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**DANGER AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT**  
**ENTRY SERVICES**  
**PRACTICE AND FACES.NET TIP SHEET**

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**CREATION DATE:** January 14, 2016

The purpose of the SDM Danger and Safety Assessment is to help assess whether any child is likely to be in imminent danger of serious harm/maltreatment, and to determine whether a safety plan can be created to provide appropriate protection from that danger or if the child needs to be removed from the home.

The Danger and Safety Assessment is a household focused assessment through which workers arrive at an individual decision for each child.

### **Section 1: Entry Services Practice**

#### **What is the Danger and Safety Assessment (DAS)?**

- The Danger and Safety Assessment (DAS) is a HOUSEHOLD-based assessment that you will use to assess the IMPACT the CAREGIVER is having on the child. It informs what you are worried about and helps you determine if the child stay safely in the home.
- You ultimately reach an assessment decision for EACH CHILD in that household

#### **When is the DAS used?**

- The initial DAS should be completed on all open CPS referrals at first contact with the child and caregiver and documented in FACES.NET within 24 hours.
- If circumstances have changed within the family to include any additions or deletions to the household, you will be required to complete another DAS.
- Links and Institutional Abuse Investigations do not require a DAS.

#### **How is a DAS initiated?**

- You must develop a household in FACES.NET that includes the caregivers and the children that reside in the home.

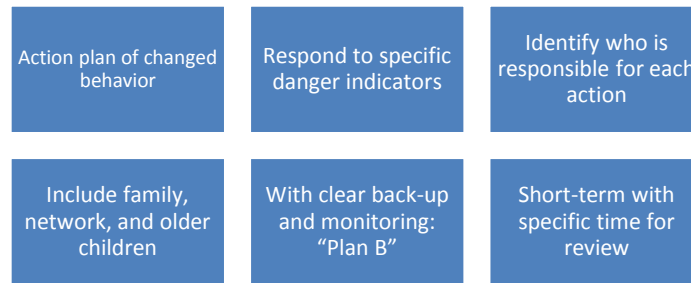
#### **If the child is a member of two households, on which household does the DAS need to be completed?**

- The initial DAS must be completed on the household where the child lives most of the time.
- If the child lives 50/50 in 2 households, you should consult with your supervisor to determine if both households should be assessed. NOTE: One DAS cannot be applied to multiple households.

#### **What prompts me to consider safety planning with a family?**

- If there are any danger indicators present for any child in the household, you will proceed with identifying *Considerations for Safety Planning* which will help determine if a temporary safety plan is needed to protect the child and address the dangers while allowing the family to remain intact.

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**Figure 1**

**How many Assessment Decisions can be made and what are they?**

- There are 3 Assessment Decisions which are the following:
  - SAFE: No Dangers exist. No safe interventions are required
  - SAFE WITH A PLAN: Danger indicators exist; a safety plan has been created with the family to address the danger while the family remains intact.
  - UNSAFE: As least one child has been found to be unsafe; 1 or more danger indicators are present that can't be controlled by a safety plan. – A REMOVAL HAS OCCURRED.

**What if the DAS shows the family to be *safe with a plan*?**

- If it is determined from your initial DAS that your family is *safe with a plan*, then you must meet with the family and conduct another DAS to determine if the danger is resolved.
- The Investigation CANNOT close if the DAS prior to closure determines that the family is *safe with a plan* unless the family is connected to an open case.
- The Family Assessment CANNOT close if the DAS prior to closure determines that the family is *safe with a plan* unless the referral is converted to Investigations.

**What happens if I need to convert my Family Assessment to an Investigation?**

- If you have an open Family Assessment referral with a DAS assessment of safe with a plan, a **second DAS** is required before the family can be converted to Investigations. The second DAS assessment should indicate that the child is unsafe in order to proceed with the conversion.
- If you have an open Family Assessment referral with a DAS assessment of unsafe due to elevated concerns, caregiver not granting access to the child, and new allegations that require an investigative response – the referral should be converted.

**What if I am unable to see a child... would I complete the DAS?**

- NOT in its entirety. Complete the assessment on the other children in that household, then select ***unable to assess*** in FACES.NET for the children who could not be seen.
- There are six choices to consider when *unable to assess* is selected: Abscondence, Incarceration, Unable to Locate, Out of Jurisdiction, Emancipation, and Child Fatality

**Who do I go to for support?**

- If you have any questions about the tool or conducting the assessment, please talk to your supervisor or your program manager. If you have any questions about the functionality in FACES, please contact the FACES helpdesk.

## Danger and Safety Assessment Flow

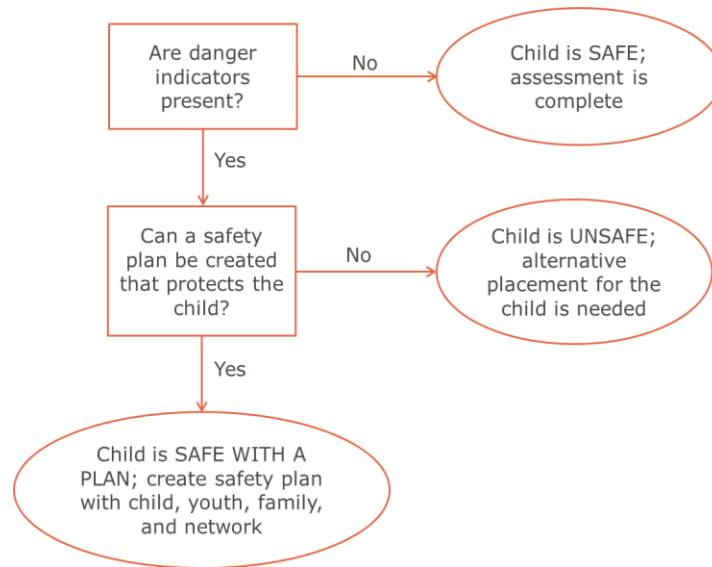



Figure 2

## Section 2: FACES.NET

### Pointers to Remember:

- 
1. A Household must be created prior to completing the FACES.NET Danger and Safety Assessment.
  2. Any changes made to the Household after approval of the Danger and Safety Assessment will invalidate the Assessment. A new Danger and Safety Assessment is required.
  3. An Assessment Decision must be selected for each child.
  4. If "Safe with a Plan" is selected, then a subsequent Danger and Safety Assessment must be completed. If the subsequent Assessment remains "Safe with a Plan", the Referral can only be closed under the following conditions: 1) Link to an existing Referral 2) Link to a closed Referral and Reopen 3) Open a Case.

### Danger and Safety Assessment:

#### Steps include:

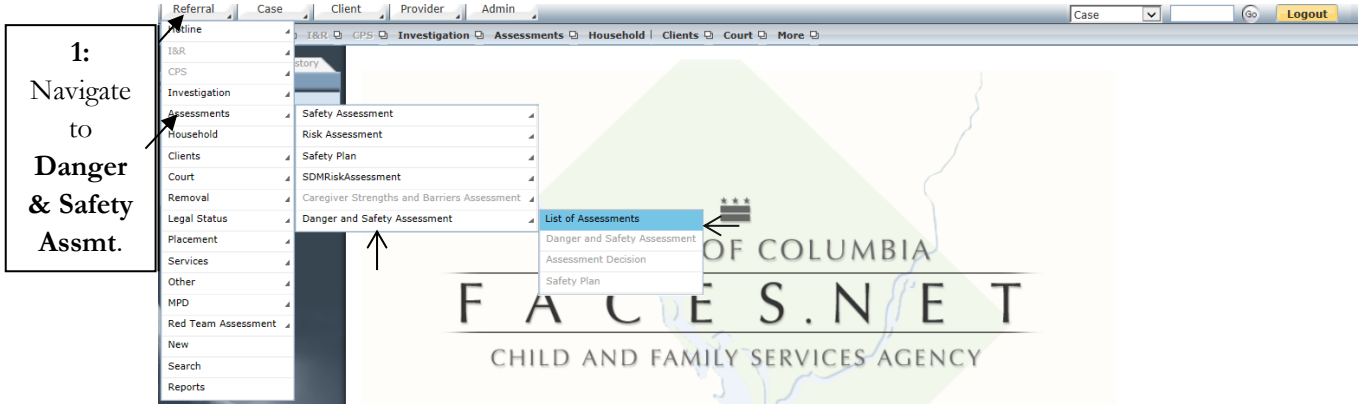
*Put Referral into focus*

**Step 1:** Navigate from **Referral, Assessments, Danger and Safety Assessment, List of Assessments.**

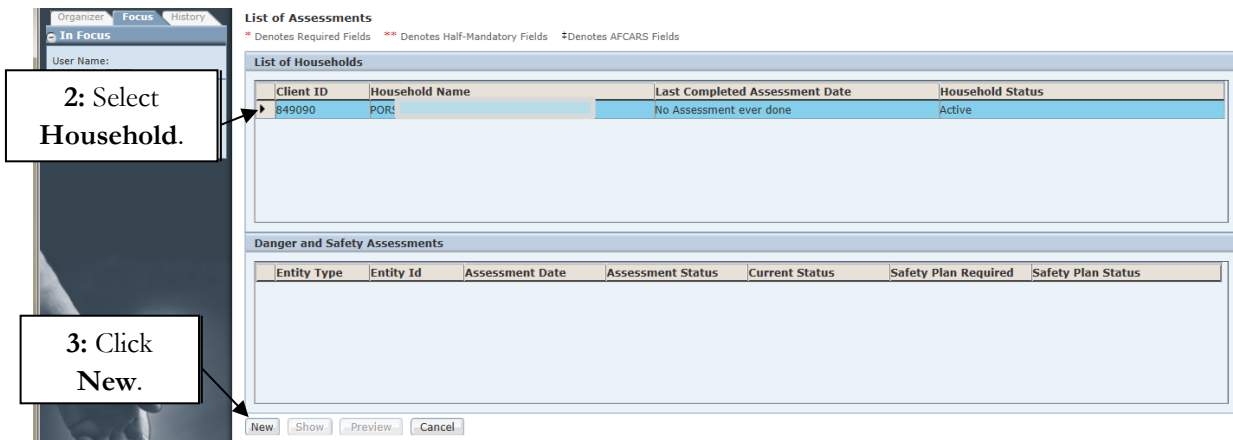
**Step 2:** Select **Household.**

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**Step 3: Click New.**



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



**Note:**

- If the last Assessment for the selected Household is not approved, “New” button is disabled.
- If the last Assessment for the selected household requires a safety plan and a safety plan is not yet approved, “New” button is disabled.
- If Investigation is closed, “New” button is disabled.

**Step 4: Enter Assessment Date.**

**Step 5: Complete Assessment Questions and Select Client(s), as applicable.**

**Step 6: Enter Description of Danger Indicators.**

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Step 7: Click Save.

4: Enter Assessment Date.

5: Complete Assessment Questions and Select Client(s), as applicable.

The screenshot shows a web-based assessment form. At the top, there is a date field labeled 'Assessment Date:' with a dropdown menu showing '01/19/2016'. Below this is a section for 'Assessment Type:' with radio buttons for 'Initial', 'Reassessment', and 'Closure'. The main content area is titled 'Danger Indicators' and 'Considerations for Safety Planning'. It contains eight numbered questions, each with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons. Question 1: 'Child has been seriously physically harmed by caregiver and/or is in imminent danger of being seriously physically harmed by caregiver.' Question 2: 'Child has been seriously harmed or is in imminent danger of being seriously harmed due to lack of: Food, clothing, and/or shelter; Supervision; Medical or mental health care.' Question 3: 'Child has been seriously harmed by others and/or is in imminent danger of being seriously harmed by others AND caregiver is unable or unwilling to protect the child.' Question 4: 'Child has been sexually harmed and/or is in imminent danger of being sexually harmed by: Caregiver; Other adult household member; Unknown person AND the caregiver or other adult household member cannot be ruled out.' Question 5: 'Child is living in conditions that are hazardous AND child has suffered serious harm OR is in imminent danger of serious harm as a result of: Domestic violence; Physical living conditions of the home.' Question 6: 'Child has been seriously emotionally harmed by caregiver and/or child is in imminent danger of being seriously emotionally harmed by caregiver AND caregiver is unable or unwilling to respond to concerns.' Question 7: 'Child is unable to be seen AS A RESULT OF caregiver purposefully hindering the assessment.' Question 8: 'Other (Specify):'. To the right of each question is a 'Select Client' section with checkboxes for 'CHRISTIA' and 'FAITH DE'. At the bottom, there is a 'Description of Danger Indicators' section with a text area and 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Callout boxes with arrows point to the date field (Step 4), the questions and client selection (Step 5), the description text area (Step 6), and the Save button (Step 7).

6: Enter Danger Indicator Description.

7: Click Save.

Figure 5



Note:

- The Assessment Type will automatically be selected. However it can be changed if it's not the initial.
- If "No" is selected for each question the **Consideration for Safety Planning** tab will be disabled.
- The Description section is mandatory.
- If "Yes" is selected for any question then the applicable client(s) should be selected for that question.
- If "Yes" is selected for any question the **Consideration for Safety Planning** tab will be mandatory.
- The sub selections are required for those questions that are marked "Yes".

Step 8: Complete **Consideration for Safety Planning** (if applicable).

Step 9: Enter **Description of Safety Planning Details** in the narrative field.

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009

Step 10: Click Save.

Assessment Date: 01/19/2016

Assessment Type:  Initial  Reassessment  Closure

Danger Indicators **Considerations for Safety Planning**

The following areas should be assessed when workers and families are considering creating safety plans to address the dangers present in the household. Mark all that apply to the household and consider all items selected when making the safety decision.

**Child Vulnerabilities**  
These conditions impact a child's ability to protect him/herself and can make it more difficult for a caregiver to protect a child. Mark all that apply to any child in the household.

- Child is age 0 to 6.
- Child has been exposed to multiple and/or seriously traumatic events.
- Child has diminished mental capacity (e.g., developmental delay).
- Child has diminished physical capacity (e.g., no ambulatory, limited use of limbs).
- Child has serious diagnosed medical or mental condition, including medically fragile.
- No child vulnerabilities.

**Existing Household Safety**  
These are actions of protection, taken by at least one of the child's current caregivers or support network members, that have addressed the danger indicator selected above to some degree. Mark all that apply to the household.

- At least one caregiver articulates specific strategies that, in the past, have been successful in addressing the identified danger indicators AND has been using this strategy in the current situation.
- At least one caregiver has a stable support network that is aware of the danger indicator(s) AND is responding to those dangers by providing some protection for the child.
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- No existing household safety actions have been taken.

**Household Strengths**  
These are resources or conditions that increase the caregiver's likelihood or ability to create safety for the child but do not in and of themselves fully address the danger indicator(s). Mark all that apply to the household.

- Caregiver identifies and acknowledges the problem and danger indicator(s) and can suggest possible solutions.
- Caregiver has at least one supportive relationship with someone who is willing to be part of the support network.
- At least one no offending caregiver exists and is willing and able to protect the child from future harm.
- Caregiver is willing to work with the agency to address danger indicators, including allowing worker(s) access to child.
- Caregiver identifies and acknowledges the problem and danger indicator(s) and can suggest possible solutions.
- Caregiver has at least one supportive relationship with someone who is willing to be part of the support network.
- At least one no offending caregiver exists and is willing and able to protect the child from future harm.
- Caregiver is willing to work with the agency to address danger indicators, including allowing worker(s) access to child.
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- There are no household strengths.

**Household Complicating Factors**  
These are conditions that make it more difficult or complicated to create safety for a child; however, they do not create danger in and of themselves. Mark all that apply to the household.

- Substance use
- Mental health concerns
- Coercive behavior and control
- History of serious or extensive child abuse/neglect
- Financial stresses
- Homelessness
- Teenager present in home is exhibiting extremely oppositional behaviors
- Current or history of incarceration/criminal activity
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- There are no household complicating factors.

**Description of Safety Planning Considerations**  
Describe the details and circumstances surrounding any of the above child vulnerabilities, existing household safety, household strengths, and household complicating factors found to be present in the household.

8: Complete Considerations for Safety Planning.

9: Enter Description of Safety Planning Considerations.

10: Click Save.

Figure 6

Step 11: Click on the Assessment Decision Screen.

Step 12: Select a Decision for each child (Safe, Safe with a Plan, Unsafe, Unable to complete Assessment) and Select Client(s), as applicable.

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009

Step 13: Click Save.

and Safety Assessment > List of Assessments | Danger and Safety Assessment | Assessment Decision | Safety Plan |

**Assessment Decision**  
 \* Denotes Required Fields \*\* Denotes Half-Mandatory Fields \*Denotes AFGANS Fields  
 For each child in the household, use the below mentioned information to reach an assessment decision for that child.  
 If no danger indicators are present, indicate by selecting "Safe" for all children.  
 If one or more danger indicators are present, consider items whether a safety plan could allow the individual children to remain in the home. If a safety plan would allow children remain in the home safely, indicate by selecting "Safe with a plan" for those children. Mark the all major components that will be used in the safety plan for those children.  
 If a safety plan that would allow the child to remain in the home safely cannot be created, indicate by selecting "Unsafe".  
 If children cannot be assessed for any reasons, indicate by selecting "Unable to Assess".

**Assessment Decision**

Safe. No danger indicators are present for the child; the child is safe.

Safe with a plan. One or more danger indicators are present; however, the child can safely remain in the home with the use of a safety plan. Create a safety plan with the family.

List major components used in the safety plan for the child. These are areas to consider using in the plan. One may be sufficient, or multiple components can be used in combination with each other.

- Use of family, neighbors, or other individuals in the community.
- Have the non offending caregiver take action to protect the child from the alleged maltreater.
- Have the alleged maltreater leave the home, either voluntarily or in response to legal action.
- Have the non offending caregiver move to a safe environment with the child.
- Legal action planned or initiated; child remains in the home.
- Use of Collaborative or community agencies to support the caregiver in carrying out the safety plan.
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how the safety plan (and associated action steps the caregivers and support network will take) will address the danger indicators.

Training

**Unsafe**  
 One or more danger indicators are present and cannot be controlled through a safety plan for the child.  
 If one child is found unsafe, strongly consider a safety plan for any other children in the household who remain in the home.

Child removed is being moved to:

- Kinship Placement
- CFSA foster care placement
- Private agency foster care placement
- Residence of other legal guardian
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Unable to complete Assessment**

Unable to assess

- Whereabouts Unknown
- Out of Jurisdiction
- Abscondence
- Incarceration
- Emancipation
- Child Fatality

Buttons: [Save] [Approve] [Cancel]

11: Click Assessment Decision.

12: Select Assessment Decision and Select Client(s), as applicable.

13: Click Save.

14: Click Approval.

Figure 7

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009

**Step 14:** Click **Approval** to request approval from Supervisor.

**Step 15:** Select **Request**.

**Step 16:** Click **OK**.

The screenshot shows a web-based 'Approval' form. At the top, there is a table with four columns: 'Requesting Worker', 'Request Date', 'Approving/Denying Worker', and 'Approve/Deny Date'. Below the table, the form contains several fields: 'Requesting Worker' (with a dropdown menu), 'Requesting Date' (with a date picker), 'Approving Worker' (with a dropdown menu), and 'Approving Date' (with a date picker). There are four radio buttons: 'Request' (checked), 'Deny', 'Approve', and 'Send Back'. A 'Reason' dropdown menu is also present. Below these fields is a 'Comments' text area with a scroll bar. At the bottom left, there are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons. Two callout boxes are overlaid on the form: one pointing to the 'Request' radio button with the text '15: Click Request.' and another pointing to the 'OK' button with the text '16: Click Ok.'

**Figure 8**



**Note:**

- A decision has to be selected for each child.
- If “Safe with a Plan” is selected, at least one of the safety components must be selected. A description is also required in this section.
- If “Safe with a Plan” is selected and approved, the Safety Plan screen is required (*See Figure 9*).
- If “Unsafe” is selected, a subcategory has to be checked and the child(ren) must be identified in that section.
- If “Unsafe” is selected with subcategories Kinship Placement, CFSA Foster Care Placement, Private Agency Foster Care Placement or Other, a child’s Home Removal Entry Date is required prior to requesting Investigation closure.
- If “Residence of other legal guardian” is selected a removal date is **Not Required**.
- The Assessment Decision must be approved prior to completing the Safety Plan (if applicable).
- If “Safe with a Plan” is selected, then a follow up Danger and Safety Assessment is required to close the referral or transfer to In-Home.
- Any changes made to the household after approval of the Danger and Safety Assessment will invalidate the Assessment. A new Danger and Safety Assessment is required.

**Step 17:** Complete **Safety Plan** Narratives (If applicable).

**Step 18:** Click **Save**.

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009



**Step 19:** Click **Approval** to request approval from Supervisor.

The screenshot shows the 'Safety Plan' form with four numbered questions. Callout boxes point to the 'Save' button (Step 18), the 'Approval' button (Step 19), and the text area for question 1 (Step 17).

**17: Complete Safety Plan.**

**18: Click Save.**

**19: Click Approval.**

**Safety Plan**  
\* Denotes Required Fields \*\* Denotes Half-Mandatory Fields †Denotes AFCARS Fields

**Safety Plan**

1. What is the specific action or concern that caused the child(ren) to be unsafe? State so that everyone participating in the plan can understand what the concern is and which child(ren) it applies to.

2. What actions will be taken right now and by whom in order to keep the child(ren) safe?

3. Who is participating in the plan? List names and phone numbers.

4. What is the timeframe for this plan? When will it be reviewed?

Buttons: Save, Approval, Preview, Cancel

Figure 9

**Step 20:** Click **Request.**

**Step 21:** Click **Ok.**

The screenshot shows the 'Approval' dialog box overlaid on the Safety Plan form. Callout boxes point to the 'Request' checkbox (Step 20) and the 'OK' button (Step 21).

**20: Click Request.**

**21: Click Ok.**

**Approval**

Requesting Worker	Request Date	Approving/Denying Worker	Approve/Deny Date
AD	Tuesday, January 19, 2016	AC	

Requesting Worker: AD Requesting Date: Tuesday, January 19, 2016  
Approving Worker: AC Approving Date:   
 Request  Deny  Approve  Send Back Reason:   
Comments:   
Buttons: OK, Cancel

Figure 10

Click the **Preview** button to view and print the Safety Plan Document.

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009

File Edit View Window Help

Home Tools DangerAndSafetyPl... x

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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY**

**SAFETY PLAN**

1. What is the specific action or concern that caused the child(ren) to be unsafe? State so that everyone participating in the plan can understand what the concern is and which child(ren) it applies to.  
Training

2. What actions will be taken right now and by whom in order to keep the child(ren) safe?  
Training

3. Who is participating in the plan? List names and phone numbers.  
Training

4. What is the timeframe for this plan? When will it be reviewed?  
Training

(Primary Caretaker) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Secondary Caretaker) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Social Worker) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Supervisor) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT**

Figure 11



**Note:**

- Referral closure will be conditional based on safety decisions.
  - a. Safe - allow closure. No additional Danger and Safety Assessment needed.
  - b. Safe with a safety plan – follow up required (2<sup>nd</sup> DAS). For Investigation, case connect must have closure reason of **Opening a New Case/ Connect to an existing Case/Open a closed Case/ Link to an existing Investigation.**
  - c. Unsafe – removal expected in referral/case. No additional Danger and Safety Assessment required. A removal is expected for a client who is marked as unsafe. The referral cannot be closed unless a removal entry date has been entered.
  - d. Incomplete Investigations will require a Danger and Safety Assessment.

The following chart provides details regarding the link between the risk score and safety decision to determine the Case Connect recommended decision.

Risk	Safety Decision	Recommended Decision
Low/Moderate	Safe With Plan	Divert
High/Intensive	Safe With Plan	Open
Low/Moderate	Safe	No Further Action
High/Intensive	Safe	Open (Cannot Override)
Low/Moderate/High/Intensive	Unsafe	Open
Low/Moderate/High/Intensive	Unable to Access	No Case Connect Decision

Figure 12

If you have additional questions, please call the HelpDesk at (202) 434-0009