

# Critical Incident Review Team (CIRT) FAQ

## What is a CIRT?

The CIRT is a team assigned by the ODHS Director to conduct the executive review of an incident that resulted in a child fatality when maltreatment is suspected and criteria are met related to contact with Child Welfare, as outlined in ORS [418.806](#) to [418.816](#) and [OAR Chapter 013, Division 017](#).

## What is the purpose of a CIRT?

- To convene a team to evaluate and learn from cases designated as critical incidents
- To increase the Department's ability to address and recommend necessary changes to systems

## What are the criteria for a CIRT assignment?

The Department reasonably believes the death was the result of child abuse **and** the deceased child was in the custody of the Department at the time of the fatality **or** the deceased child, the deceased child's sibling, or any other child living in the household with the deceased child:

- was the subject of a CPS assessment within the 12 months preceding the fatality **or**
- had a pending child welfare or adoption case with the Department within the 12 months preceding the fatality **or**
- was the subject of a report of abuse made to the department within the 12 months preceding the fatality

## How is the local office informed of a CIRT being assigned?

- When the Department is informed through the Sensitive Issue Report procedure ([Chapter 1, Section 4](#)) that a child fatality occurs and the fatality appears to meet criteria for a CIRT, the Child Fatality Prevention and Review Program manager will be in contact with leadership for the district in which the critical incident and/or fatality occurred.
- The CIRT Coordinator will attend the 3-day Fatality Staffing, per the [fatality protocol](#), to listen to the information shared about the circumstances surrounding the fatality and provide introductory information regarding the CIRT process should the case meet criteria.
- After the 3-day Fatality Staffing and once the ODHS Director assigns the CIRT, the CIRT Coordinator from the Child Fatality Prevention and Review Program will be in contact with leadership, informing them of the assignment and providing an outline of next steps.

## Who attends the CIRT meeting(s)?

The CIRT law requires certain members and allows for others at the discretion of the ODHS Director. There are a number of standing CIRT members, including the ODHS Director, Child Welfare Deputy Director, ODHS Communications representative, ODHS Tribal Affairs (if applicable), Central Office Program Managers, Oregon Child Abuse Hotline Continuous Quality Improvement Manager, as well as

consultants and coordinators. In each case the local office leadership is also asked to participate. The CFPRP encourages local office leadership to consider including caseworkers who were involved in decision making on the case to participate in the CIRT process.

In addition to the typical participants, depending on the specific circumstances, a CIRT may include ODHS subject matter experts (e.g., Alcohol and Drug coordinator, Domestic and Sexual Violence coordinator, or Suicide Prevention coordinator), ODHS Self Sufficiency Program, or external partners with specific information related to the family or the larger family serving system (e.g., law enforcement, medical providers, or service providers).

### **What is the timeline associated with a CIRT?**

The CIRT Final Report is required to be submitted to the Department no later than the 100<sup>th</sup> day following the CIRT assignment. Local office leadership is asked to complete the CPS assessment within 90 days to ensure that all available information can be included in the CIRT Final Report.

### **What is available to the public regarding a CIRT?**

The Department is required to immediately post information about the critical incident on the Department's [public website](#). This includes:

- The date of the critical incident
- Age of the deceased child
- Whether the child was in the custody of the Department at the time of the critical incident or fatality
- Whether there was an open CPS assessment regarding the child at the time of the critical incident or the fatality
- The date the Department assigned the CIRT
- The due date for the CIRT's final report

In addition, the Department is required to share the CIRT Final Report on the Department's [public website](#). This report includes non-identifying information regarding the critical incident, the fatality and the family's relevant Oregon Child Welfare history.

### **What is a Discretionary Review?**

During 2021, the CFPRP began facilitating Internal Discretionary Reviews. An Internal Discretionary Review is convened by the ODHS Director when Child Welfare becomes aware of a fatality, near fatality, or other serious incident involving a family that has had contact with ODHS and the incident does not meet the criteria for a critical incident review team (CIRT) however an opportunity for system learning has been identified. The reviews are called by the ODHS Director to analyze ODHS actions in relation to the incident and to ensure the safety and well-being of all children being served by Child Welfare.

All the work surrounding the Internal Discretionary Review, such as engaging and preparing participants, facilitating meetings, partnering with other child welfare programs to conduct case reviews, and tracking data, is the responsibility of the CFPRP.

For more information, contact the Child Fatality Prevention and Review Program at [cw.prevention@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:cw.prevention@dhsosha.state.or.us).