

## FIELDWORK

Adopted: 03/20/2024

SADO maintains a safe work environment. When that work environment necessarily extends beyond the physical office, safety remains a priority. SADO employees often must work in the field to fulfill crucial parts of their jobs. Fieldwork is often necessary to understand the circumstances of our clients' legal cases and to learn their stories. This may require meetings, interviews, or investigations in public places or in private residential settings. Employees must abide by the following policies when conducting fieldwork, which does not include court or in-custody client visits:

### Attorneys

Attorneys who meet a client in the community must balance the confidentiality of the attorney-client relationship, the client's transportation resources or needs, and the attorney's own safety while in the field. When a client's transportation resources/needs permit, the best space to meet is SADO's own offices. When a client's transportation needs do not permit an in-office visit, the attorney, in consultation with the client, can select a community location that balances confidentiality and employee safety: sometimes this will be a private area of a public location (i.e. conference room of a library or co-working space, corner booth at a local restaurant, quiet spot in a park, etc.), but there are times where meeting in a private/home setting is necessary. Attorneys are encouraged to conduct fieldwork with a partner, especially when in a private setting. Attorneys who meet their clients in the community, especially in private settings, must follow the "Precautions of all Positions" below. When attorneys are conducting mitigation or investigation, the "Mitigation Specialists and Investigators" requirements below apply.

### Reentry Specialists

Reentry specialists who conduct home investigations and fieldwork are encouraged to conduct that fieldwork with a partner.

### Mitigation Specialists and Investigators

The expectation for mitigation specialists and investigators is that substantive meetings and interviews<sup>1</sup> will be conducted in-person unless there is a strategic reason why a phone call or video interview is necessary.<sup>2</sup> Employee duties for these positions often require in-home meetings and interviews and on-site investigations. Certain fieldwork is best conducted alone. When solo fieldwork is not necessary to fulfill the team's goals, employees are encouraged to conduct fieldwork with a partner, especially when in a private setting.

### Precautions for all Positions

All employees must end the fieldwork assignment and notify their supervisor immediately if they are in imminent danger.<sup>3</sup> Employees must exercise discretion when deciding whether to terminate fieldwork due to a potentially unsafe situation. New employees in their training or

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<sup>1</sup> A substantive meeting/interview is different than non-substantive communication. An example of a substantive meeting is one in which family members are being interviewed for the purpose of writing a social history report or when interviewing a potentially crucial witness. An example of non-substantive communication is calling a family member to obtain a piece of clarifying information from a previous interview or making a phone call to determine if certain records exist.

<sup>2</sup> At times, the caseload of the investigator or mitigation specialist, or the immediacy of the deadline might necessitate a remote interview. In those cases, the employee should first discuss with their supervisor. SADO's priority will be to adhere to best practices when practicable.

<sup>3</sup> An example of a dangerous situation may be if a weapon is present in the vicinity or if there is violence or aggression on display.

probationary period are prohibited from conducting solo fieldwork during their probationary period without supervisor approval.

All employees must log the approximate fieldwork location(s) into the “comments” section of SADO’s check-in application and must provide supervisors with addresses or approximate addresses of those location(s) when available. Employees must notify their supervisor when they are entering a private setting for fieldwork and when that fieldwork is completed. Employees engaged in fieldwork in a private setting are expected to check in with their supervisors periodically when their fieldwork assignment extends beyond two hours. A check-in can be conducted by text, email, or phone call. Employees should ensure their phones are charged when conducting fieldwork. When fieldwork spans multiple days, employees must provide supervisors with the trip itinerary and must check in with their supervisor daily and in accordance with this policy.

#### Compliance

Failure to comply with this and other SADO policies will result in disciplinary action.