

## SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

- AUTHORITY:** Administrative Directive California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Section 1329 Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 210.2 California Penal Code section 6030
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item 3-1-053, dated 06/20/16
- FORMS:** Special Incident Report (SIR) (F057-7018)  
Unit Face Sheet (F057-6009)  
Release Letter (English and Spanish) (Attachment A)
- PURPOSE:** To establish uniform guidelines for providing the appropriate level of supervision for youth who present a threat to their own safety, and to enhance suicide prevention measures in all juvenile facilities.

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The preservation of human life shall supersede all other facility responsibilities.
- B. All persons incarcerated in juvenile facilities may experience emotional crisis and are potential suicide victims. It is also important to remember that not all youth at risk for suicide fit a typical profile. From a youth's perspective the detention setting increases personal stressors including:
1. Fear of the unknown
  2. Authoritarian setting
  3. No apparent control over the future
  4. Isolation from family and significant others
  5. Shame
  6. Dehumanizing aspects of detention
- C. All Probation, Health Care Agency (HCA) Medical/Mental Health and Clinical Evaluation and Guidance Unit (CEGU) staff have the authority and responsibility to place a youth on Suicide Risk Status or to upgrade the level of risk for any documentable reason (see specific provisions of Section II).
- D. During the Intake process IRC staff at Juvenile Hall shall ask each youth the following questions:
1. In the past few weeks, have you wished you were dead?
  2. In the past few weeks, have you felt that you or your family would be better off if you were dead?

3. In the past week, have you been having thoughts about killing yourself?
4. Have you ever tried to kill yourself? If yes, how and when?
5. Are you having thoughts of killing yourself right now?

Should the youth answer yes to any of these questions, IRC staff shall make an immediate referral to CEGU or the Duty Officer in the absence of CEGU to determine an appropriate suicide level for the youth.

- E. **During the intake process, IRC staff will administer the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) questionnaire to all new intakes. This form will be scanned to the youth document record in ICMS.**
- F. All suicidal signs, threats and attempts shall be regarded as real and dangerous, even if they appear to be manipulative, superficial or lacking serious intent.
- G. CEGU staff shall be apprised of all youth placed on suicide risk status at the earliest possible opportunity.
- H. The Division Director of the involved juvenile facility, the assigned Assistant Division Director (ADD) and the Administrator in Charge (AIC) (if during non-business hours) shall be notified of any suicide attempt resulting in transportation to the hospital as soon as possible. In addition, the Chief Probation Officer will be notified via the chain of command. Administration will coordinate the notification of parents or guardians subsequent to such an attempt. A suicide attempt is defined as an intentional act that could lead to death or serious harm to oneself.
- I. At no time will suicide risk status be used as, or treated as, a form of punishment.
- J. A reasonable amount of force may be used to effect a valid unclothed body search to remove clothing in order to prevent a suicide attempt or because the clothing is contaminated and must be removed for the youth's safety.
- K. At no time will a youth on any suicide level be housed in a room with a metal frame bed with the exception of the use of soft leather restraints which requires a metal frame bed. Subsequent to the use of soft leather restraints the youth will be immediately moved to another room without a metal frame bed. At no time will a youth on Level II or III be housed in a room with a cot.
- L. Suicide prevention gowns and blankets are available for youth requiring a higher level of precaution. These gowns and blankets are made of heavy duty, tear resistant material that makes it very difficult to use the material for self-harm. Use of these items is a temporary measure with the eventual goal to return the youth to regular items when it is safe to do so. These gowns and blankets are located in Unit Q.

## II. PROCEDURE

- A. Suicide Risk Status has three levels of observation and precautionary measures available.

1. Level I

- a. Level I is essentially an awareness assessment level that may be assigned for any of the following reasons:
  - (1) New intake with former history of suicide risk status.
  - (2) History/available information (II. A.3.).
  - (3) Suicidal Behaviors (II. A.2.).
- b. Employees shall regularly observe youth with no less than one visual observation not to exceed a [REDACTED] minute period, which is to be documented in the unit logbooks/Institutional Case Management System (ICMS) log.
- c. Youth shall receive a CEGU staff visit consultation at least once per week and sooner by request of facility or CEGU staff. This CEGU contact shall be documented in the unit logbook/ICMS log.
- d. Youth may be housed in any unit/facility.
- e. Youth on Level I may or may not be informed of being on suicide risk status. A supervisor or administrator will review the rationale for not informing a youth of his status and approve the decision.
- f. Youth are encouraged to join all unit activities. **If a youth declines any unit activity, document in ICMS.**
- g. Youth may have roommates.
- h. Youth may have their sheets or pillowcases removed from their sleeping rooms at a Supervising Juvenile Correctional Officer's (SJCO's)/Administrator's discretion, based on the youth's suicidal behavior history and the youth shall not be placed in quarters with a metal bed frame, unless under certain circumstances, consistent with Section J. above.

2. Level II

- a. Level II is a serious and urgent level of suicide watch, based upon any of the following:
  - (1) Suicidal statements (III. A., 1).
  - (2) Suicidal behaviors (III. A., 2).
  - (3) Suicidal threats (III. B.).
  - (4) Suicidal gestures (III. D.).
- b. Employees shall regularly observe the youth with a visual observation/room check not to exceed [REDACTED] minutes after the youth

is placed in a locked room, or in an area outside of staff's constant view i.e., cart room. This visual observation/room check must be documented in the unit logbook/ICMS log.

- c. Youth shall receive a CEGU staff visit and consultation at least once per day during CEGU working hours. This CEGU contact shall be documented in the unit logbook/ICMS log.
- d. Youth may be considered for housing in Unit Q, the Mental Health Treatment unit of Juvenile Hall.
- e. Youth are required to leave clothing, including socks outside of rooms, unless an SJCO/DO/Administrator determine to allow clothing based upon the youth's dynamics. Youth shall be given gym shorts to wear and may keep their T-shirt or sweatshirt and undergarments if the youth becomes compliant.
- f. A roommate will not be allowed, except with supervisor approval and CEGU recommendation.
- g. Youth will have no sheets or pillowcases in their sleeping rooms and the youth shall not be placed in quarters with a cot or metal bed frame, unless certain circumstances apply, consistent with Section J. above.
- h. Youth on Level II are encouraged to participate in all unit activities unless limited by a supervisor/administrator or CEGU. **If a youth declines any unit activity, document in ICMS.**
- i. Male and female youth will not be allowed to shave while on Level II unless with supervisor/administrator approval and under the observation of staff who are in direct proximity to the youth while shaving.
- j. If youth join in unit activities, they may be searched with a screening device (wand) or pat down, prior to entering their sleeping rooms, to ensure no instruments of self-destruction are brought to the room. With supervisor approval, the youth may be subject to an unclothed body search or visual body cavity search if reasonable suspicion is articulated related to the youth possessing contraband. When considering reasonable suspicion, the youth's current behavior and mental state, as well as prior history of self-harm and possession of contraband should be strongly considered. Any unclothed body search or visual body cavity search shall also be noted in the unit logbook/ICMS log, giving the name of the youth, staff who searched, name of approving supervisor, articulation for the more intrusive search and the results of the search.
- k. Youth on Level II status may not transfer to any other juvenile facility and must be transferred back to Juvenile Hall from any other facility, once on Level II status. Exceptions can be made for youth housed at the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA), with supervisor or administrator approval.

3. Level III

- a. Level III is an immediate and critical level of suicide watch based upon:
  - (1) Threats (III. B.)
  - (2) A suicide attempt: defined as an intentional act that could lead to death or serious harm to oneself.
  - (3) Behavior demonstrating extreme mental instability indicative of self harm.
- b. Youth shall receive constant visual observation by Probation staff. CEGU staff will provide consultation. Staff must document the youth's behavior and statements in the unit logbook/ICMS log, and observation notes.
- c. Level III is intended to provide maximum supervision and counseling for a brief period of time following a critical episode in which a youth has demonstrated intent to cause death or serious injury to himself/herself.
- d. Youth shall receive a CEGU staff visit and consultation once per day during CEGU working hours and more often as determined necessary by CEGU.
- e. All Level III youth shall be considered for housing in Unit Q of Juvenile Hall, regardless of gender, unless otherwise determined by a supervisor or Juvenile Hall administration.
- f. Youth are required to leave clothing, including socks outside of rooms, unless an SJCO/DO/Administrator determine to allow clothing based upon the youth's dynamics. Youth shall be given gym shorts to wear and may keep their T-shirt or sweatshirt and undergarments if their behavior becomes compliant.
- g. No roommates will be allowed.
- h. Youth are to have no sheets or pillowcases in their rooms while on Level III. Youth are to be given extra blankets, if requested.
- i. Staff should consider a search of a Level III youth and their room once each shift, if deemed appropriate. A screening device (wand) or pat down search should be routinely utilized. Staff requires a supervisor's approval and reasonable suspicion prior to conducting an unclothed body search or visual body cavity search. When considering reasonable suspicion, the youth's current behavior and mental state, as well as the prior history of self-harm and possession of contraband, should be strongly considered. Any search should be logged on the Level III notes and any unclothed body search or visual body cavity search should also be noted in

the unit logbook/ICMS log, giving the name of the youth, the staff who searched, the name of approving supervisor, articulation for the more intrusive search and results of the search.

- j. Youth on Level III may remain in their sleeping rooms; however, these youth will be encouraged to participate in unit daily programming unless this would jeopardize the safety and security of the youth, staff or facility. **If a youth declines any unit activity, document in ICMS and on the Level III notes.**
- k. With supervisor or administrator approval, staff may open the youth's door during waking hours for direct supervision of the Level III youth, providing the safety and security of the facility is not jeopardized. While the door is open, staff should counsel the youth with the hopes of stabilizing the youth's behavior, if appropriate. The door should remain closed during sleeping hours, unless otherwise directed by the DO, AIC or Juvenile Hall administrator.
- l. Male and female youth will not be allowed to shave while on Level III unless with supervisor / administrator approval and under the observation of staff who are in direct proximity to the youth while shaving.
- m. Youth on Level III status may not transfer to any other juvenile facility, and must be transferred back to Juvenile Hall from any other facility, except YLA, once placed on Level III status. Level III youth at YLA may remain housed there on a case-by-case basis, depending on the youth's dynamics and as approved by a supervisor or administrator.

#### B. Suicide Risk Removal

- 1. Youth on Level I or II may be downgraded or removed from suicide risk status via CEGU staff recommendation and unit supervisor/DO and/or if Facility Management (AIC) approves.
- 2. Youth on Level III may be reduced to Level II if recommended by CEGU and with unit supervisor/DO or Facility Management (AIC) approval.
- 3. A youth may be removed or reduced from a suicide risk status without CEGU recommendation only by administrative approval.
- 4. Youth removed from Level III shall be placed on Level II for a period of not less than 48 hours for observational and safety reasons; exceptions must be endorsed by CEGU staff and approved by an administrator.

#### C. Deputy Juvenile Correctional Officer (DJCO) Responsibilities

- 1. Maintain awareness of and engage youth who display significant changes in mood, who appear isolated and withdrawn from the group, are tearful/upset or who display previously described (Section III.A. above) suicidal statements or behaviors. It is important to remember that youth on isolation in their room (whether imposed or chosen by the youth) are

typically at higher risk, and they should be observed closely during room checks and engaged when there are concerns. Youth are often willing to discuss their emotional problems with staff they perceive as approachable and concerned. Immediately make your co-worker and SJCO/DO aware of any serious concerns you may have about a youth. Make a CEGU referral for youth viewed as having, or who express emotional difficulties/mental health concerns. Attentive and diligent line staff is the most effective preventative measure related to youth considering suicide or self-harm.

2. Identify youth who return from court after a Dispositional Hearing (Juvenile Court) or Sentencing Hearing (Adult Court) in which a custody commitment was imposed. Engage the youth in order to assess their mental/emotional state in response to their court hearing. Contact CEGU if deemed appropriate. If the youth received a commitment to a state facility (DJJ or State Prison), a CEGU referral shall occur and be documented in ICMS.
3. Place the youth on suicide risk Level I, II or III or upgrade to Level II or III as outlined. Ensure that the youth's suicide prevention level is noted immediately on the face sheet in the youth's folder, unit roster and also changed in the unit logbook/ICMS log.
4. Notify CEGU and the unit SJCO or DO at the earliest practical opportunity when a suicide level is reduced, imposed or upgraded. Ensure that the change in the youth's suicide prevention level is noted immediately on the face sheet in the youth's folder, unit roster and also changed in the unit logbook/ICMS log.
5. Immediately place any youth making a suicidal threat on at least a Level II status, (initiating 15 minute room checks immediately) notify an SJCO/DO and request a CEGU consultation. The youth is to remain on Level II status until evaluated by CEGU and an SJCO/DO, at which time the level may change. All suicide threats are to be taken seriously, per I.D. above, even if staff feels the youth may be manipulating or not serious when he/she makes the threat. A youth placed on Level III is to have constant supervision immediately and staff is to maintain this level of supervision from close proximity until relieved.
6. Complete and record room checks in the unit logbook/ICMS log, as outlined.
7. When assigned, provide direct continuous supervision to a Level III youth, seek special instructions and maintain a behavior observation log during the Level III period. (Attachments from Procedure Manual Item [PMI] 3-2-309 [Observation Reports] related to Level III observation notes should be placed on the Level III notes clipboard for reference)
8. Address the issue of the youth's suicide risk status on weekly behavior summaries and record levels/changes on the youth's face sheet and in the unit logbook/ICMS log immediately. Do not leave changes made to levels for the night staff or the next shift.
9. Provide opportunities for youth on suicide precaution levels to discuss issues related to their emotional circumstances.

10. Verbally notify all parties to whom care of the youth is delivered of the suicide risk level and pertinent information and precautions. It is important to develop a basic understanding of the youth's dynamics and the reasons for his/her current Level III status. It is possible you may be asked to accompany the youth to the Juvenile Court and be asked questions by the Court regarding the youth's status and emotional state. If a youth is being transferred to the custody of the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) for transportation to Adult Court, OCSD deputies are to be notified of the youth's suicide precaution status. This notification is to be documented in the unit logbook/ICMS log. If a youth on Level III is being released from custody, notify a supervisor/DO of this information. Continue Level III supervision of the youth until the youth is released from custody.
11. Participate in the preparation of treatment plans related to suicide precaution status as directed by the unit supervisor.
12. Take reasonable steps consistent with this procedure in an effort to prevent threats from becoming attempts at suicide.
13. Read all unit CEGU consultation reports.
14. Ensure that youth are not deprived of their rights insofar as the severity of their crisis may reasonably and safely permit. If deprivation is required, it must be documented per regulations/requirements.
15. Conduct searches of youth and their rooms as appropriate and as authorized in relation to more intrusive searches.
16. Notify the unit supervisor/DO and/or facility management when a member of CEGU requests a modification of level status in order for a decision to be made.
17. Attend mandatory (four hours) of Suicide Prevention training every two years.

D. Supervising Juvenile Correctional Officer (SJCO) Responsibilities

1. Ensure that DJCOs are properly trained and comply with all procedures.
2. Review and initial all CEGU staff consultations and the documentation of DJCOs.
3. Make final decisions regarding suicide risk level/removal, based upon casework knowledge and CEGU staff recommendation. Document all disagreements with CEGU with an additional SIR. Consult with the chain of command when available and appropriate, if needed, related to the decision-making process.
4. Note any changes that are related to Level II or Level III status of the youth in the DO notes as pending items and also in the chronological shift text, related to the action taken and why.



5. Participate with CEGU staff and the youth's assigned caseload officer in the development of treatment plans for unusually disturbed or at-risk youth.
6. When assigned as the midnight to 8:00 a.m. DO at Juvenile Hall, ensure that all youth in the facility on a level are correctly noted on the suicide level precaution report and provide this report with any corrections to the appropriate JH administration and the CEGU inbox the following morning. When making your DO rounds, engage staff by inquiring about youth on levels in the unit and utilize the opportunity to discuss suicide precautions and prevention with the night staff that is sometimes the least experienced staff in the facility.
7. Notify Control Station scheduling when a Level III status is initiated or reduced as this affects a staff member position and impacts facility scheduling.
8. Prior to completing the Orange County Juvenile Hall Release Authorization, the SJCO or administrator will verify if the youth was placed on a suicide risk status during his/her commitment at Juvenile Hall. This will be displayed on the Booking entry Master screen of ICMS as "level history". Per Section III C 9 above, ensure that the person responsible for assuming custody and control over the youth is informed of the youth's status. This should include the high degree of concern we have for the youth's safety and the high level of precaution we have been taking. If a CEGU staff is available, they should also be utilized in providing information to the person assuming custody and control over the youth. This communication shall be documented in the unit logbook/ICMS log.
9. An Administrator, SJCO, the Duty Officer or a designee will contact the parent or legal guardian when a youth is placed on any Suicide Level Precaution. Notification of parent or legal guardian shall be documented in the ICMS logbook.
10. After any serious suicide attempt, the SJCO / DO will coordinate with Administration to set up a debriefing of the incident **for both staff and youth**.

### III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

#### A. Suicidal Signs

##### 1. Statements

- a. Alluding to non-specified drastic action regarding harming oneself.
- b. Alluding to or specifying intent to kill oneself.
- c. Communicating the contemplation of the impact of one's death on others.
- d. Alluding to a wish to be dead or expressing no reason to live or having no purpose in life.
- e. Expressing a high degree of apathy about life or the future.

- f. Expressing severe depression, remorse, guilt, hurt, rejection or feelings of being trapped.
- g. Indicating severe inability to cope with detention.
- h. Expressing self-condemnation.
- i. Expressed by others that youth wants to kill self.

2. Suicidal Behaviors

- a. Recent suicide ideations or prior attempts.
- b. Depression.
- c. Withdrawal.
- d. Lack of emotion.
- e. Inappropriate comments about killing or harming oneself.
- f. Inability to sleep or sleeping too long/too often.
- g. Loss of appetite and/or chronic purging.
- h. Loss of interest in activity.
- i. A high degree of apathetic expression or communication.
- j. Disorientation, anxiety or isolation.
- k. Hyperventilation.
- l. Dangerous risk taking or reckless behavior, carving or self-mutilation.
- m. Euphoric behavior after depression or other dramatic mood swings.
- n. Giving away or disposing of personal property.

3. History/Available Information

- a. Prior identification as suicide risk.
- b. Significant substance abuse history.
- c. Responsibility for death of loved one.
- d. Responsibility for family upheaval.
- e. Offense resulting in death or catastrophe.
- f. Proneness for accidents or dangerous acts.

- g. Self-abusive or self-injurious behavior history.
- h. Recent loss of a close family friend or family member to suicide or intense feelings of loss of loved one (especially due to suicide).
- i. Information relayed from others.
- j. Significant action by court or Deputy Probation Officer.
- k. Diagnosed mental disorder, especially depression.
- l. Prior abuse trauma, severe neglect or abandonment.

B. Suicide Threats

Behaviors designed to make others believe there is intent to commit suicide.

C. Suicide Gestures

Acts, which are not inherently life threatening, but symbolic of suicide attempts, such as superficially scratching wrists.

**REFERENCES:**

Procedures:	3-1-003	Deterrence of Unacceptable Behavior
	3-1-022	Youth's Rights
	3-1-106	Death, Serious Suicide Attempts and Other Serious Incidents Related to Youths in Custody
	3-1-404	Referral of Youth to Mental Health
	3-2-002	Prevention and Control of Inappropriate Behavior
	3-2-110	Soft-Leather Restraints/Tubes
	3-2-309	Observation Reports
Policy:	F-10	Medical Examination and Treatment for Juveniles

Attachments

K. Carvo

**APPROVED BY:**



**STEVEN J. SENTMAN**  
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

TELEPHONE: (714) 937-4500

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MAILING ADDRESS:  
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SANTA ANA, CA 92711-0260



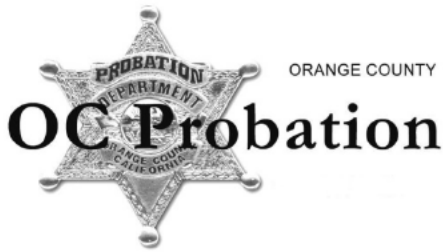
Dear parent / guardian / placement staff:

█ (youth), █ (DOB), who is being released from this Juvenile Hall or camp into your custody at █ hours (time) on █ (date), is felt to be a potentially suicidal person.

If █, displays any suicidal behavior, the Orange County Probation Department suggests that you: (1) take him/her to a hospital emergency room for evaluation, (2) call the police/sheriff, (3) call the Clinical Assessment Team (CAT) at (714) 517-6353 or (4) assist him/her in arranging and keeping an appointment at one of the Behavioral Health contract agencies listed on the attached sheet, or at the office of a psychotherapist of your choice who deals with potentially suicidal adolescents.

I acknowledge receipt of this letter regarding █ (youth) being potentially suicidal.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_



ORANGE COUNTY

3-1-053

Attachment A

**STEVEN J. SENTMAN**  
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

P. 2

TELEPHONE: (714) 937-4500

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Estimado padre / tutor/ personal de colocación residencial:

█ (menor), █ (fecha de nacimiento), quien ha sido liberado de la Tutelar de Menores (Juvenile Hall) o campo para quedar bajo su custodia a partir de las █ (hora) el día █ (fecha), es considerado como una persona potencialmente suicida.

Si █ (menor), muestra cualquier comportamiento suicida, el Departamento de Libertad Condicional (Probation Department) del Condado de Orange sugiere que usted haga lo siguiente: (1) llevarlo(a) a emergencias de un hospital para una evaluación, (2) llamar a la policía/sheriff, (3) llamar al Equipo de Evaluación Clínica (Clinical Assessment Team) (CAT) al (714) 517-6353 o (4) ayudarlo(a) para hacer y mantener una cita en una de las agencias de Salud Mental (Behavioral Health) que aparecen en la hoja adjunta, o en la oficina de un psicoterapeuta de su elección que se ocupa de adolescentes potencialmente suicidas.

Yo acuso recibo de esta carta relacionada con █ (menor) siendo potencialmente suicida.

Firma: \_\_\_\_\_ Parentesco \_\_\_\_\_