

Sample Conditions for Return for each Safety Threat

This document provides examples of possible Conditions for Return for each of the 16 Safety Threats. For each Safety Threat, a very brief description of how the Safety Threat is occurring in the family is provided.

This handout provides examples and therefore is not intended to address all the information that should be understood and documented about Safety Threats. For this reason, the sample Conditions for Return statements may be less comprehensive than an actual child welfare case when the identified Safety Threats and how they are occurring in the family are better understood.

The examples of Conditions for Return under each Safety Threat are divided into the three areas necessary for an in-home safety plan to be possible. In developing Conditions for Return, the three areas must be considered and addressed, WHEN they are among the reasons an in-home safety plan is not currently possible:

1. Parent(s) willingness and ability to participate in an ongoing safety plan and to continue to work with DHS toward achieving the expected outcomes;
3. The living environment being safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of a sustainable in-home safety plan; and,
4. The frequency and type of safety service provider intervention necessary to ensure child safety.

SAFETY THREAT #1:		
The family situation results in no adult in the home routinely performing parenting duties and responsibilities that assure a child's safety.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Mary does not provide routine care and supervision for her 6-year-old daughter, Ellen. Even when Mary is at home, she does not ensure Ellen is fed, does not bathe her or assist with her other daily needs. Mary is often unaware of Ellen's whereabouts and often leaves her home alone for hours at a time.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Mary will understand her actions have not been safe for her daughter. Mary will demonstrate she is motivated to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to keep her daughter safe and healthy. Mary will be willing and able to allow DHS staff and others in her home as often as needed to ensure Ellen is well-cared for and safe.	No C4R is needed for this element. The physical living environment is safe and stable enough to allow an in-home safety plan to be effectively implemented and managed in a sustainable way.	A responsible adult will be in the home each day to ensure Mary's basic needs are met and she is appropriately supervised. One or more responsible adults will be readily available (24/7) to respond to a call from Mary to baby sit whenever Mary wants/needs to leave the house for any reason. DHS staff and others will be available to make random, unannounced visits to monitor Ellen's safety.

SAFETY THREAT #2:		
2. One or both parents' or legal guardians' behavior is violent and/or they are acting (behaving) dangerously.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Cindy frequently lashes out at her 8 year-old son, Steve, hitting him uncontrollably with her fists and with objects. Cindy has made threats to kill Steve and/or herself on more than one occasion.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Cindy will be willing to have safety service providers in her home as often as necessary to keep Steve safe.</p> <p>Cindy will recognize her violent behavior is harmful to Steve.</p> <p>Cindy's actions and conversations will demonstrate she wants to learn to behave and parent safely.</p> <p>Cindy's behaviors will be safe enough and predictable enough to allow the safety service providers to be safely in the home to protect Steve.</p>	No C4R is needed for this element. The physical living environment is safe and stable enough to allow an in-home safety plan to be effectively implemented and managed in a sustainable way.	<p>A person approved by DHS will be present whenever Steve is with Cindy to protect Steve from Cindy behaving violently.</p> <p>A plan will be in place for Steve to be away from the home and Cindy at all times when a protective person is not in the home.</p>

SAFETY THREAT #3:		
3. One or both parents' or legal guardians' behavior is impulsive or they will not/cannot control their behavior.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Greta is so depressed that she is unable to provide basic care for her three children (7, 4, and 2); she is lethargic; sleeps most of the time; refuses to take medication; cries and sobs; cannot keep the home safe or hygienic.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Greta will agree to have people in her home as often as necessary to help keep her children safe. Greta will recognize the impact of her depression on the safety of her children. Greta will be taking steps toward addressing her depression and increasing her ability to safely parent her children.	The home will be physically safe and hygienic. A plan will be in place to assist Greta in keeping the home clean and safe.	A responsible person, approved by DHS, will be in the home each day to ensure the children's needs are met and the home is safe and clean.

SAFETY THREAT #4:		
4. Parents' or legal guardians' perceptions of a child are extremely negative.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Don openly says he hates his 12 year-old effeminate son, Sean. He describes feeling repulsed by the boy and as a result verbally and physically attacks him, saying he is trying to "toughen him up."		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Don's behaviors will be safe enough and predictable enough for safety service providers to be safely in the home to ensure Sean's safety.</p> <p>Don is willing to have people observe and supervise all of his interactions with Sean.</p> <p>Don will demonstrate he understands the harm to his son caused by his beliefs and behaviors.</p> <p>Don's actions will show he wants to take the steps necessary to have a safe and healthy relationship with Sean.</p>	No C4R is needed for this element. The physical living environment is safe and stable enough to allow an in-home safety plan to be effectively implemented and managed in a sustainable way.	A responsible person approved by DHS is available to supervise all contact between Don and Sean to ensure Sean is not mistreated.

SAFETY THREAT #5:		
5. A family situation or behavior is such that the family does not have or use resources necessary to assure a child's safety.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Junior and Rita's home is near being condemned because of the deteriorating physical structure, faulty wiring and unhealthy conditions. There is no heat and the plumbing is inadequate. Junior and Rita both have mild cognitive delays and they make poor choices about their money and the care of their home. They have sufficient income to provide a safe home for the children, but consistently use the money for things not related to child safety.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Junior and Rita will understand the safety threats posed to the children when the home is unclean and in disrepair.</p> <p>Junior and Rita will allow DHS and others to be in the home as often as necessary to assist them in keeping the children safe.</p> <p>Junior and Rita Junior and Rita will show they are motivated to learn how keep the home safe for the children.</p>	<p>The family home will be safe and clean with adequate plumbing, heat, and wiring.</p> <p>A plan will be in place to support Junior and Rita in making sure the home is safely livable day to day.</p>	<p>A person approved by DHS will be in the home twice weekly to ensure the ongoing safety of the home.</p>

SAFETY THREAT #6:		
6. One or both parents or legal guardians' attitudes, emotions and behavior are such that they are threatening to severely harm a child or are fearful they will abuse or neglect the child and/or request placement.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Marsha's ability to cope with her newborn infant's colic and fitful temperament has deteriorated. Lack of sleep, feelings of inadequacy, and the stress of being a single parent are combining in ways that frighten Marsha. Marsha reports having thoughts of hurting the baby. Marsha said if the baby remained in her care, she was sure she was going to hurt her and that someone else should raise the baby. Marsha asked the CPS worker to take her daughter into protective custody.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Marsha will be able to describe what factors led up to her fearing she would hurt her baby, and how and why her fears about hurting the baby have begun to diminish.</p> <p>Marsha will be clear in her statements and actions she wants to learn to safely parent her daughter.</p> <p>Marsha will be willing to have various persons in her home to supervise all of her contact with her baby.</p>	No C4R is needed for this element. The physical living environment is safe and stable enough to allow an in-home safety plan to be effectively implemented and managed in a sustainable way.	A responsible family member or combination of volunteers and professionals approved by DHS will be in the family home every day and at all times to provide adequate supervision and care of the baby, as well as to supervise all contact Marsha has with the baby.

SAFETY THREAT #7:		
7. One or both parents' or legal guardians' attitudes or emotions are such that they intended to seriously hurt the child.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Beatrice burned her 13 month-old daughter with a cigarette to teach her a lesson. Beatrice believes what she did was an acceptable method to teach children lessons and openly states her intention to use physical pain and injury for punishment in the future.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Beatrice will demonstrate she understands what she did was wrong and openly and believably show regret and remorse for the way she treated Phoebe.</p> <p>Beatrice will be able to describe what the consequences can be using pain and injury to punish a child and will be actively engaged in learning and demonstrating new ways to discipline Phoebe.</p> <p>Beatrice will be willing to have persons supervise all of her contact with her daughter.</p>	No C4R is needed for this element. The physical living environment is safe and stable enough to allow an in-home safety plan to be effectively implemented and managed in a sustainable way.	One or more responsible adults approved by DHS must be available 24 hours a day to be present when Beatrice and Phoebe are together and must actively observe all interaction between Beatrice and Phoebe.

SAFETY THREAT #8:		
8. A situation, attitudes and/or behavior is such that one or both parents or legal guardians lack parenting knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to assure a child’s safety.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Bryan and Sheila are the 18 year-old parents of a newborn. Both adults are mildly cognitively limited and socially immature. They have no knowledge or skill needed in providing basic care to the infant. In addition to the basic care problems, they mishandle the child and behave toward her like she is a doll, handling her roughly and leaving her strapped in her car seat the majority of the time, failing to recognize or respond to her cues.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Bryan and Sheila will show they understand what the consequences for Heather could be if they don’t learn how to keep her healthy and safe, and will be taking actions to begin to learn how to safely care for Heather.</p> <p>Bryan and Sheila will be agreeable to having someone in their home daily to assist them in safely caring for their baby.</p> <p>Bryan and Sheila will demonstrate the ability to consistently handle Heather gently and carefully and will clearly understand the importance of doing so.</p>	No C4R is needed for this element. The physical living environment is safe and stable enough to allow an in-home safety plan to be effectively implemented and managed in a sustainable way.	A family member, volunteer or professional with suitable knowledge and skill to meet the safety and basic care needs of Heather will be present at all times to assist Bryan and Sheila in appropriately caring for Heather.

SAFETY THREAT #9:		
9. Parents' or legal guardians' attitudes and behavior result in overtly rejecting CPS intervention, refusing access to a child, and/or there is some indication that the parents or legal guardians will flee.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Fred is the father of two boys: 4 and 7. Both children have chronic medical problems. Despite clear instructions by medical providers on numerous occasions, Fred has failed to provide his sons with the necessary medical care. Fred has a long history of running away from CPS interventions and has said repeatedly he doesn't think the boys' conditions are as bad as everyone is saying, and he knows what's best for his sons and will not let CPS run his life. Fred has no connections in the community and admitted he was making arrangements to leave town when the children were taken into care. (Note: A safety threat directly related to the medical neglect would also be identified under these circumstances.)		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Fred will show he clearly understands his sons' exceptional medical needs and is committed to routinely providing the stability they need to be safe and healthy.</p> <p>Fred will be actively engaged with DHS and working diligently to increase his ability to keep his sons safe and healthy.</p> <p>Fred agrees to be in touch with CPS by phone or in person as often as requested by DHS, and is willing to have unannounced visits to his place of employment and his home as often as DHS deems necessary.</p>	<p>Fred will show evidence of an established residence based on some standing commitment (such as a lease or mortgage), and will have income adequate to sustain the safe, stable housing indefinitely.</p>	<p>Persons (such as Fred's landlord and/or employer) will be willing and able to notify DHS immediately if it even appears possible Fred is intending to leave the area.</p> <p>Dr. Jones will report to DHS the same day if a medical appointment is cancelled or Fred does not schedule all necessary appointments or fails bring the boys to a scheduled appointment.</p>

SAFETY THREAT #10:		
10. Parents' or legal guardians' attitude, behavior, perception result in the refusal and/or failure to meet a child's exception needs that affect his/her safety.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Lydia has chronic, life-threatening breathing problems requiring constant and elaborate care including the use and maintenance of medical equipment. Her mother, Sandy, is easily distracted; in denial about the seriousness of Lydia's medical problem; and preoccupied with having fun, which results in Lydia not receiving the routine medical care she needs and requiring frequent hospitalizations.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Sandy will accept and understand Lydia's medical needs. She will be able to describe the dangers of Lydia not being properly treated and will be supportive of Lydia receiving the necessary medical care. Sandy will be willing and able to have all necessary persons in her home to assist with Lydia's care.	All necessary medical equipment will be available in the home. A plan to maintain the equipment in good working order will be in place.	A person or persons will be available and have sufficient expertise to make sure Lydia receives her necessary daily care for as long as needed.

SAFETY THREAT #11:		
11. Family situation is such that living arrangements seriously endanger the child’s physical health.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Bill and Wanda Radcliff have an 18 month-old and a 3 year-old. The home is overrun with pets, littered with pet feces on the floor; the smell of animal urine is overwhelming; contains rotting and spoiled food; includes used diapers discarded on the floor; trash is overflowing; plumbing is faulty and backing up; the home is infested with roaches, fleas and rats. Both children are covered with infected insect bites and have breathing problems which medical providers have attributed to the filth in the home.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Bill and Wanda will be able to describe the safety threats to the children resulting from the dangerous condition of the home. They will demonstrate they are motivated to make and maintain necessary changes and are open to visits and oversight as necessary.	The home must be clean and safe and a plan must be in place to ensure it is appropriately maintained. Bill and Wanda will reduce the number of pets to 1 or 2, and will demonstrate the ability to care for the pets in ways to avoid filth to the home.	A person approved by DHS will be willing and able to visit the home a minimum of 3 times each week to ensure the ongoing safety of the physical environment.

SAFETY THREAT #12:		
12. The family situation is such that a child has serious physical injuries or serious physical symptoms from abuse or neglect.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Jane has become increasingly frustrated with 8-year-old James wetting his pants and his bed. She punished James for wetting his pants at school by holding him down in a tub of scalding hot water. James has second and third degree burns on his legs and buttocks from the immersion.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Jane will be able to discuss the factors that contributed to her abusing James. Jane will demonstrate remorse for the child's mistreatment and will be actively involved in services and activities to address the concerns. Jane will be willing and able to allow people to supervise her contact with James and to assist with his medical care as needed.	James will feel safe about returning home with the ongoing safety plan in place. Jane's emotional state will be calm and predictable enough to allow safety service providers to be safe while providing care and safety for James.	A person or persons approved by DHS will supervise all contact between James and his mother. A person or persons with sufficient medical knowledge will be available to be in the home daily to ensure James' burns are appropriately cared for.

SAFETY THREAT #13:		
13. The situation is such that a child shows serious emotional symptoms and/or lacks behavioral control that result in provoking dangerous reactions in parents or legal guardians.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Johnny is 12 years old and just attempted suicide for the third time. Johnny’s father, Thomas, is a single parent and reports he is exhausted, has done everything he can think of to help Johnny, and is “done.”		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Thomas will demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn to intervene appropriately, monitor (behavior, meds, services, interventions) Johnny’s needs, and obtain ongoing supports from service providers (school, mental health, others.) Thomas will report being willing and able to meet Johnny’s needs with support from others.	Johnny’s emotional symptoms and behavioral control will be remediated to the point that he is unlikely to provoke dangerous reactions in others and/or commit self-destructive behaviors.	There will be a plan in place to obtain professional intervention for Johnny on an emergency basis whenever needed.

SAFETY THREAT #14:		
14. The situation is such that a child is fearful of the home situation or people within the home.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
A.J. is observably shaken and afraid of his home situation. Drug transactions, prostitution and criminal activity are occurring in the home on a daily basis. A.J. is clearly afraid of the people who frequent the home and of his father, Greg, who is a gang member. A.J. is terrorized and made fun of by his father and his father's friends.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Greg will be willing to have a responsible adult in the home as often as necessary to supervise Greg's interactions with A.J. and to ensure A.J.'s safety.</p> <p>Greg will demonstrate a connection with and empathy toward A.J. and will be able to describe how his behavior and the behavior of his friends have made his son fearful and unsafe.</p> <p>Through his actions and statements, Greg will demonstrate he is committed to making the changes necessary to allow A.J. to be safe, and feel safe.</p> <p>Greg will willingly limit the persons in the family home and/or in contact with A.J. to those persons deemed appropriate by DHS.</p>	<p>A.J. will feel comfortable with the ongoing safety plan and will express no fear of returning to his home and/or being with his father.</p> <p>Only persons approved by DHS will be in the family home and/or in contact with A.J.</p> <p>A plan will be in place for A.J. to safely leave the family home if he feels unsafe.</p> <p>Greg's own associations and behaviors will not create an environment within the home which threatens child safety (drugs, gangs, drive-by shooting, etc.)</p>	<p>A person or persons known and trusted by A.J. will have face to face contact with A.J. on a daily basis to ensure A.J.'s physical and emotional safety is being maintained.</p> <p>Greg's parole officer and DHS case worker will make random, unannounced visits to the home to check on A.J.'s physical and emotional safety and to help assure there are no unauthorized persons or activities happening in the home.</p>

SAFETY THREAT #15:		
15. Because of perception, attitude or emotion, parents or legal guardians cannot, will not or do not explain a child's injuries or threatening family condition.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Sarah is 9 months old. She has an unexplained serious injury to her head. The medical personnel who examined Sarah have diagnosed the injury as non accidental. Sarah's mom, Missy, and dad, Donald, were both at home with Sarah at the time of the injury and have offered three different explanations for the injury, none of which fit.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
<p>Missy and/or Donald* will work diligently with CPS to sort out how Sarah was actually injured.</p> <p>Missy and/or Donald* will be able to describe the circumstances and conditions which contributed to the abuse of Sarah.</p> <p>Missy and/or Donald* will demonstrate believable remorse in relation to Sarah's injuries.</p> <p>Missy and/or Donald* will clearly and obviously feel a connection to Sarah and a responsibility for ensuring Sarah's safety.</p> <p>Missy and/or Donald* will be actively engaged with DHS and diligently working to increase their ability to safely parent.</p>	Missy and/or Donald's behaviors and emotional state must be calm enough and predictable enough to allow management of an in home safety plan with in-home safety service providers 24/7.	<p>One or more suitable, trustworthy adults will be present at all times and will have primary responsibility for Sarah's care and safety. They will closely supervise all contact between Sarah and her parent(s).</p> <p>*If only one parent meets the conditions for return, Sarah will be returned to that parent with the ongoing safety plan restricting contact by the other parent.</p>

SAFETY THREAT #16:		
One or both parents or legal guardians has a child out of his/her care due to child abuse or neglect, or has lost a child due to termination of parental rights.		
How is the safety threat specifically occurring in the family?		
Lisa has a significant history with our agency. She has had her parental rights terminated on three children, two years ago. This termination was based on Lisa's drug and alcohol addiction and her inability to care for her children while she was high or withdrawing from methamphetamine. Lisa has given birth to another infant who has tested positive for methamphetamine at birth.		
Conditions for Return		
Parental willingness/ability to cooperate with the safety plan and work toward the Expected Outcomes	Living environment is safe, stable and sustainable enough to allow management of an in-home ongoing safety plan.	Safety service providers
Lisa will be observed to be actively in recovery and taking appropriate steps to support her continued sobriety. Lisa will describe the dangers to her child created by her addictive choices and behaviors and show she is committed to ensuring the safety of her child.	Lisa's behaviors will be calm and stable enough to allow others in the family home to care for her child.	A responsible family member or combination of volunteers and professionals are in the family home every day to provide adequate supervision and care of the baby, as well as supervise all contact Lisa has with the baby.