



News Release

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FOR REVIEW

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Southern Nevada Child Fatality Taskforce Publishes Guidelines for Investigating Suspicious Child Deaths

In an effort to create a more uniform and consistent community response to a Child's Death in Clark County, the Southern Nevada Child Fatality Taskforce (SNCFT), a joint collaboration between local and state law enforcement agencies and key departments in Clark County, has published a set of guidelines for investigating suspicious child deaths.

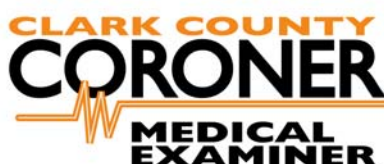
"The Clark County District Attorney's Office welcomes the opportunity to act as a leading partner on the SNCFT. Child deaths are a significant concern and priority for all of us. We are committed to the implementation of a process that promotes increased communication among all agencies involved in the investigation of suspicious child deaths," said David Roger. "These guidelines, created as a result of a multidisciplinary effort, will serve to support improved decision making in the criminal justice and child protection systems. Our sincere thanks to all of our partners on the SNCFT for their dedication to the children of our community."

The guidelines addressed by the 22-page document include:

- Defining the roles of responding entities, from securing the crime scene to assessing the safety of other children present.
- Measures to ensure interagency communication and information/document sharing.
- Calls for the immediate notification of the Multi-agency Response Team, as well as a 72-hour debriefing/on-going investigation meeting.
- Protocol for the release of information to the public and media outlets.

Recognizing that that each child death is unique as to the facts and circumstances, these guidelines are intended to provide direction to public entities responsible for responding to suspicious child deaths in Clark County, though under certain circumstances deviation from the recommended guidelines may be prudent and necessary.

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"Our most valuable resource – and our most vulnerable victims – are our children," said Sheriff Doug Gillespie. "By bringing together the various agencies who deal with incidents involving their death or near death, we will ensure a smooth and efficient investigation, and provide both the survivors and our community with the fastest possible closure to a truly tragic event. The many agencies who have worked tirelessly on this project are to be commended for their dedication to these precious victims."

In 2006, the Nevada Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHS) contracted with a panel of national experts to review a select number of child deaths that occurred in Clark County from 2001 to 2004. This independent Child Death Review Panel made findings and recommendations to enhance child safety and prevent child deaths in Clark County. That same year, the DHHS convened the Clark County Blue Ribbon Panel for the Review of Child Deaths, which consisted of child welfare experts in Nevada, to review the report of Recommendations by the independent Child Death Review Panel and provide oversight to the Action Plan for the Clark County Death Review.

"With collaborative efforts like the Southern Nevada Child Fatality Task Force and with the continued commitment of funds and staffing support from county and state leadership, we will continue to improve the lives of children and families in our community," said Assistant County Manager Darryl Martin. "We have a shared vision of a safe and healthy future for our children, and this is just another example of how we are working collaboratively to make that vision a reality."

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