

# *Safe and Sound: Preventing, Addressing, and Reporting Significant Incidents*

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Provider & VR Staff Training

2023 Update

Presented by the Provider & Contract Management Unit

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## ***Purpose of This Training: Safety First***

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- Providers support individuals with disabilities in a variety of community settings
- Providers ensure the safety of individuals served in the community, such as at CBA work sites, during Summer Youth Work Experiences, or while providing On-the-Job Supports
- Incident occurrences are rare, but must be addressed with a sense of urgency, communicated timely, and clearly documented
- The Significant Incident Report Form (SIRF) is a helpful tool to ensure consistency
- In this training, we are reviewing participant safety during services. Though some information is taken from the Incident Reporting Procedure, this is not a training of the specific procedure

## *Keeping Participants Safe*



- Safe from physical injury or harm
- Safe from verbal, physical, or sexual harassment
- Safe from discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, and disability
- Safe from being exposed to inappropriate media or materials
- Providers have a responsibility to create an environment where violations are immediately recognized, addressed, and reported, so they do not reoccur

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## *Significant Incidents*

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Significant incidents are RARE

**R**ecognized

**A**ddressed

**R**eported

**E**xtinguished (reduce future risk, prevent reoccurrence)

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## ***What is a SIRF?***

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SIRF: Significant Incident Report Form

A SIRF is a form on which a significant incident is reported to OOD

A significant incident is an unusual incident that potentially impacts an individual's health or safety

According to **OAC Rule 3304-2-53 Qualifications and Standards for Service Providers and Vendors**, Providers shall report and document all events which affect or pose a threat to the health and safety of individuals receiving services from OOD through the significant incident report form. Providers shall follow the VR Provider Manual guidelines regarding timeliness, contact, and reporting process. This includes situations such as:

- suspicion of illegal activity (i.e., violations of local, state, and/or federal law, including state ethics laws) either committed or in the process of being committed by or against a participant;
- an individual causes or attempts to cause harm, creates a risk of causing harm, or threatens the safety, health, and/or well-being of an OOD participant;
- a participant is causing or attempting to cause harm, creating a risk of causing harm, or threatening the health, safety, or well-being of another person;
- medical emergencies or mental health crises involving a participant

Providers may have additional internal reporting requirements, as well as their own agency policy and procedures regarding safety

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## ***Why is a SIRF Needed?***

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- Use to document significant incidents that occur during OOD services
- Use to determine if it is safe for the individual to continue with services
- Use to determine if a corrective action is needed to reduce risk
- Use to consult with OOD Legal Department
- Use to document other agencies involved in the incident or other individuals who were notified

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## ***Who Completes a SIRF?***

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The Significant Incident Report Form is to be completed by the provider staff working with the individual (e.g., job coach, job developer) as well as OOD Staff when a significant incident is reported to or occurs during contact with OOD Staff

Once the VR Counselor or Contractor receives the SIRF, they should complete the appropriate section on the second page.

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## *When is the Reporting Period?*

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- The “clock”/timer for reporting starts from when the incident occurs; not from when it is reported to provider management
- **Provider staff must be trained to recognize, address, and report significant incidents, and to report them to their management in a timely manner**
- When appropriate reporting has not occurred, there is often a communication breakdown between direct service staff and management. A failure by direct staff to report incidents in a timely manner can result in unaddressed incidents, a reoccurrence of the incident, or a string of incidents rather than a single incident





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## ***Examples of When a SIRF is Needed (VR Provider Manual pg. 73)***

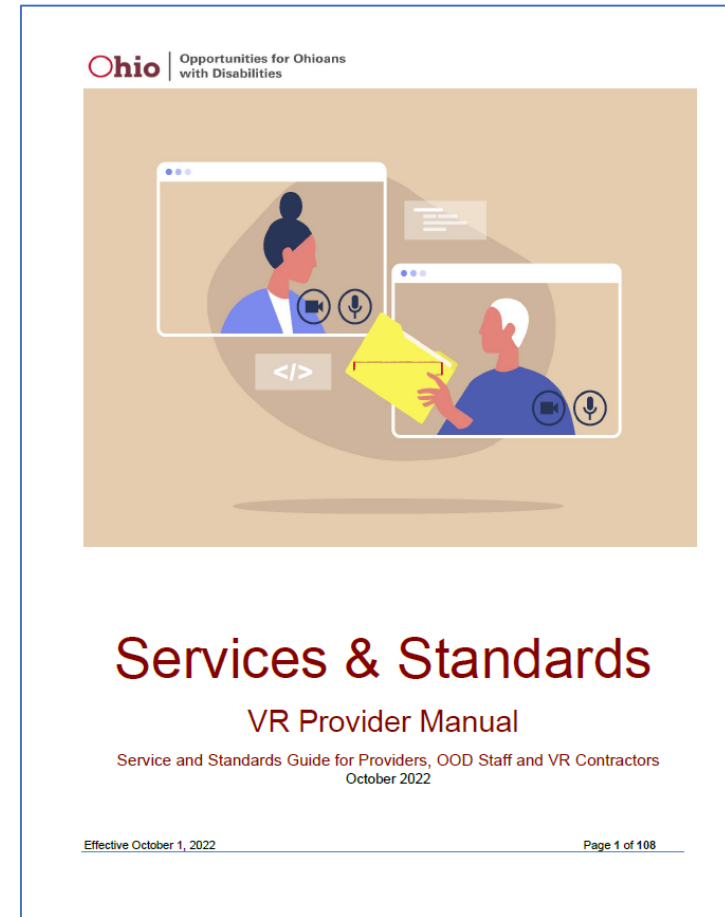
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- Medical emergencies or mental health crises involving an individual
- An individual causes or attempts to cause harm, creates a risk of causing harm, or threatens the health, safety, or well-being of themselves or another person
- Suspicion of illegal activity either committed or in the process of being committed by or against an individual
- An individual has reported abuse in their household, place of residence, or place of employment or provider staff have observed abusive behavior occurring either inside or outside the individual's place of residence or employment
- An individual exhibits signs of abuse or neglect
- An individual is the target of harassment (physical, sexual, financial, verbal) or harasses another individual, including allegations of harassment
- An individual makes unwanted sexual advances or is the recipient of unwanted sexual advances
- An individual is missing from services (e.g., worksite, provider office) for any length of time and cannot be located

## ***Examples of When a SIRF is Not Needed (VR Provider Manual pg. 73)***

- An individual case update occurs such as a health diagnosis or personal matter unrelated to current services being delivered
- An individual refuses to complete work tasks
- An individual is not performing work at the level of competitive integrated employment (CIE)
- An individual experiences an injury that can be or is treated by basic first aid

If it is uncertain if a SIRF is required, please consult with VR Staff; it is often better to have documentation of an incident and not need it, then to not fully document and later need the details



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## ***Reporting Observations vs. Diagnosing***

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Provider staff should not make mental or physical health diagnoses during service delivery or on service reports. (VR Provider Manual page 73)

### Examples of Inappropriate Reporting:

After the fall, Emily's leg was fine and was not broken.

Job coach determined that Stephen has depression.

### Examples of Appropriate Reporting:

After the fall, Emily stated she felt fine and had no pain. There were no visible cuts or bruises on her leg.

Stephen stated that he has been feeling down lately and is not finding joy in activities he used to. Job coach noticed he was less talkative than usual and did not smile once during the day.

# *Parent/Guardian Notification*

- When an incident is determined to rise to the level of a SIRF, their parent or legal guardian (if applicable) should generally be notified
- The SIRF should document any related parent or legal guardian communication (e.g. Job coach phoned and spoke with Mason's mother regarding his fall, who appreciated the call)
- VR Staff, please reference *Custody, Guardianship, and Power of Attorney Policy #80-VR-19* if needed



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## *Check Your Knowledge*

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Which of the following incidents would be considered a Significant Incident which would require provider staff to address and report the behavior? (Select one or more)

- A. Participant punches a wall during services and makes a threat to harm others
- B. Participant states that he would prefer not to work and wishes he would win the lottery
- C. Participant slips and falls on a wet floor at a work site; he says his leg hurts
- D. Participant “Y” continuously sends inappropriate texts to Participant “Z” while in a group service; Participant “Z” has repeatedly told Participant “Y” they do not want to be contacted, and it was reported to the job coach

**Answer:**

**A, C, and D**

While significant incidents do not occur often, the situations noted in A, C, and D would all require a SIRF.

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## ***One Story - Two Outcomes***

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### **Scenario 1**

#### **How might the provider staff handle this situation?**

**Scenario A:** “Kids will be kids.” Provider staff dismiss this behavior as part of their youth, or as part of disability-related symptom, and the participant continues in the group Summer Youth service.

What are the risks to this approach?

**Scenario B:** “Stop and staff.” Provider staff immediately report to referring VR Counselor/Coordinator. A SIRF is received, and there is a staffing with the participant and their family before services can resume. What does this person need? What would be safe for everyone?

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## *Check Your Knowledge*

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Charles is a 53-year-old male participating in OOD services. He has been engaging in On-The-Job-Supports (OTJS) and is in the process of reducing the number of hours needed. While at work over the weekend, Charles had a heart attack. This was not during the time that OTJS was provided. Is a SIRF necessary once the Provider Staff is informed of this incident?

- A) Yes
- B) No

**Answer:**

**B**

This occurred outside of OOD services being provided. However, once the Provider Staff is informed of this incident, it would be appropriate for this to be reported to the VRC. If the heart attack had occurred while OTJS was being provided, this would have occurred during OOD services and would require a SIRF to be completed.

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## *Check Your Knowledge*

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Haley is 15-year-old female participating in a Summer Youth Work Experience. She discloses to the job coach she has been physically abused by her mom. What should provider staff do in this situation? (Select one or more)

- A) Ask if Haley is okay and continue with services
- B) Report this to OOD as soon as possible and complete a SIRF
- C) Contact local county public children services agency (Children Services)
- D) Write about this incident in SYWE report but not report it to their supervisor or OOD

**Answer:**

**B and C**

Anytime there is a report made of possible abuse to a child or developmentally delayed individual (connected with local county board of development disabilities), this should be reported immediately to the appropriate authority (e.g. Children Services, DODD). OOD would need to be contacted and a SIRF completed whether or not the incident occurred during OOD services. The safety and security of a participant needs to always come first.



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## *Where to Find Instructions*

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VR PROVIDER MANUAL



ON THE SIRF

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## ***Provider Instructions***

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- Take immediate steps to ensure individual's health and safety
- Notify the assigned VR Counselor/Contractor via telephone. Leaving a voice message is a not sufficient notification if the incident/issue occurred during business hours. If the VR Staff or VR Contractor cannot be reached during business hours, the Provider shall contact their supervisor or a local OOD office and speak with a supervisor or their OOD Provider Liaison
  - ★ Complete this step no later than 24 hours after the incident
- Provider staff may need to notify other agencies such as the local County Board of DD, local county public children services agency (Children Services), or law enforcement
- Provider staff must follow up with a written copy of the SIRF within 24 hours. Email the SIRF via Zix Mail to the VR Counselor/Contractor and cc: [pcmu@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:pcmu@ood.ohio.gov)
- Failure to follow this process may result in the Provider being suspended and/or a Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

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## ***Provider Instructions for After Hours Reporting***

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- If the incident/issue occurred during non-business hours (e.g., evening, weekend, holiday) and did NOT involve filing a local county board of development disabilities “Major Unusual Incident” (MUI) report or involve law enforcement being contacted, the Provider is required to leave a voicemail with the VR Counselor or VR Contractor and follow-up with a call the 1<sup>st</sup> thing in the morning of the next business day
  
- If the incident/issue involved filing a MUI or law enforcement was contacted, Providers are required to contact an OOD Area Manager, Assistance Deputy Director or Deputy Director immediately after the individual’s safety, health and/or welfare was verified, and other required contacts are made. OOD contact numbers can be found on the [OOD Provider Webpage](#) and are listed on the next slide

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## *Reporting After Hours Contacts*

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<b>Area Manager</b>	<b>Cell Phone Number</b>
Kelly Rodriguez, SE	614.802.1580
Marc Manheim, EC	330.495.4118
Jerica Kruse, SW	513.532.2485
Traci Conkling, NE	440.251.9849
Stephanie Branco, NW	419.602.2899
<b>Assistant Deputy Director</b>	<b>Cell Phone Number</b>
Brian Baumgartner, SE	614.549.2012
Shannon Komisarek, NE & EC	614.809.6663
Stephanie Andrian, NW & SW	614.425.2371
<b>Deputy Director</b>	<b>Cell Phone Number</b>
Susan Pugh	614.935.8677
Greg Dormer	614.296.3788

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## ***VRC Instructions (Procedure 10-ADM-04 Incident Report and Tracking)***

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- Upon notification of an incident or issue, the VR Counselor/Contractor shall verify that the provider completed the appropriate steps
  - Ensured the individual's safety, health and/or welfare (e.g., called 911, provided first aid)
  - Made immediate notification to the assigned VR Counselor/Contractor via telephone
- Leaving a voice message is not a sufficient notification. If the VR Counselor/Contractor was not available, the provider should have called the VR Counselor/Contractor's supervisor or a local OOD office to speak with a supervisor or the OOD Provider Liaison
- If the incident/issue happened during non-working hours (e.g., evening, weekend, Holiday), the provider should have left a voice mail with the VR Counselor/Contractor and then made telephone contact the morning of the next business day

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## ***VRC Instructions (Procedure 10-ADM-04 Incident Report and Tracking)***

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- Depending on the nature of the incident/issue, if appropriate, the provider should have notified other agencies (e.g., local County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Children’s Services, law enforcement).
  - If the individual is eligible to receive services from the local County Board of Developmental Disabilities, that local County Board’s Major Unusual Incident (MUI) report form should have been completed and submitted by the provider.
- Within 24 hours of the incident/issue the provider should have completed the “Significant Incident Report Form (SIRF)”, and submitted, via secure email (i.e., ZixMail), to the VR Counselor/Contractor copying PCMU at [pcmu@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:pcmu@ood.ohio.gov).
  - If they spoke to someone other than the assigned VR Counselor/Contractor, this person should have also been copied on the email.
  - If PCMU or if applicable, another person, was not copied, forward immediately to [pcmu@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:pcmu@ood.ohio.gov) and that person.

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## ***VRC Instructions (Procedure 10-ADM-04 Incident Report and Tracking)***

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VR Counselor/Contractor shall:

- Notify their supervisor and the appropriate OOD Provider Liaison within 2 hours of being informed of the incident.
  - Dependent on the type of incident/issue, the supervisor shall notify their Area Manager. The Area Manager will determine whether if the incident requires discussion with the Chief Legal Counsel, the Division of Human Resources, Deputy Director if incident is EEO related, Assistant Deputy Director and/or the Deputy Director.
- Review the SIRF for completeness, including determining if there was any provider responsibility.
  - If necessary, contact the provider and/or other VR Staff or VR Contractors to discuss the incident/issue or obtain additional information.
- Complete the OOD portion of the SIRF (e.g., follow up requirements, action plans).
- Upon completion of the SIRF upload into an AWARE Case Note with the title “Significant Incident Report Form.”

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## ***VRC Instructions (Procedure 10-ADM-04 Incident Report and Tracking)***

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- If the provider failed to follow incident reporting requirements, notify their assigned PCMU staff, via email, and copy the PCMU supervisor.
- PCMU staff shall contact the provider to ensure they come into compliance with the incident reporting requirements.
- Upon receipt of a SIRF, PCMU staff will review it and if determined necessary, contact the VR Counselor/Contractor, the provider, and/or other appropriate individuals or entities to collect additional information, discuss report details, and/or to provide support and/or management.
- Services may be suspended until any incident/issue is resolved and if appropriate, the provider may be placed on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).



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## ***Considerations Following a Significant Incident***

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Does the service need to be paused in order to complete it safely or consider next steps?

- Consider changing to an individual service if the incident took place during a group service
- Consider meeting with the individual's support team (e.g. family, counselor, appropriate school contacts, local DD board contact, etc.) to discuss success strategies
- Consider reviewing success strategies from school's IEP or local DD board (including the Ohio ISP)
- Consider a new work site or work tasks
- Consider developing a behavior plan/agreement with the provider staff, individual, parent(s) and legal guardian (if applicable) with clear boundaries
- Consider modifying the schedule
- Consider if this is the right time for this service or if the service should be terminated
- Consider reviewing the Ohio ISP document, if applicable
- Recommend staffing complex cases with Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor

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## ***SIRF- Provider Form 2***

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### **Provider Instructions for Significant Incident Report Form (SIRF)**

Providers are required to complete the Significant Incident Report Form (SIRF) within 24 hours of a reportable, significant incident/issue which affects and/or poses a threat to the safety, health and/or welfare of individuals receiving services from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). Examples of reportable significant incidents/issues include but are not limited to: injuries requiring medical treatment; specific threats of harm to self or others; suspected abuse or neglect; suspected illegal activity; and/or any other non-routine incident that may cause public interest or concern.

Upon the occurrence of the incident/issue, and prior to submitting this report, the Provider is required to have completed the items detailed below.

- Upon learning of a significant incident/issue Providers should have first ensured the safety, health and/or welfare of the OOD participant (e.g., call 911); and
- then immediately contacted the assigned VR Counselor or VR Contractor, via telephone to report details of the incident/issue (e.g., date, time, location, individuals involved, severity of incident).
  - Leaving a voice message during business hours is NOT sufficient notification. If the VR Counselor or VR Contractor cannot be reached during business hours, the Provider shall contact that person's supervisor. If the supervisor is not available, the Provider should contact another supervisor at the local OOD office, their OOD Provider Liaison, or another OOD management staff person.
  - If the incident/issue occurred during non-business hours (e.g., evening, weekend, holiday) and did NOT involve filing a local county board of developmental disabilities "Major Unusual Incident" (MUI) report or involve law enforcement being contacted, the Provider is required to leave a voice mail with the VR Counselor or VR Contractor and follow-up with a telephone call the 1<sup>st</sup> thing in the morning of the next business day.
    - If the incident/issue involved filing a MUI or law enforcement was contacted, Providers are required to contact an OOD Area Manager, Assistant Deputy Director or Deputy Director immediately after the individual's safety, health and/or welfare was verified, and other required contacts are made. OOD contact numbers can be found on the [OOD Provider webpage](#).

Once the Provider completes the SIRF, they shall submit, **only through secure email (i.e., ZixMail)**, to the assigned VR Counselor or VR Contractor and copy OOD's Provider and Contractor Management Unit (PCMU) at [pcmu@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:pcmu@ood.ohio.gov). Note: If the Provider spoke to someone on the telephone other than, or in addition to, the assigned VR Counselor/VR Contractor (e.g., a supervisor, Area Manager, Deputy Director), this person(s) is also to be copied on the email.



# SIRF- Provider Form 2



This form shall be completed within 24 hours of an incident/issue. Due to confidentiality concerns, it shall ONLY be submitted through secure email (i.e., Zixmail),

**INDIVIDUAL(S) INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT INFORMATION**

Participant Full Name: [ ] Age (if under 18): [ ]  
 Phone Number: [ ] DD Eligible:  YES  NO  
 Parent/Legal Guardian Contact Information (if applicable):  
 Name: [ ] Phone Number: [ ]  
 VR Staff or VR Contractor Assigned to the Participant's Case (if applicable):  
 Name: [ ] Phone Number: [ ]  
 If the assigned VR Staff or VR Contractor was not reachable, indicate with whom contact was made.  
 Name: [ ] Phone Number: [ ]

**REPORTER OF INCIDENT INFORMATION (Should be the individual who witnessed the incident)**

Name: [ ] Job Title: [ ]  
 Email: [ ] Phone Number: [ ]  
 Employer Name: [ ]

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENT**

FOR CONFIDENTIALITY, DO NOT USE ANOTHER OOD PARTICIPANT'S NAME IN THIS DOCUMENT, USE THE PID # INSTEAD.

Date: [ ] Time: [ ] Were there any witnesses?  YES  NO (if yes, attach sheet with names (or PID #), addresses and phone numbers).

Immediate action taken to ensure the health, safety, and/or wellbeing of the individual(s) involved.  
[ ]

Details of the Incident (include what happened, factors leading to the incident, if applicable describe injuries including if medical treatment was provided and if so where):  
[ ]

Other than calling 911 for emergency situations and contacting a parent or legal guardian, list other contacts made as required per OOD policy "Incident Reporting and Tracking" (10-ADM-04) or the VR Provider Manual.

Name of Person or Entity Contacted	Who Made the Contact	Date
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: [ ]

**OOD Staff Use ONLY:**



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## ***SIRF- Provider Form 2***

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Received by:

Date:

Comments (e.g., additional actions taken, next steps required)

Received by:

Date:

Comments (e.g., additional actions taken, next steps required)

Received by:

Date:

Comments (e.g., additional actions taken, next steps required)

Received by:

Date:

Comments (e.g., additional actions taken, next steps required)

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## ***Provider Health and Safety***

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- Providers should have procedures for ensuring participant safety
- Providers shall be able to provide OOD a copy of their policies and procedures that address participant health and safety within 24 hours of being requested to do so
- Services may not be able to continue until significant incidents have been resolved between the participant, OOD, and the provider with a safe plan to move forward in place
- Providers are responsible to accurately report any significant issues/safety concerns to the participants and/or their parent/legal guardian as appropriate
- Effective March 28, 2022, the updated Provider Rule requires Provider background checks and identifies requirements for transporting participants; this applies to seasonal staff as well

## Resources - OOD Offices

The Referral to CRP Form will have the referring VR Staff's phone number. If you need to find the main office phone number for any office, you can find it quickly at [ood.ohio.gov](http://ood.ohio.gov). Click on Individuals with Disabilities and then Find your Regional Office

Language Translation An Official Site of **Ohio.gov**



Individuals with Disabilities

WELCOME

SERVICES

# Empowering Ohioans with disabilities through employment disability determinations, and independence

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are available at OOD offices located throughout the state of Ohio to assist individuals with disabilities. Counselors at these local offices can assist individuals with disabilities determine if they qualify to receive services from OOD.

[FIND YOUR REGIONAL OFFICE](#)

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) provides counseling and guidance to individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment to jointly choose an employment goal based on strengths, resources, priorities,

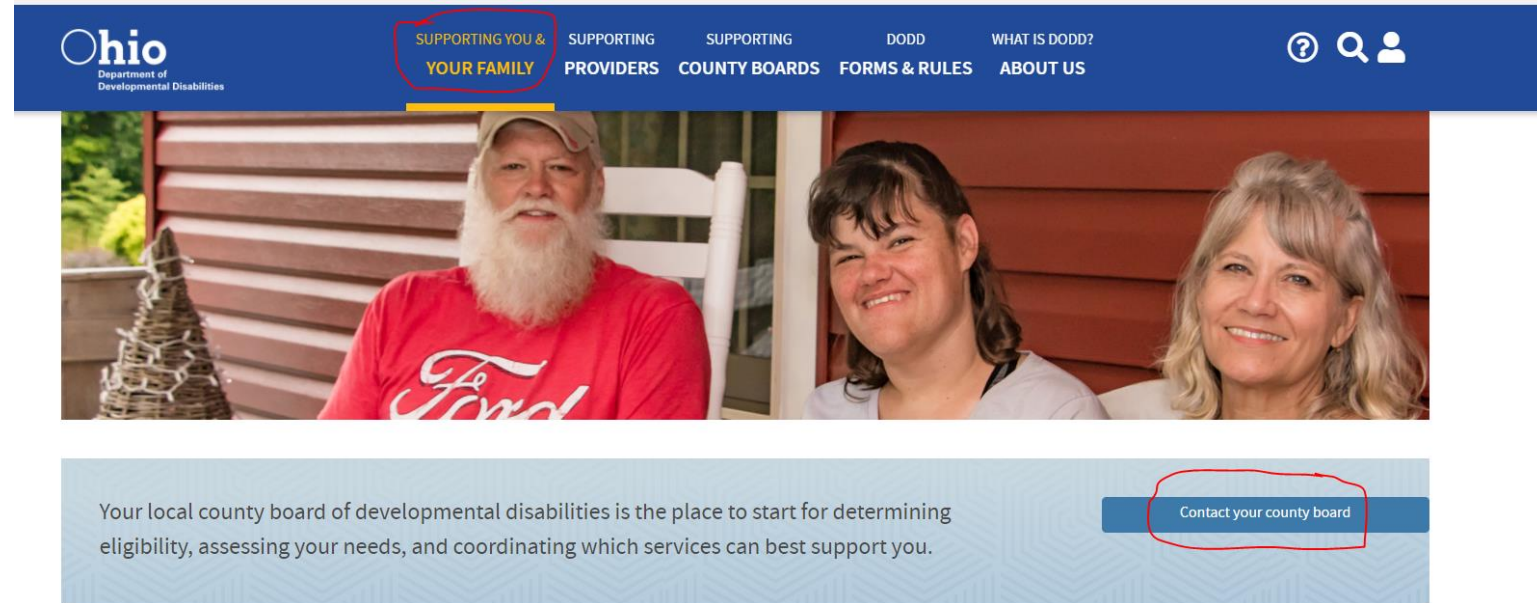
## Resources - Board of Developmental Disabilities

[www.dodd.ohio.gov](http://www.dodd.ohio.gov)

Click on “Supporting You  
& Your Family”

Click on “Contact your  
county board”

Report an MUI (Most  
Unusual Incident) by  
phone or download the  
incident report form from  
the relevant county  
board.



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## ***Resources - Children Services***

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855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453) is an automated telephone directory that will link callers directly to a child welfare or law enforcement office in their county.

### **What information is helpful when making a report?**

1. The name and address of the child you suspect is being abused or neglected;
2. The age of the child;
3. The name and address of the parents or caretakers;
4. The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the child and the address if available;
5. The reason you suspect the child is being abuse and neglected;
6. Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation; and
7. You have the option of giving your name or reporting anonymously. Giving your name can help the investigator clarify information. The agency will not give your name to the person suspected of abusing the child.



*Thank you!*

- Thank you to providers, VR Staff, and VR supervisors for all you do to keep participants safe during the summer and year-round!

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## ***Provider and Contract Management Unit***

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- **PCMU@ood.ohio.gov**
- Northeast: Ronna Woods, 216.310.4017, [ronna.woods@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:ronna.woods@ood.ohio.gov)
- East Central: Melanie Seckler, 330.203.3670, [melanie.seckler@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:melanie.seckler@ood.ohio.gov)
- Southeast: Jennifer Pollard, 740.517.3635, [jennifer.pollard@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:jennifer.pollard@ood.ohio.gov)
- Southwest: Ginger Scaife, 513.453.2707, [ginger.scaife@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:ginger.scaife@ood.ohio.gov)
- Northwest: Jennifer Cosgrove, 419.277.6754, [Jennifer.Cosgrove@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Cosgrove@ood.ohio.gov)
- Jay Burns, Supervisor, 614.507.3761, [jay.burns@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:jay.burns@ood.ohio.gov)