



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT  
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual**

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	IX	Administrative	
Chapter:	A	Worker Safety	3-24-2015
Subchapter:	1	General	
Issuance:	150	<b>Teamed Field Response (Buddy System)</b>	

**Purpose**

The purpose of this issuance is to establish policy and procedures governing teamed field response (aka the Buddy System) for the conduct of CP&P case work.

**Policy**

**A) Teamed Field Response.**

Situations may and frequently will arise in the conduct of CP&P work when safety concerns necessitate the assignment of a two person team to work that would normally be undertaken by a single worker. Such use of a “teamed field response” or “buddy”, even when required by this policy, must be approved by a supervisor. Teams may be comprised of two workers, or the buddy role may be filled by law enforcement officers, community service providers or others.

**B) Approval of Teamed Field Response**

Supervisors shall determine the need for a teamed field response based on consideration of worker safety. Absent compelling reason to do otherwise, deference should be given to the expressed safety concerns of the requesting worker.

Supervisors shall not, under any circumstances, unreasonably deny or discourage the use of teamed field response as a means of ensuring worker safety.

**C) Circumstances REQUIRING Teamed Field Response**

Supervisors are required to approve the use of teamed field response in the following circumstances:

1. A teamed response is required in any case where Division records indicate the client has a history involving: a) assaults or threats of violence; or b) a conviction involving the use of a weapon in the commission of a crime or disorderly persons offense. In these situations, the buddy should be the Human Services Police or other law enforcement officials.
2. A teamed response is required in all active cases that involve ongoing domestic violence situations, where the alleged batterer resides in or frequents the home. For additional safety precautions, see the [Domestic Violence Protocol](#).
3. A teamed response is required in all initial responses to allegations of abuse in unknown (no prior CP&P history) cases if requested by the assigned worker.
4. A teamed response is required in all responses to known high crime and initial responses to known drug-use locations. The designation of such known high crime and drug-use areas is to be established by mutual agreement between local office management and field staff on an office-by-office basis. The determination that an area is a high crime or drug-use area must be communicated by local office management to the Area Director as soon as such determination is made. Area Office SPRU Coordinators share this information with SPRU Supervisors and SPRU Workers
5. A teamed response is required in all cases in which the Division is making an out-of-home placement into a resource family home. By assisting the Worker, the buddy helps the child by lessening trauma associated with separation from the family of origin. The buddy permits the assigned worker to focus solely on the child's needs. See [CP&P-II-C-5-500](#)
6. A teamed response is required in all cases where the Worker is transporting a child with known behavioral problems (e.g., a history of sexual acting out, making false accusations or running away). When transporting a group of children, a teamed response is necessary in order to assist with supervision of the children while driving to the destination. Requests for assistance by Human Services Police may be appropriate.
7. Previously assaulted field staff are entitled to a buddy until such time as the Worker and his or her Supervisor jointly decide that a buddy is no longer routinely needed. The input of a crisis counselor or a treating professional may be sought, if agreed to by the Worker, to resolve any

questions or dispute about the issue of the worker's readiness to respond to routine Division field assignments alone.

#### **D) Teamed Field Response in Other Circumstances**

Where teamed field response is not *required* by this policy, supervisors may determine that is necessary based on consideration of all circumstances surrounding a case or work environment. If a supervisor determines that a teamed field response is necessary, workers are not permitted to decline.

#### **E) Composition of Teams and Deference to Law Enforcement Accompaniment**

In all field response situations described above, the buddy may be: another CP&P staff member; a CP&P Supervisor, see [CP&P-III-C-5-100](#); a Family Preservation Service (FPS) worker; a Youth Advocate Program (YAP) staff member; a homemaker; ; a school staff person; a mental health/crisis team worker; a county welfare agency representative; a self-help counselor, such as an authorized Youth Companionship Service Program worker; a Human Services Police Officer or other law enforcement officer; or other individuals providing services or assistance to the Division. The Supervisor, with input from the Worker, determines what other person(s) may serve as a buddy on a particular case situation.

In any of the above situations where policy or prudence call for a joint response by CP&P and law enforcement (e.g., Human Services Police, local police, county prosecutor office detectives), such law enforcement personnel shall be utilized in lieu of other types of buddies.

### **Procedures**

#### **A) Recording of Teamed Field Response**

At the conclusion of any case work by a team, a NJ SPIRIT Contact Sheet, CP&P Form [26-52](#), will be completed that both identifies and includes input from the assigned buddy.