

When to Report

Immediately make a report when you have reasonable cause to believe that abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation occurred to a vulnerable adult.

1. **“Reasonable cause to believe”** means it is probable that an incident of abuse, neglect by another, self-neglect or financial exploitation happened. Probable means that based on evidence or information readily obtained from various sources, it is likely the incident occurred.
2. **“Reason to suspect”** means it is possible that an incident of sexual or physical abuse occurred. Possible means that, based on information readily obtained from various sources, the incident could have happened.
3. Criteria to accept a report: A. Vulnerable Adult age 18 or older. B. Allegation of Abuse, Self-Neglect, Neglect by another or Exploitation

What Information to Give When Making a Report

The more information you can give, the more you assist the vulnerable adult.

When making a report, give as much of the following information as you have:

- Name and birth date of the victim
- Current DSS case manager, if one exists
- Allegation—what is the abuse, neglect or exploitation event and what happened
- Other interested individuals
- Income/income source
- Date/time of allegation and when incident occurred
- Name typology (A/N/E) of the allegation
- Household members, other known relatives
- Location of the incident/Directions
- Perpetrator/Caregiver information
- Danger Influences (to client and to worker)
- Reporter request follow up (name and number required)

Sometimes people want to make a report anonymously. You are *encouraged* to leave your name and phone number so that the intake worker can call you back to obtain more information. The additional information you give may be the very information needed to protect the vulnerable adult.

The intake worker will document your name and phone number, which is *proof* of your fulfillment of your obligation by law to report the abuse of vulnerable adults. Remember that your name as a reporter is confidential.

A Community Partnership

There are many 'causes' of vulnerable adult abuse, from a caregiver relative who is unaware that resources are available in a community, to the person who preys on vulnerable adults for their money.

Vulnerable adult abuse will remain hidden unless YOU, as a neighbor, church member, shopper in a grocery store, mail carrier, grocery clerk, bank teller, health care professional, law enforcement employee, or social services worker — *COMMUNITY MEMBER* -- partner in preventing its occurrence.

How Can You Help Prevent Vulnerable Adult Abuse?

- Learn the signs and symptoms of vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation.
- **GET INVOLVED.** Talk to the vulnerable adult you suspect is being abused. Sometimes just providing a listening ear opens opportunities of assistance.
- As a caregiver or relative, if you feel overwhelmed and out of control, get help. The vulnerable adult may be eligible for in-home services, which will help the vulnerable adult and provide you respite.
- Report abuse immediately.