



## Serious Injury in Residential Care

**Policy Number:** RP-26-03

**Release Date:** May 14, 2026

**Effective Date:** November 17, 2026

**Applicability:** All Licensed Residential Programs

---

### BACKGROUND

Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) regulations require Residential Programs to notify EEC of serious incidents, including when a resident receives a serious injury. This policy seeks to outline the requirements for reporting such injuries to EEC.

### AUTHORITY

- 3.04(5)(f): In the event of serious illness or injury, the licensee shall notify, as soon as reasonably possible, the Department, the resident's parent or guardian, the referral source, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, when applicable.

### DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, serious injury shall mean any injury to a resident that results in the need for a medical hospital, emergency department, or urgent care visit. Serious injuries include, but are not limited to, broken bones, lacerations requiring stitches, and loss of consciousness.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Any serious injury to a resident in residential care must be reported to EEC immediately and within 24 hours of the incident and, in accordance with EEC's [Internal Investigations Policy](#), investigated by the licensee.

Serious injuries that occur under the following conditions must also be reported to EEC:

- Any serious injury, including self-injury, which results in hospitalization due to the need for medical care;
- Any serious injury that occurs during restraint in residential care, regardless of whether it results in the inpatient hospitalization of a resident;
- Any injury to a resident which results in the filing of a 51A report to the Department of Children and Families alleging abuse or neglect of the resident while the resident was in the care of the program, as required by 606 CMR 3.04(5)(d);
- Any injury to a resident which might be the result of staff error or neglect, and which is the subject of an internal investigation by the program; and
- Any injury to a resident that results in a complaint to the licensee regarding their care of the resident.

A serious injury must be reported to EEC regardless of whether the injury occurred at the residential facility or away from the facility while the resident was in the care of the program.

All incidents of injury to residents in group care are investigated by EEC and, when appropriate, in coordination with DCF and law enforcement and are documented as part of the program's record.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information on conducting an internal investigation, please see EEC's [Internal Investigations policy](#).

## **OBSOLETE**

For licensed Residential programs, this policy replaces EEC's previous Serious Injury in Residential Care or Placement policy issued on September 25, 2008.