

Minnesota Guidelines to Provide Necessary Supervision or Child Care Arrangements

Failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangement occurs when a child is unable to provide for their own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care. [M.S. 626.556, subd 2 (3)]

1. Modifying factors affecting screening decisions include:

- A child's age, mental ability and maturity level.
- The accessibility of the parent/guardian/or designated caretaker to the child by phone and/or in person.
- The presence of intellectual deficits, psychological problems, or mental health concerns; the existence of physical problems or disabilities.
- The behavioral history of a child, including suicidal thoughts or actions, fire setting, delinquency, vandalism or assault.
- A child's age, if using the kitchen stove, an iron or other appliance.
- The establishment of a well understood escape plan that has been worked out by the parent(s), or a fire drill practice that has been rehearsed with a child. The presence of a working fire/smoke detector in the home.
- The presence of unusual hazards in the home.
- A child feeling confident and safe when left alone.

2. Examples of parent(s) not providing adequately for a child's supervision and safety include but is not limited to:

- Failing to provide supervision of children in bathtubs, near swimming pools, lakes, ponds, holding tanks, machinery, busy streets and alleys.
- Selecting an unreliable person to provide child care.

3. Reports alleging inadequate supervision or child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response, including:

- Children age 7 and under who are left alone for any period of time.
- Children ages 8-10 who are left alone for more than three hours.
- Children ages 11-13 who are left alone for more than twelve hours.
- Children ages 14-15 who left alone for more than 24 hours.
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for over 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency.

4. Reports alleging inadequate child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response according to the following guidelines:

- Children under age 11 should not provide child care
- Children ages 11-15 who are placed in a child care role are subject to the same time restrictions of being left alone as listed above.
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with adequate adult back-up supervision.

Note: if children are left alone at the time the report is received by the local child welfare agency and the circumstances fall outside the timelines listed above, the local agency may refer the matter to local law enforcement for a child welfare and safety check.