NOTE: Orally reporting the incident is not a billable activity.
4. LCBHS staff who witness the event, in collaboration with the Compliance Officer or their designee, complete an Unusual Occurrence Form LCBHS0002. The Compliance Officer or their designee completes the DHCS Form 5079-Unusual Incident/ Injury/ Death incident report.
  - a. The Unusual Occurrence Form LCBHS0002 and/or DHCS Form 5079 report will include the following:

- Client's information (if directly related to a client);
  - A detailed description of the event;
  - LCBHS response; and
  - Planned follow-up activities/action items.
- b. Client confidentiality must be maintained to the extent allowed by law. Staff will share the minimum necessary to properly report the event.
- c. NOTE: Completing and submitting the LCBHS0002 Unusual Occurrence report and/or the DHCS Form 5079-Unusual Incident/ Injury/ Death incident report are not billable activities.
5. If the event directly involves a client, designated staff make a Progress Note in the client's chart, stating the details of the event, the effect on the client, and the action taken to mitigate the effect.
- a. A description of the event must be documented. Do not simply refer to the report, and do not place a copy of the report in client's chart as documentation.
  - b. If other clients are involved in the event, the other clients will be identified by Medical Record number in other clients' records (not by name or initials).
6. If the case involved an incident that requires reporting to the state, the Compliance Officer or their designee submits a completed DHCS Form 5079-Unusual Incident/ Injury/ Death incident report to DHCS within seven (7) calendar days of the event:
- a. Fax: (916) 445-5084, or
  - b. Email: [DHCSLCBcomp@DHCS.ca.gov](mailto:DHCSLCBcomp@DHCS.ca.gov)
    - i. NOTE: See the most current DHCS Form 5079 for up-to-date submission instructions.
  - c. LCBHS furnishes DHCS with any additional information related to the incident, as required.
7. The Compliance Officer or their designee maintains a confidential copy of completed IRs for at least one (1) year after the event date.

## ***B. Reporting to Law Enforcement***

1. If the sentinel event involves suicide, homicide, weapons, threats, violent offense, or other criminal activities, LCBHS contacts law enforcement.
- a. The Director, Compliance Officer, or other designated staff notify law enforcement immediately by phone.

- b. LCBHS works directly with law enforcement to mitigate harm and resolve the event.
- c. A copy (or summary) of the unusual occurrence report (LCBHS0002) is forwarded to the law enforcement within two (2) working days of the event.
  - i. Client confidentiality must be maintained to the extent allowed by law. Staff will share the minimum necessary to properly report the event.

NOTE: For the steps necessary to protect potential victims please see Policy#223 Duty to Protect Potential Victims: "Tarasoff" Warnings and Others.

### ***C. Communicable Disease Reporting***

1. In addition to the reporting process outlined in Section A, the Compliance Officer or their designee immediately reports all cases of reportable communicable diseases to the Public Health Officer.
  - a. Evidence of this notification is documented on the DHCS Form 5079- Unusual Incident/ Injury/ Death incident report with date, time, method of notification (e.g., by phone or fax), and name of staff person responsible. Evidence is maintained for a least one (1) year after the event date.