

**Table of Contents**

**Policy Statement.....2**

    Persons Affected ..... 2

    Directives Affected..... 2

    Definitions ..... 2

    Contacts ..... 2

**Situation Assessment .....2**

**Criteria .....2**

**Procedure.....3**

**Liability and Accountability .....3**



## Procedure

Upon responding to a report of threatened *or* attempted suicide where all of the aforementioned [criteria](#) are met, the primary deputy should refer the person to [Compass Health](#). Referrals should be made via written documentation, and should be titled in a way to allow the law enforcement agency to identify specific reports where a referral was made/is being made (similar to how DV-related incidents are noted/coded). Additionally, referrals should include sufficient narrative for the mental health agency to understand the nature of the call, the behavior of the individual, and prioritize their level of response. ([Mental Health Referral Protocol](#))

Referrals by written documentation can be supplemented with a phone call or dispatch referral to [Compass Health](#). Phone calls or dispatch referrals should not be a substitute for written documentation referrals. Phone calls or dispatch referrals should be noted in the written documentation, including the date and time of the referral, and to whom the officer spoke.

Referrals made by written documentation only, without a phone call or dispatch referral to [Compass Health](#), should be processed in as expeditious a manner as practicable.

[RCW 71.05.458](#) requires the mental health agency to attempt to contact the person as soon as possible, but not more than 24 hours (excluding holidays and weekends) after receiving the referral from law enforcement, to determine whether mental health intervention is necessary.

## Liability and Accountability

[RCW 71.05.120\(2\)](#): Peace officers and their employing agencies are not [liable](#) for the referral of a person, or the failure to refer a person, to a mental health agency pursuant to a policy adopted pursuant to section 3 of this act ([HB 1448, Chapter 158, Laws of 2016](#)) if such action or inaction is taken in good faith and without gross negligence.

Deputies who willfully fail to enforce the law are not immune from liability, the above statutes notwithstanding. It is the policy of the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office that all deputies will be held accountable for any willful failure to comply with this policy.