

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN UNIT

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CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN UNIT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Crimes Against Women and Children Unit is to ensure the welfare of the children, women and men of Monroe County.

II. DISCUSSION

This directive shall apply to all Sheriff's personnel. One of the goals of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office is to investigate into reported cases of possible child abuse or sexual battery; to aid in the location and return of run-away and missing juveniles from Monroe County and to build and maintain a good professional relationship with other agencies involved with the protection of children to ensure a thorough investigation of all allegations of abuse, abandonment or neglect. Crimes Against Women and Children Unit is headed by a Sergeant who reports to Special Investigations Division.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. The Unit will be notified on the following cases and will take the lead in the investigation:

1. Child Abuse
2. Sexual Performance by a Child
3. Contributing to the Delinquency or Dependency of a Child
4. Sexual Battery
5. Lewd, Lascivious or Indecent Assault or Act upon a Child
6. Exposure of Sexual Organs

B. The guidelines to assist with the criminal investigation are as follows:

1. Custodial Child Abuse (Physical, Neglect, Abandonment, Sexual) - CAWACU will take the investigative lead with the case and will work in conjunction with Department of Children & Families (DCF).
 - a. Obtain the original information (Monroe County Sheriff's Office report or Abuse registry report).
 - b. Obtain information about all parties involved (locals, FCIC/NCIC, deputies, DCF prior history). Share the locals information and FCIC with DCF.
 - c. Contact reporter for information about the case.
 - d. Determine an appropriate time to interview the child victim either at school, home, or another location best suited for the child. The interview time will also be suited for the child, determined by the safety needs of the child.
 - e. When possible, the interview will be tape-recorded, video taped or both.
 - f. The juvenile activity practice will be used to help qualify the child for court purposes.

- g.** A Child Protection Team medical exam will be scheduled by DCF, as soon as possible, to document the injuries. A psycho-social will also be requested when applicable. A copy of the CPT evaluation will be attached to the report.
 - h.** The detective will photograph the residence (inside and outside for DCF records) and the victim's injuries. The injuries will be documented by using a ruler in the photo. The photographs will be property marked for court purposes and then placed into evidence.
 - i.** The suspect(s) will be interviewed. The detective will comply with Miranda guidelines.
 - j.** The victim's advocate will be notified for the non-offending parent or guardian.
 - k.** If probable cause is found and a suspect is known, then a warrant will be applied for. The SAO may be consulted if the detective feels there is a need for review of the probable cause affidavit or if there are any case law problems.
 - l.** The child will be taken to a shelter if there are any indications of imminent danger to the child. The detective will follow Florida State Statute for the removal of a child (39:401b).
 - m.** Case Closure - If the case is closed by arrest, the detective will prepare the report for court presentation. When there is no arrest, the detective will close the case with the appropriate UCR closure.
- 2. Non-custodial Child Sexual Abuse - Will be handled similar to the custodial without the involvement of DCF.**
- a.** The Child protection Team or the SARA nurse practitioner will conduct physical exam. The detective is responsible to schedule this exam.
 - b.** A Child Protection Team psycho-social may also be requested, if applicable.
 - c.** The victim's advocate and/or the SARA advocate will be notified.
 - d.** BOLO will be issued, if appropriate.

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- 3. Sexual Battery - The Unit will investigate all adult sexual battery reports regardless of their gender. Road Patrol will be the first responder to the report and when the officer receives information of the sexual battery from the victim, CAWACU will be notified.**
- a.** The victim / SARA advocate will be notified.
 - b.** The SARA nurse practitioner will be requested if the victim agrees, and respond to the hospital for the exam.
 - c.** A sworn statement will be obtained from the victim and it will be tape-recorded, if possible.
 - d.** Photographs of any injury will be taken. A ruler will be placed along the injury to help measure the area. The photographs will be marked for court purposes and then placed into evidence. If the photographs needed are in a sensitive area, all attempts will be made to have the same sex as the victim photograph the area of injury.
 - e.** The crime scene will be secured and a search warrant will be obtained if needed.

- f.** The crime scene technician will process the scene.
 - g.** A BOLO will be issued if appropriate.
 - h.** The suspect(s) will be interviewed in compliance with Miranda guidelines.
 - i.** The suspect(s) will be asked if they would consent to a sexual assault kit being completed on them. This would be done for any possible trace of evidence. This cost will come from investigative expenses.
 - j.** The crimes compensation form will be completed at the hospital for the cost of the victim's exam.
 - k.** The victim will be shown photo line-up of possible suspects. If the line-up is not possible, then all attempts should be made to complete a composite.
 - l.** The probable cause affidavit will be completed if the detective feels there is enough evidence. If the detective does not feel they have probable cause, or there are extenuating circumstances, then the SAO may be requested to review the case.
 - m.** Case closure will be in accordance with UCR guidelines.
- 4.** Training for CAWACU - The detective assigned to the Unit will receive training in all areas covered by the Unit and will receive updated training, when possible. Training in the areas of child victims is essential to a successful closure for both the victim and the detective. Improper or lack of training may result in an improper investigation and could lead to a possible child predator being released into the community or an innocent person being wrongfully arrested.