

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected is obliged to report the abuse to the appropriate authorities.

1. Professionals Required to Report

Individuals designated as mandatory reporters typically have frequent contact with children. These professionals can be held liable by both the civil and criminal legal systems for intentionally failing to make a report. The following persons are mandated reporters:

- Physicians, osteopaths, medical examiners, chiropractors, nurses, or hospital personnel
- Other health or mental health professionals
- Practitioners who rely solely on spiritual means for healing
- Teachers, school officials and personnel
- Social workers, daycare center workers, professional child care, foster care, residential or institutional workers including volunteers
- Law enforcement officers and judges
- Counselors and therapists
- Clergy, clerical staff from all denominations
- Photo processors, computer repair technicians
- Probation and parole officers
- Animal control officers
- Court appointed special advocates or Guardians

2. Standards for Making a Report

A report must be made when the reporter *suspects or has reasons to believe* that a child has been abused or neglected. This includes when the reporter has knowledge of, or observes a child being subjected to, conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child.

It is an individual's responsibility to make a report; they do not need the permission of a supervisor to do so, nor can anyone prevent them from doing so.

3. Inclusion of the Reporter's Name in the Report

There is a toll-free telephone number for receiving reports of abuse or neglect. Reports may be made anonymously to this reporting number, but it is helpful to investigations to know the identity of reporters. Professionals who are mandated reporters are required to provide their names to hotline staff.

4. A report is required when:

- A person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected

- A person knows that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care.

5. Disclosure of Reporter Identity

The names of reporters shall be entered into the record of the report but shall be held confidential. The name of the reporter may not be released to any person other than those responsible for child protective services, the central abuse hotline, law enforcement, the child protection team, or the appropriate State legal representative without the written consent of the person reporting.

6. Failing to Report Abuse

Failure to report child abuse may result in fines, imprisonment - or both.

7. Filing a False Report

A person who knowingly files a report known to be false may incur fines or imprisonment.

8. The Four Types of Child Abuse are:

1. Physical abuse (includes exposure of abusive substances to children/newborn infants). 2. Sexual abuse (Rape, molestation, exploitation, child pornography production, distribution and possession). 3. Neglect (Physical neglect, medical neglect, educational neglect, and emotional neglect). 4. Emotional abuse.

A child of any age, sex, race, religion, and socioeconomic background can fall victim to child abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect may result in the death of the child or incur life-long physical or mental damage or disability. You may be the only defense a child has. If you don't report abuse, who will?

To make a report **call the police and ask for the child abuse reporting hotline in your area. Or make the report directly to the police.**

This information is provided as a guide. Local variances of the law supercede the information provided here. Free brochures: www.abusewatch.net - Click Brochures

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**SPEAKING OUT FOR THOSE
WHO CAN'T - CHILDREN**