



Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

October 2006

The law requires any person who believes that a child or person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited to report the circumstances to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Abuse Hotline. A person making a report is immune from civil or criminal liability, and the name of the person making the report is kept confidential. Any person suspecting abuse and not reporting it can be held liable for a Class A misdemeanor. Time frames for investigating reports are based on severity of allegations. Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible for a family to get help.

For life threatening or emergency situations, you should call your local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately.

There are two options for reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Abuse Hotline.

By Phone

Call the Abuse Hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free 1-800-252-5400 from anywhere in the US to report abuse or neglect that occurred in Texas.

By Secure Internet Website

From your internet browser, go to <https://www.txabusehotline.org> (You MUST include the "s" in "https://") to access the site.) When you get to the web site, there will be directions to the links to report abuse or neglect against children or to report abuse against elderly or disabled adults. Once you file an online report, you will receive an e-mail telling you that your report has been received and providing you an identification number. If you have trouble or questions about making a report on the website, call (512) 929-6784 or 1-800-252-5400 for help.

Types of Abuse/Neglect/Exploitation

What is Abuse?

- Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities or failure to prevent such injury.

What is Neglect?

- Neglect of a child includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.
- Neglect of a person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities results in starvation, dehydration, over- or under-medication, unsanitary living conditions, and lack of heat, running water, electricity, medical care, and personal hygiene.

What is Exploitation?

- Exploitation is misusing the resources of an person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities for personal or monetary benefit. This includes taking Social Security or SSI (Supplemental Security Income) checks, abusing a joint checking account, and taking property and other resources.

Information that is helpful to have on hand when filing an abuse report (if known):

- Name, age, and address of the child or person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities
- Your name and contact information
- Brief description of the situation and the child or vulnerable adult
- Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
- For a child: Parents' names and names of siblings in the home
- For an adult: Names of relatives in or outside the home and name of perpetrator
- Explain how you know about the situation

