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Informational Letter

Transmittal:	06-OCFS-INF-03
To:	Commissioners of Social Services Executive Directors of Voluntary Authorized Agencies
Issuing Division/Office:	Information Technology Division of Development and Prevention Services
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Subject:	Interim Case Recording Process
Suggested Distribution:	Directors of Services All child protective services staff All child welfare staff
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Attachments:	Appendix A; Links to OCFS intranet and internet websites
Attachment Available On – Line: Internet and Intranet	yes

Filing References, if applicable

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
03-OCFS ADM-01 05-OCFS ADM-02		18 NYCRR 428 18 NYCRR 466			

I. Purpose

The purpose of this informational letter is to provide Local Departments of Social Service (LDSS) and Voluntary Agencies with tools for documentation of casework activity during periods of CONNECTIONS system instability. The Interim Case Recording Process supports the timely recording of casework activity and other required child welfare documentation when the system is not available for normal case processing. While we continue to aggressively address these problems, it is important to note that CONNECTIONS continues to be the New York State system of record and we are making every effort to support your full use of it. Resolution of these problems is our top priority.

II. Background

Issues with system performance have been identified, including those associated with the deployment of Build 18.7.3 on March 17, 2006. Users have experienced problems with latency (slowness) and retrieving and saving data. When retrieving data, users are able generally to use the "OK" button to navigate past the error message and request the data a second time. However, if users are attempting to enter data and the error message is displayed, sometimes the data does not save as a "local save" (to the "T" drive on the user's PC) and must be re-entered.

There is no discernable pattern to the types, timing or geographic location of problems noted above. Users within the same LDSS are reporting different experiences with the system and individual users encounter different results at different times or with different transactions. LDSS and Voluntary Agency staff should continue to record data and narrative information into CONNECTIONS, where possible. It is also important that users continue to report problems to the Enterprise Help Desk to enable technical staff to diagnose problems and monitor the effect of remedial efforts.

III. Process

OCFS has posted a series of templates on the OCFS Internet and CONNECTIONS Intranet website. These templates correlate with the CONNECTIONS input screens, such as Progress Notes, CPS Investigation documents, the Family Services Intake and the FASP. Instructions for accessing the templates on the OCFS Internet site and CONNECTIONS Intranet site, as well as guidance on how to save, file and e-mail the templates, are contained in Appendix "A" that is attached to this informational letter. LDSS and Voluntary Agency staff should complete and store the templates electronically to facilitate re-entry of this information into CONNECTIONS at a future date. When caseworkers wish to retrieve a template from the Internet/Intranet site, they need to save it first to a drive (OCFS recommends the "H:\") drive) by using the "save as" selection from the File drop down menu. Users should carefully review their work and continue to save entries into the templates frequently.

The use of these templates is at the discretion of the LDSS. It is expected that a LDSS administrator will determine which templates will be used and under what circumstances. In this regard, Voluntary Agencies must consult with the respective LDSS with which they contract in regard to the use of templates on cases managed by that department. LDSS and Voluntary Agency administrators and supervisors must keep track of what material has been entered onto templates and develop a plan to enter the data into CONNECTIONS as soon as practicable. This plan should include provision to monitor the process of entering the data into CONNECTIONS.

Components

Progress Notes: This has been an area where users have frequently encountered problems with Saves. OCFS recommends the following procedure:

1. Open and save a Progress Note template in accordance with the instructions in Appendix "A" that is attached to this informational letter. Note that there is a separate CPS Investigation and Family Services Stage (FSS) version of the Progress Note template.
2. Within the CONNECTIONS case, start a new Progress Note. Enter the data fields and narrative fields. Do not attempt to save.
3. Highlight the narrative section of the entered note
4. Use the "hot keys" to cut and paste the note:
 - a. Press Control – C (to initiate the "copy")
 - b. Open the template from Step 1 and place cursor into Narrative
 - c. Press Control – V to "paste" the narrative text into the template
5. Return to the Progress Note in the CONNECTIONS Case and save it. If the save is successful, the note is stored in the CONNECTIONS data base and the version done on the template may be discarded. If the save fails, after repeated attempts or users are otherwise unable to complete the Progress Note in the CONNECTIONS case, then the template version of the Progress Note should be saved and filed.
6. The Progress Note template contains dropdown values just as in the CONNECTIONS case. Click on "Select One" and the values for that field will appear for the user to select.

The CPS Investigation Progress Note template can be found in the section labeled CPS Investigation. The FSS version of the template can be found in the section labeled FSS-Common Modules.

CPS Investigation/Safety Assessment: There are templates to support the documentation of a CPS Investigation. CPS workers should document their safety assessments and other CPS investigation tasks within the CONNECTIONS case record. If attempts to enter or save work in CONNECTIONS fail, templates are available to record Safety Assessments. CPS staff should document in their progress notes that a Safety Assessment was completed on a template and where it can be located.

RAP (Risk Assessment Profiles): The Risk Assessment Profile should be completed in the CONNECTIONS case up to the point where the risk rating is calculated. Users should then

create a screen print of the risk rating by hitting the screen print key then holding down the CTRL key and the C key. At that point, users should open up a WORD document and paste the screen print into it using CTRL-V. This action will place the screen print on the WORD document where it can be saved and then retrieved if the save is not completed. The user can then hit Save. If the save is successful, then the screen print can be ignored.

If the save is not successful, users should then go into their H:\ drive and save the screen print by opening up a WORD document, and again holding down the CTRL key, and then hitting the V key. This action will place the screen print into the WORD document where it can be saved with the case number and date.

RAP templates: If users cannot access the RAP in CONNECTIONS, they should complete the Risk Assessment Profile in the FASP templates, or in the standalone RAP templates. The RAP template can be found in the CPS Investigation and within the Initial, Comprehensive and Reassessment FASP templates. The Initial FASP contains both a CPS and non-CPS Risk Assessment. They are also presented as standalone documents, so that users can complete them without having to tab through the entire FASP.

Completing the RAP in any of the templates will not include a calculation of the Risk rating, but the information that users include will help guide them in determining risk.

Users should first save the template to their H:\ drive, and then complete it. Completing the RAP in the FASP template will not include a calculation of the Risk rating, but users can save the template and have backup documentation of the risk elements and comments for later data entry.

The Risk calculation should be completed in the CONNECTIONS case. If the RAP is completed in the template, it must be entered into the CONNECTIONS case, when practicable.

Family Services Intake (FSI): Note that if a template is used, it will not be immediately possible to stage progress the case to the Family Services Stage which has implications for opening the case in WMS/Services, including payment authorization. Therefore, it is important that this information be entered into CONNECTIONS as soon as possible.

Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP): Templates are available for one version of each FASP type (Initial, Comprehensive and Reassessment). It will be necessary for caseworkers to determine which specific modules of the FASP should be completed based on the Program Choice and Permanency Planning Goal(s) for the tracked children. Plan Amendment Templates are under development.

Conclusion

OCFS will continue to communicate with LDSS and Voluntary Agencies and will continue to explore other supports to the field. CONNECTIONS Regional Support staff and

Implementation Specialists are available to provide technical assistance in the use of CONNECTIONS as well as the templates.

/s/ Jane Lynch

Issued By:

Name: Jane Lynch

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Division of Prevention and Development Services

/s/ William E. Travis, Jr.

Issued By:

Name: William E. Travis, Jr.

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Division of Information Technology

APPENDIX A

Instructions for Accessing the Interim Case Recording Process Templates

From the OCFS Internet site:

To access the templates use the following URL: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cnxtmpl/>

From the CONNECTIONS Intranet site:

- Access the CONNECTIONS intranet site at <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/cnxtmpl/template.asp>
- Click on “Interim Case Recording Process Templates”

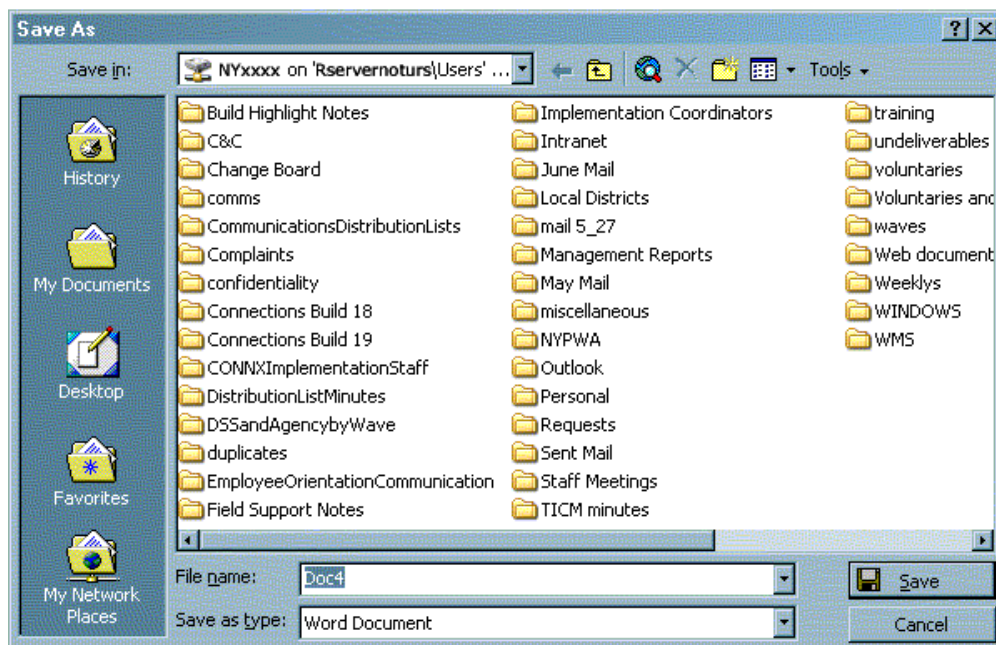
The 3 types of templates (CPS Investigations, Family Services Intake and Family Services Stage) can be accessed from these links.

Instructions for Saving the Interim Case Recording Process Templates

Users should save the document in a named folder (use the case name and number) in the **H:drive** before entering data in the form.

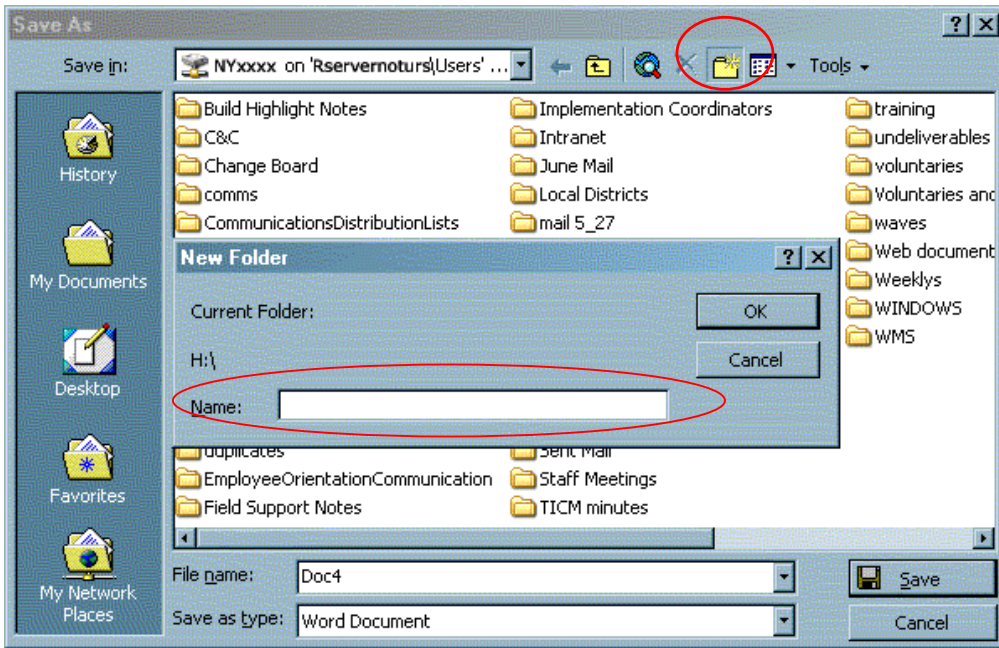
Below are instructions for creating a **New Folder**:

Step 1: With the document open, click the **File** menu and select **Save As**
Select Your H folder, e.g. ny9999



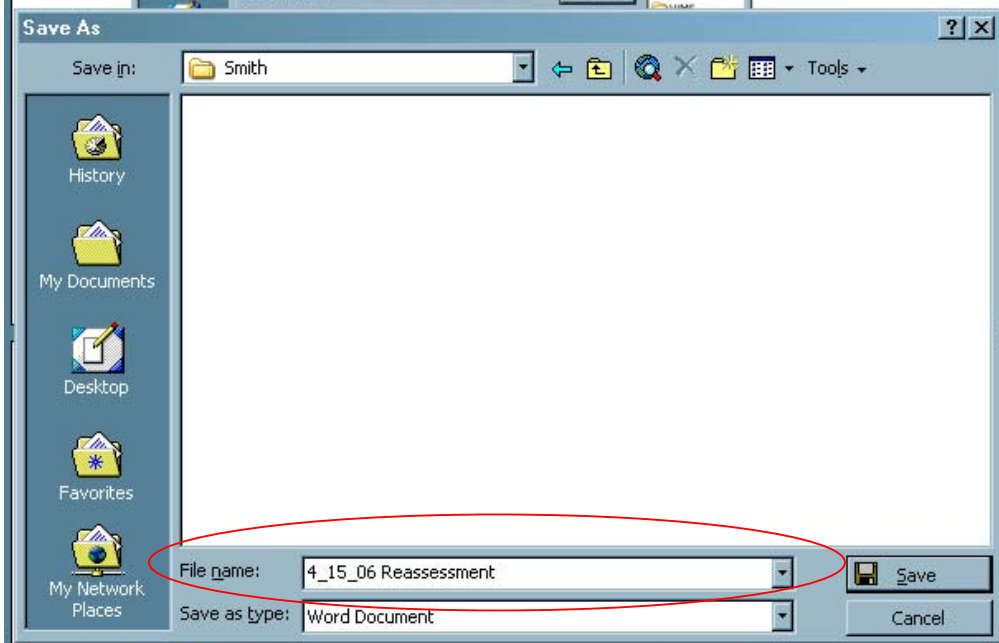
Step 2: Click the file folder with the asterisk.

Step 3: Type the Case Name in the **Name** field



Step 4: Click **OK**

Step 5: Type in the name of the document in the **File name** field.



Step 6: Click **Save**

The named document is now saved in the Case Name folder in your **H:drive**.

After you save form onto your H drive, you can update the document. You will need to save the second version in the same folder on your H drive. This second save will save the template as a word document that you can update.

A. Instructions for Navigating in the Document

To move forward from field to field, press the TAB KEY. To move backward from field to field, press the SHIFT and TAB keys. To tab within a field, press the CTRL and TAB keys. If you hit the Enter key, you will add blank lines to the form. You may delete blank lines by pressing the backspace key.

B. Instructions for E-mailing the Templates

If templates must be e-mailed between agencies, adhere to the existing security and confidentiality guidelines posted on CONNECTIONS intranet site, Security page using the following URL: <http://ocfs.state.nynet/connect/security/>