



# A Father's Guide to the **SC Child Welfare SYSTEM**



SOUTH CAROLINA CENTER  
FOR FATHERS AND FAMILIES

*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System*



*Published with support from the SC Bar Foundation*

# Contents

Before Things Go Wrong: How to Be Ready .....	1
Establish Paternity .....	1
Responsible Father Registry .....	1
Be an Involved Dad .....	2
Be a Safe Dad.....	2
Intake: How DSS gets involved and when they take custody.....	3
The Report .....	3
Non-Removal .....	3
Removal .....	4
Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect.....	5
Family Preservation .....	5
Judicial Process: When and How Will Things Get Decided.....	5
Probable Cause Hearing.....	5
Hearing on The Merits .....	6
Guardian ad Litem: .....	6
What Happens After Court .....	6
Treatment Plan .....	6
Placement Plan:.....	7
Permanency Plan:.....	7
Termination of Parental Rights .....	7
When You Get Your Day in Court .....	8
What to wear .....	8
Cellphone .....	8
When speaking.....	8
Who will be in the court room .....	9
Other Information .....	9
Working with Your Lawyer.....	9
Working with Your Caseworker.....	9
Important Time Frames to Remember .....	10
Definitions & Explanations.....	10
Other Resources .....	11
County DSS Contact Information to Report Abuse.....	11

**This booklet is for information. It is not legal advice.  
If you need legal advice contact an attorney.**

## **Before Things Go Wrong: How to Be Ready**

### **Establish Paternity**

One of the first things you can do is establish paternity, which means to be recognized by the law as the father of your child. This allows the court to protect your rights as the father and gives you the ability to ask the court for visitation; however, it could also be used to set up child support. If anything does happen to your child, it helps make sure that you are informed. If anything happens to you, your child will be able to get Social Security as well as inherit from you. There are three ways to do this in SC:

- 1. Marriage** – If you are married to the mother when the child is conceived or when she gives birth, you are assumed to be the father.
- 2. Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity** – This is an option when the mother and father are unmarried. This can be done for free at the hospital shortly after the child is born or it can be done any time afterwards at DHEC Vital Records for \$27. Both parents must agree, sign the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement form and have a government issued ID. If the form is not done, then only the mother's name will appear on the birth certificate. You can only undo your acknowledgment of paternity within 60 days of signing the form. After that, you cannot undo it. A voluntary acknowledgment of paternity cannot be done if anyone else's name is on the birth certificate as the father already.
- 3. Court Order** – If either parent is unsure about who the father is, this is the best choice. Either parent can file a court action through a private attorney or through DSS's Child Support Services Division. If you apply to file through DSS, the application is free as well as the genetic testing. Once the results are back from the genetic test, you will still need to have a court date for the court to issue the order of paternity. DSS will schedule this. Once paternity is established by a South Carolina court order, your name will be added to the birth certificate for a child born in South Carolina. If paternity was established by court order prior to May 16, 2019, you will need to take a certified copy of the court order and the application for a birth certificate (found here: <http://www.scdhec.gov/Library/D-2595.pdf>) to DHEC Vital Records. The father must have a government issued ID as well as \$27 to pay for the change.

### **Responsible Father Registry**

Something else that you can do is register on the Responsible Father Registry. *This cannot be used to establish child support and is not the same as establishing paternity.* Signing up for the registry will only make sure that you are notified before your child is adopted or before your parental rights are terminated.

You can submit the form online at

<https://ssl.sc.gov/DSSFatherRegistry/FatherReg/RegIndex.aspx> or fill it out and mail it in.

You do not need to do this if: (1) a court has found you to be the father of the child, (2) your name is on the birth certificate, (3) you are openly living with the child, the child's mother, or both, or (4) the mother has named you as the father in a sworn, written statement. The father is the only one who can fill this form out and get on the Registry. It is free. This may be a good step to take even if you have already established paternity if you think the mother may put the child up for adoption. DSS or a private attorney has to check this before any adoption can take place. DSS can also use this to check for a possible father if the child is in foster care. DSS can usually check the registry faster than obtaining a birth certificate. The registry may be especially helpful if your name is not on the birth certificate.

**Getting notice is important because if your parental rights are terminated and your child is adopted, all of your legal rights to the child are gone and you cannot get them back!**

### **Be an Involved Dad**

One important aspect of being a Dad is being involved in your child's life. If you are a noncustodial parent (the child doesn't live with you), then the main way to do this is likely through visitation. Not only is it good for you and your child to spend time together, but if more people know you are involved, they may be able to let DSS know you are an option for placement. Being involved can also include talking regularly with your child. You have the right to a reasonable amount of communication with your child as long as you have never abused or neglected them. Whether it is having a conversation or just playing catch, time together is critical for your child. Fatherhood is extremely rewarding, even though it may seem scary at times.

For some more tips on ways to be involved, you can check out the Guide to Being a Great Father at <http://father365.com/resources/guide-to-being-a-great-father.pdf>. You can also learn how to set up visitation for the first time for children in SC at [scvisitation.com/](http://scvisitation.com/).

### **Be a Safe Dad**

Another important thing you can do is to make sure your home is safe for your child. This will not only keep you out of trouble but will allow the state to place your child with you if anything happens. Keeping your home safe means making sure you are not mentally or physically abusing your child yourself and that no one in your household is, as well as making sure to do things like feeding and clothing them.

This also includes staying away from illegal drugs or abusing alcohol, as well as people who do. Proof that you or someone around your child may have trouble with alcohol or drugs includes missing work/school because of it, driving while under the influence of something (especially with your children in the car), or neglecting the kids in order to use alcohol or drugs. These are things that DSS will look for when considering if someone is safe.

## **Intake: How DSS gets involved and when they take custody**

### **The Report:**

DSS receives a call and has 24 hours to make a decision of whether they will investigate the report or not. If the complaint is against the custodial parent, *as the noncustodial parent you are not being investigated.* You may be contacted and interviewed but remember if the complaint was not against you, that you are not the subject of the investigation.

- a. Anyone can report child abuse or neglect and DSS has to keep the name of the reporter confidential. You can't find out who reported it, even if the report was made against you.
- b. Many people are considered mandatory reporters, which means they are required by law to report if they have any reason to think the child was abused. If they do not report, they can be charged with a crime. The main ones your child may see will be healthcare workers like doctors and nurses, as well as education workers such as teachers and counselors. This also includes police, pastors or religious counselors, childcare workers, foster parents, and guardian ad litem.
- c. If you believe child abuse is happening, you should report it. You can go to <https://dss.sc.gov/contact/> to find your county and the phone number to call and report. A county phone list is also at the back of this booklet. As long as the report is made in good faith (you honestly believe abuse/neglect is happening) then you cannot get in trouble. *However, if you make a report in bad faith (you know it is false) then it is not only against the law, but you could be sued by DSS and the person you reported.*
- d. If DSS decides to investigate, they have 45-60 days to make a decision about the report. This is whether it is "indicated" (there is evidence of abuse and the investigation must go on) or "unfounded" (there is not enough evidence to show abuse and the investigation stops but stays on file for 5 years).
- e. During this time, DSS and law enforcement may interview the child who may have been abused as well as any other children in the house.
- f. The parents, whether they have custody or not, do not have to give permission or be present during these interviews. However, the caseworker should give you notice that an interview is happening.

### **Non-Removal**

This occurs if DSS believes the child is abused/neglected and needs help (the case is "indicated"), but it would be best to keep the child in the home. They can offer services without taking custody of the child. DSS can also develop a "safety plan" for the child, which can also be called a "treatment plan". The safety plan is an agreement in which the parent agrees to do certain things to avoid court action. DSS will still be involved and will monitor the case to be sure the parent is doing what is required. DSS may also refer the case to a private company to provide services. A child may be removed from the home and be placed with a relative while the

plan is completed. A safety plan is a voluntary agreement with DSS. It is not a court order. If all goals are met, DSS can close its file.

### **Removal**

This occurs when DSS believes the situation is bad enough that they need to take the child away from the home.

There can also be an emergency removal. If law enforcement believes the child is in an extreme situation, they can take the child into emergency protective custody. The police can do this without the consent of the parents or guardians if they have probable cause to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred, and the child is in substantial and imminent danger. The police may also take a child into emergency protective custody if the parents are being arrested or if the child is lost. The police will also take the child to a hospital or other health care facility if the child needs medical care. Once the police take the child into emergency protective custody, the child will be turned over to DSS. DSS cannot take custody unless they have a court order or law enforcement has taken the child into emergency protective custody. This means DSS does not make this decision. It must be made by law enforcement or a judge.

If your child is removed in an emergency removal, DSS has 24 hours to find a suitable placement with a relative or other person without DSS taking legal custody. DSS may keep the child for up to 5 additional days to allow the caregiver to travel or make arrangements for the child. If this happens, a probable cause hearing does not need to be held but a parent can request one.

Once DSS has legal custody, they must begin an investigation. Even if you are the noncustodial parent, you have a right to know about any court dates. The law states: *If a noncustodial parent is not named as a party, the department shall exercise every reasonable effort to promptly notify the noncustodial parent that a removal proceeding has been initiated and of the date and time of any hearings scheduled pursuant to this subarticle.*

**If you learn that your child has been taken into custody,  
promptly contact DSS so they know how to contact you and give you notice  
of the date and time of any hearings.**

If DSS removes the child, they will need to give the child somewhere to live, at least temporarily. This means foster care, unless the child can be placed with you, the noncustodial parent, or with another family member. DSS starts by considering family for temporary care. As the noncustodial parent, you should be the first option, but in reality, that may not happen. It is important that you and your family are vocal about your ability to take care of your child. If the child cannot be placed with you, another member of your family may be able to care for the child. You may hear this referred to as kinship care or kinship foster care. With this program, family members other than the child's parents who act as foster parents are entitled to the same benefits as any other foster parent, including regular payments to help care for the child. Family members will need to be licensed foster parents and pass a background check, but DSS should walk them through this process. DSS has Kinship Care Coordinators to help you navigate the

process and advocate for you and your child. They can also provide information about local resources that will support you. If your child is placed with a member of your family, be sure they know about the Kinship Care Coordinators and reach out to them for assistance.

### **Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect**

This is a system monitored by DSS, where they can put peoples' information any time after receiving a report of child abuse. It is checked by not only DSS but also anyone who is hiring you and needs to know your child abuse history. If you are put on this Registry, you will be notified and unless you ask for a hearing, the judge will rule on the facts DSS provides them in the packet you will get. If you want a hearing, you have 5 days to ask for one in writing. This is a serious thing that follows you like a criminal record and you should ask for the hearing, so you have a chance to keep your name off the registry. If the case ever becomes "unfounded," DSS should remove your information from the system. If you think the report against you was made in bad faith or just to hurt you, you have the right to ask DSS to hold on to the information so you can go to court. You have to ask them to do it within 30 days of DSS deciding that it is unfounded.

### **Family Preservation**

This is a part of our laws that requires DSS to make reasonable efforts to preserve or reunify a family. Reasonable efforts will mainly depend on the situation. Everything is based on the health and safety of the child, so the amount of effort depends on the harm being done. One thing DSS is required to do is try to accommodate disabled parents. This means that if the parent has a disability, DSS should modify the plan to help them parent, including referrals to services with equipment or techniques to help them get around their disability. DSS can bypass these efforts if certain things happen, for example, if the parent has been convicted of certain crimes like voluntary manslaughter or domestic violence, or the abuse is serious enough to send the child to the hospital.

## **Judicial Process: When and How Will Things Get Decided**

**If you are subject to a judicial proceeding in an abuse and neglect case, you are entitled to a lawyer. If you can't afford an attorney, the court will appoint one for you. You will need to contact the Clerk of Court in the county where the case is located to apply for the attorney.**

### **Probable Cause Hearing**

If DSS has not been able to make placement arrangements within 24 hours, there will be a Probable Cause Hearing. This will happen within 72 hours of the child being taken by police. The court will determine if law enforcement had probable cause to take the child into custody and if the child should remain in custody.

## **Hearing on the Merits**

There will be a hearing called the hearing on the merits, the merits hearing, or the removal hearing. This must be held within 35 days of the court getting the removal petition (DSS will submit this to the court; it is where they say why they need custody) or a petition to intervene and provide services (they file this if the child stays in the home). A party can ask for a continuance (extension of time), but the court will be very unlikely to grant it unless there are extreme circumstances. If it does occur, then the hearing must happen within 65 days of receiving the removal petition.

## **Temporary Hearings**

DSS, the guardian ad litem for the child or the parents can request a temporary hearing to address issues that are not part of the standard process.

## **Guardian ad Litem**

A guardian ad litem (GAL) must be appointed for children in these cases. A GAL is there to look out for the best interests of the child. A GAL does not have physical custody of your child. In South Carolina, the GAL is usually a non-attorney volunteer who has had special training. The non-attorney GAL will be represented by an attorney and will investigate and report to the court with recommendations on what is best for your child.

The GAL is very important to you and your child. You should talk with and cooperate with the GAL to be sure the GAL knows your side of the story and so the GAL may possibly support you as a placement or custodial parent.

## **What Happens After Court**

### **Treatment Plan**

If the court orders removal of a child, DSS services will continue. DSS will create a treatment plan that is reviewed and approved by the court. This is meant to resolve the issues that caused DSS to be called. The plan will set out requirements that the parent must meet such as making the home safe, attending parenting classes or taking drug tests. It is important that if you are listed as a child protector, or if you are involved in any way, that you are helpful and nice. Whether you like DSS or agree with them doesn't matter. They are the ones making the plan and helping with a lot of the decisions as to what happens next.

**Placement Plan:** When a child is removed from one parent, DSS will generally try to place the child with the other parent unless that parent cannot be found, is unfit or has abused the child as well. If the other parent is not a suitable placement, DSS will try to place the child with a relative. Foster Care is a last resort for placement. The placement plan will be prepared by DSS

with input from the parents, if possible. The placement plan will set out what changes must happen before the child can be returned. The next part will set out what actions the parent must take and what services are available and when these actions must be completed. The rights and obligations such as an obligation to pay child support will be included. Visitation is included, if safe. If you do not comply with the placement plan, which includes not paying support or not visiting within 6 months, DSS may start a termination of parental rights action. The plan also sets the placement of the child (relative, foster care). You can file a motion to change the plan if circumstances change such that the plan can no longer work. An example might be if you had visitation on weekends but now have a new job that requires you to work on weekends. It is up to the judge to approve any plan or changes to the plan.

### **Permanency Plan**

A review hearing will be held within 1 year of a child being in Foster Care. At the first permanency hearing, the court will review the situation, see if the parent has made progress and determine if a change in the plan is needed. DSS will submit a report on the status. This report will be based on how DSS sees the situation. At this point, DSS will usually have a plan to reunify the family or to give custody to a relative or if they plan to pursue termination of parental rights.

At this hearing, if the judge is satisfied that the child can safely be returned to the home, the court will order the child's return. The court can require DSS to continue supervision for up to 12 months. The court can extend the plan if the court feels the parent has worked hard to correct the problems and that the problems can be fixed if given more time. The court may also order that DSS pursue a termination of parental rights if the court does not believe the child can be safely returned.

## **Termination of Parental Rights**

Terminating parental rights means you will no longer be considered the parent of your child for anything and *cannot* be undone. The family court may terminate parental rights if it finds that this is in the best interest of the child and that one or more of the following reasons exist:

- A child has been harmed and it is so severe or repeated that the home cannot be made safe within twelve months. This doesn't have to be your child; the court could look at if you have done this to another child.
- A child was removed from the parent and the parent has not fixed the situation that caused the removal within six months.
- The parent has chosen not to visit the child for six months.
- The parent has chosen not to support the child for six months.
- The legal father (decided by a court) is not the biological father and terminating parental rights of the legal father would be best for the child.

- The parent has a condition unlikely to change in a reasonable time, such as an addiction to drugs or alcohol, and the condition makes it unlikely that the parent can care for the child and fix the condition within a reasonable time. The parent has failed two or more times to successfully complete a treatment program required by DSS or the court or has refused to participate in treatment. This does not include a disability; a disability cannot be the only reason used to terminate your rights.
- The child has been abandoned.
- The child has been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months.
- The parent was criminally convicted of abuse that killed the child or caused the child to be placed in the hospital.
- A parent has been convicted of murdering the child's other parent.
- A child is a result of criminal sexual conduct as determined by a court. The court can terminate the parental rights of the biological parent unless the court finds that the sexual conduct was consensual, and both people were between 14 and 18 years old.
- The parent is guilty of murder, voluntary manslaughter or homicide by child abuse of another child of the parent.

## **When You Get Your Day in Court**

### **What to wear:**

- Collared shirt, nice pants, dress shoes.
- If you have a button up shirt and tie, it would be nice to wear.
- Don't wear a hat.
- Don't wear clothes with inappropriate words or pictures.

### **Cellphone:**

- Make sure it is on silent or off if you have it with you. If it rings, the court could take it and make you pay a fine.
- Some courts don't like people having them so you may need to leave it in the car or at home.
- Don't have it out in the court room, even while you're waiting.

### **When speaking:**

- Talk clearly and at a steady pace.
- Try not to raise your voice, they may think you are losing your temper.
- Talk to the judge, not the other attorney or parent.
- If you have something for the judge, don't carry it to him. He'll have an officer get it from you and carry it up. Stay behind your table.
- Refer to the judge as "your honor".
- If the judge asks a question about what you said make sure to answer it.
- Don't interrupt the other side while they are speaking
- Don't curse or use foul language.

### **Who will be in the court room:**

- The judge, who will be in a place called “the bench”.
- The lawyer for DSS.
- A court reporter- This person types everything that is said for the record.
- Security, which is law enforcement officers. They are just there to make everyone safe.
- There may be people in the gallery, which is a seating area in the court. They are most likely just there for court as well.

### **Other Information:**

- You will have to go through a security check, empty your pockets and go through a metal detector. So, it may be best not to have much in your pockets.
- No weapons, including pocketknives, are allowed in the building.
- It is best to arrive 30 minutes early.
- If you have kids, don’t bring them with you. Arrange for childcare outside of the courthouse.
- Don’t chew gum while you are in court. Eating and drinking are not allowed.

## **Working with Your Lawyer**

Even if you don’t get to the point of having a lawyer appointed, it may be helpful to speak with one. The uncertainty in a situation like this may lead you to feel like you have to do whatever DSS says, and that may not be the case. If you are not sure where to start to find an attorney, one step is the **SC Lawyer Referral Service, which is at 1-800-868-2284** (if you’re in Lexington or Richland County, **1-800-799-7100**). The Lawyer Referral Service will put you in touch with a local lawyer and you will get a 30-minute consultation for no more than \$50. It is important to know that getting a lawyer **does not mean you are guilty**. Although some people may make you feel like that, including your caseworker, it is not a sign of guilt. This is a complicated process and your children are important, so it is not a bad thing to try and protect yourself and them. If you get a lawyer, they will be there to help you and they can only help you if you are honest with them about what is going on. The more they know, the more they can prepare for court and make sure your rights are protected.

## **Working with Your Caseworker**

It is important that you are polite and courteous to your caseworker and other DSS workers you meet throughout this process. The caseworker is the main person working with your child and setting up the process for you to see or get custody of your child. They are supposed to help you, but they also deal with a lot of angry parents and parents who do hurt their children. Because of this, although you may have done nothing wrong, you may feel you are being treated like you

have. It's good to remain patient and stay focused on making it through and getting your children back because this is temporary.

**Remember that everything you say can be used  
in the investigation and court proceedings.**

## **Important Time Frames to Remember**

DSS gets a report, then:

1. 24 hours to decide if they will investigate. If they do, then:
2. 45-60 days to make a decision about if the report was right. If it is, they may remove the child
3. 3 days (72 hours) to have a probable cause hearing if the child is removed
4. 35-65 days later, there will be a Hearing on the Merits
5. 5 days to ask for a hearing on the merits if DSS is asking that you be placed on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect. This is 5 days from when DSS notifies you that you are being placed on the Registry.
6. 10 days after the hearing on the merits for DSS to submit their placement plan if the child was removed
7. 6 months to fix the problems DSS identified as the cause of removal or potentially lose parental rights
8. 1 year to hold a review hearing of a child in Foster Care
9. 12 months is how long the kinship care agreement can last if one was put in place in this process
10. 120 days after filing a termination of parental rights action, a hearing must be held.

## **Definitions & Explanations**

**Abuse/Neglect:** Abuse can include not just physical abuse, such as hitting your children or sexual abuse, but also mental abuse like constantly saying mean things to your child. Neglect can mean not providing the child with enough food or clothing or abandoning the child. Parents can also get in trouble for allowing these things to happen to their kids, even if the parents don't actually do it themselves.

**Child Protector:** A responsible person, usually a family member who is close with the child, who makes sure they are safe while staying in the home. This is part of a safety plan when the child remains in the home while DSS offers services. This cannot be your spouse if they live in the home and did so during the alleged abuse.

**Guardian ad Litem:** A trained volunteer who only argues for your child. They do not work for DSS and are only there to help watch out for your child during this process.

**Termination of Parental Rights (TPR):** This is when parents lose any legal rights to the child. This is a permanent situation.

**Government Issued ID:** This can include a driver's license or state ID card.

## Other Resources

SC Legal Services

[sclegal.org](http://sclegal.org) /

Intake Office: 1-(888) 346-5592

Pro Se Visitation

[sevisitation.com](http://sevisitation.com)

Pro Se Child Support Modification

[modifychildsupportsc.com](http://modifychildsupportsc.com)

Guide to Expungement

<http://father365.com/resources/expungement-guide-2019.pdf>

Establishing Paternity

<https://dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/>

## County DSS Contact Information to Report Abuse

County	Regular Hours	After Hours
Abbeville	(864) 366-5481 (Press 2)	If local, call 911
Aiken	(803) 649-1111 (Press 1)	(803) 648-6811 (Aiken Sheriff's Dept.)
Allendale	(803) 584-7048 (Press 2)	(803) 584-8151
Anderson	(864) 260-4100 (Press 3)	(864) 224-6576
Bamberg	(803) 245-4363 (Press 2)	(803) 245-3000 (Bamberg Law Enforcement)
Barnwell	(803) 541-1200 (Press 2)	(803) 541-1078 (Barnwell Sheriff's Dept.)
Beaufort	(843) 255-6143	(843) 524-2777 (Beaufort Sheriff's Dept.)
Berkley	(843) 761-8044 (Press 3)	(843) 761-8044
Calhoun	803-874-3384	803-874-2741 (Calhoun Sheriff's Dept.)
Charleston	(843) 953-9400 (Press 2)	(843) 953-9422
Cherokee	(864) 487-2704 (Press 1)	(864) 487-2747 (Cherokee County Fire Department)
Chester	(803) 377-8131 (Press 2)	(803) 385-5433 (Chester County Law Enforcement)
Chesterfield	(843) 623-2147 (Press 1)	(843) 921-7344
Clarendon	(803) 435-4303 (Press 2)	(803) 473-8726
Colleton	(843) 584-4042	(843) 549-2211 (Colleton County Sheriff's Office)
Darlington	(843) 332-2231 (Press 2)	If local, call 911
Dillon	(843) 774-8284 (Press 2)	(843) 841-3707
Dorchester	(843) 821-0444 (Press 3)	(843) 873-5111 (Dorchester Sheriff's Office)
Edgefield	(803) 637-4040 (Press 0)	(803) 637-5337 (Edgefield Sheriff's Office)
Fairfield	(803) 635-5502 (Press 1)	(803) 635-5511 (Fairfield County Law Enforcement)

Florence	(843) 669-3354 (Press 5)	(843) 669-3911 (Florence County Law Enforcement)
Georgetown	(843) 546-5134 (Press 2)	If local, call 911
Greenville	(864) 467-7750 (24hrs)	Same as the Regular Hours number
Greenwood	(864) 229-5258	(864) 942-8632 (Greenwood Sheriff's Office)
Hampton	(803) 943-3641 (Press 2)	(803) 943-9261 (Hampton County Law Enforcement)
Horry	(843) 366-1601	(843) 248-1520 (Horry County Sheriff's Office)
Jasper	(843) 726-7747 (Press 2)	(843) 726-7519 (Jasper County Fire Department)
Kershaw	(803) 432-7676 (Press 2)	(803) 425-1512 (Kershaw County Sheriff's Office)
Lancaster	(803) 286-6914 (Press 2)	(803) 283-4136 (Lancaster County Law Enforcement)
Laurens	(864) 547-8079	(864) 984-2523 (Laurens County Sheriff's Office)
Lee	(803) 484-5376 (Press 2)	(803) 484-1723 (Lee County Sheriff's Office Dispatch)
Lexington	(803) 785-7333 (Press 1 for English, then press 5)	If local, call 911
Marion	(843) 423-4623 (Press 3)	(843) 431-8063 (DSS On-Call worker)
Marlboro	(843) 479-7181 (Press 4)	If local, call 911. If outside the county, (843) 479-1111
McCormick	(864) 465-2140 (Press 0 for operator)	(864) 465-3211 (McCormick County Jail)
Newberry	(803) 321-2155 (Press 2)	(803) 321-2222 (Newberry County Sheriff's Office)
Oconee	(864) 638-4400 (Press 3)	(864) 638-4111 (Oconee County Sheriff's Office)
Orangeburg	(803) 531-3101 (Press 2)	(803) 534-3550 (Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office)
Pickens	(864) 898-5810 (Press 2)	(888) 227-3487
Richland	(803) 714-7444 (24hrs)	Same as Regular Hours number
Saluda	(864) 445-2139 (Press 2)	(864) 445-2112 (Saluda County Sheriff's Office)
Spartanburg	(864) 596-3001 (Press 1)	(864) 585-1445
Sumter	(803) 775-2273 (24hrs)	Same as Regular Hours number
Union	(864) 429-1660 (Press 1)	(864) 429-1611
Williamsburg	(843) 355-5411 (Press 2)	If local, call 911
York	(803) 909-7446 (Press 1)	If local, call 911