

Reporting Elder Abuse

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect, self-neglect, exploitation and abandonment. It can happen anywhere, anytime, and often affects the most vulnerable members of the community. While approximately 16,000 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation are made each year in Ohio, the National Institutes of Health estimates that these reports represent only one in 14 cases.

Why Report Abuse?

When you see suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation, it is easy to think that “somebody should do something.” Let that somebody be you. While many professionals are required by law to report suspected elder abuse, that is no substitute for the power of alert neighbors, friends and family members. There are no costs or penalties for reports made in good faith, and you can choose to file a report anonymously. Your action could save a person’s life.



Reporting Information Checklist

When reporting suspected elder abuse, you can help investigators by providing, at a minimum, the following information:

- Names and addresses of the individual and his or her caregiver or guardian
- The individual’s current location
- Circumstances and as much specific information as possible about the suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Information regarding any previous suspected incidents of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Any other information that may help discover the cause or scope of the suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation

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If you suspect an elder is at risk for immediate harm, contact local law enforcement as soon as possible.

For most instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation of older adults living in their own homes and communities, contact the **Ohio Adult Protective Services** program at **1-855-644-6277**.

For suspected abuse of an older adults in a nursing home or assisted living facility, contact the **Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman** at **1-800-282-1206** or visit **www.ombudsman.ohio.gov** to find the regional program serving your community.

For suspected abuse of adults of any age with a developmental disability, contact the **Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities** at **1-866-313-6733**.

Ohio Adult Protective Services
1-855-644-6277

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Types of Abuse

Neglect: Failure, through action or inaction of the individual or another person, to meet the individual's basic needs for safety and well-being (such as medical care, adequate nutrition, socialization).

Exploitation: Unlawful or improper use of another person's resources for monetary or personal benefit, profit or gain.

Physical abuse: Intentional use of physical force that results in injury, pain or impairment. It includes pushing, hitting, slapping, pinching and other ways of physically harming a person.

Emotional abuse: Actions that threaten, humiliate, intimidate or otherwise psychologically hurt an individual.

Sexual abuse: Rape or other unwanted, nonconsensual sexual contact, nudity, exhibitionism and other sexual situations.

Warning Signs of Elder Abuse

- Bruises, cuts or other signs of physical harm;
- Sudden behavioral changes, such as becoming less social;
- A caregiver who refuses to allow visitors to see the adult alone;
- Hazardous or unsanitary living conditions;
- Dehydration, malnutrition or poor personal hygiene;
- Previously uninvolved relatives showing sudden interest in the adult's rights, affairs and possessions;
- Unexplained, sudden transfers of assets or finances to an individual;
- Unexplained disappearances of funds or valuable possessions;
- Abrupt changes in a will, financial documents, bank accounts or banking practice; and
- Over- or under-utilization of prescribed medications or missing medications.

Contacts

Ohio Attorney General's Office
1-800-282-0515

Office of the State Long-Term Care
Ombudsman
1-800-282-1206

Ohio Department of Developmental
Disabilities, Abuse/Neglect Hotline
1-866-313-6733

Ohio Department of Health, Office
of Health Assurance and Licensing
1-800-342-0553

Ohio Department of Mental Health
and Addiction Services
1-877-275-6364

Ohio Department of Aging
www.aging.ohio.gov/elderabuse

