Online Texas Abuse Hotline User Guide

Introduction

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) provides the Online Texas Abuse Hotline as a secure website for reporting suspicions of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, adults with disabilities, or people 65 years or older.

Emergencies and Life-Threatening Situations

If you need to report an emergency or life-threatening situation, call your local law enforcement agency or 9-1-1 immediately. The Online Texas Abuse Hotline should NOT be used in urgent or emergency situations. Reports made through this website take up to 24 hours to process.

Getting Answers

This user guide provides information on how to use the online reporting tool. Additional information is available at the Report Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation page.

Online Help

Online Help is the built-in help system for the Online Texas Abuse Hotline. It provides answers to common questions and instructions on how to navigate the site. You can access Online Help while you are working on a report.

Select the Help link in the top right corner, and a new tab opens with information about the page such as:

- The purpose
- Word and acronym definitions
- How to perform specific actions
There are five icons in Online Help that help make it easier to find information:

**Icon Description**

**Table of Contents**
The **Table of Contents** looks like a bulleted list. When you select the icon, all Online Help content displays in the left pane. Select any item to display the topic details.

**Index**
The **Index** icon looks like a file folder labeled with A-Z. When you select the icon, a list of keywords displays in the pane. Select a word or phrase to jump to where it displays in Online Help.
**Search**
The **Search** icon looks like a magnifying glass. It allows you to search for a word or phrase. The results include all topics with the word or phrase you searched.

**Glossary**
The **Glossary** icon looks like an open book. It displays an alphabetical list of words, phrases, and acronyms that are used in the Online Texas Abuse Hotline Reporting tool.

**Print**
The **Print** icon looks like a printer. It enables you to print topics from Online Help.

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**Hearing Impaired**

If this is an emergency and you are deaf and equipped with a Teletypewriter (TTY), call Relay Texas by dialing 711 or 1-800-735-2989. Tell the relay agent you need to call the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

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**Frequently Asked Questions**

An [FAQ page](#) is available to answer questions about online reporting.
Terms and Definitions

Using the correct terms when reporting abuse or neglect is very important. For the full list of up-to-date terms, follow these links:

- Child Protective Services
- Adult Protective Services

Navigation

The Online Texas Abuse Hotline is set up to make the online reporting process as simple and efficient as possible.

Main Sections

There are 4 main sections. The section you are working on is highlighted. Complete the section you are working on before going to the next section. The 4 main sections are:

1. People Involved
2. What Happened
3. Safety Concerns
4. Report Summary
People Involved
In the People Involved section, provide detailed information about everyone involved in the incident; alleged victims, alleged perpetrators, others living in the home, and anyone else has who has information about the incident. Multiple people can be added to each category.

What Happened
In the What Happened? section, provide details on the specific allegations and events that cause concern.

Allegations
If you leave this page without pressing the "Continue" or "Save as Draft" button, your information on this page will be lost.

What are your concerns about the primary child? Select all that apply:
- Abandonment/Refusal to accept parental responsibility
- Emotional abuse/Psychological state
- Fetal alcohol/Drug exposure
- Medical neglect
- Neglectful supervision
- Physical abuse/Injuries to a child
- Physical neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Labor/Sex trafficking
- Other

Save as Draft  Continue  Back
Safety Concerns

In the Safety Concerns section, provide details regarding domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, living conditions, and other safety concerns.

If you leave this page without pressing the "Continue" or "Save as Draft" button, your information on this page will be lost.

*Required Field

Explain if there are concerns about weapons:

Explain if anyone is affiliated with a gang:

Explain if there are people, pets, or conditions that could be a danger:
Summary Pages
After entering detailed information in each section, a summary page displays where you can review and edit the information. Select **Edit** or **Delete** to make changes. Select **Add Another Entry** to add another person or allegation. Select **Back** to return to the last page visited and **Continue** when you are finished with your review to open the next section.

People in the Home Summary

**Anyone Else in the Home**
Select all the details you know about this person:

- Primary Language
- *How is this person involved in the incident?
  - Neither/Unknown
- How is this person related to the primary alleged victim?
  - Grandparent Maternal
- Primary Language:
  - Spanish
- Will this person require an interpreter?
  - Yes
- *Gender:
  - Female
- Provide details about this person’s school/day care or after school program/workplace including name and address:
  - enter info here
- Where is this person right now?
- Share other relevant information about this person:

Do you want to add anyone else in the home?

**Save as Draft**

Select **Add Another Entry**
**Report Summary**

After completing **People Involved**, **What Happened**, and **Safety Concerns**, the **Report Summary** page allows you to review the information you entered.

You can edit, add another entry, or delete any of the information if needed, then select **Finish** to submit the report.
Customized Questions
Questions for entering detail adjust based on the information you provide.

Example:
When you begin entering information for the **Primary Alleged Victim**, a list of topics with check boxes next to them displays.

In this example, the reporter checked boxes to indicate they know the **Name, Primary Language, and Race, ethnicity, Social Security Number**. Questions will appear on the page, so the reporter can provide information for each of these topics. In this example, the reporter will not be asked to provide information about the alleged victim’s phone number or special needs.
**Navigation Buttons**
Use the navigations buttons to complete your report. **DO NOT** use the back and forward browser buttons.

*Save as Draft*
Saves your report as a draft to be finished later.

*Back*
Takes you to the previous page.

*Continue*
Takes you to the next step in your report.

*Delete*
Deletes your entry. Deleted information cannot be retrieved.

*Edit*
Opens the section so you can make changes.

*Add Another Entry*
Adds additional people or allegations.
Creating an Account

When you make a report for the first time, you’ll be prompted to create an account. Select **Create an Account**.

The **Request Access: Citizen Registration** page displays. First, you’ll create a username. The username can contain uppercase and/or lowercase letters, and numbers. Numeric only usernames are not allowed. A green check mark means your username is available; and red check mark means your selected username is not available.

Fill in the required fields. Required fields are indicated by an asterisk and include **Username**, **First** and **Last Name**, **Gender**, **Email Address**, **Primary Phone**, **Phone Type**, **Street Address**, **City**, **State**, **Address Type**, **Place of Employment**, and **Days and Times** you can be reached.
After filling in all required fields, you are prompted to verify you are not a robot by answering the security questions, then select **Next**.

The **Citizen Registration** page displays with a message alerting you to check your email for your credentials. Select **Done**.
The Abuse Hotline web page displays. Select **Login**.

The sign in page displays. Enter your username and password, and select **Sign In**.
The first time you log in, you’re prompted to set up three security questions. You aren’t required but you encouraged to secure your account. When you’ve selected the questions and entered your answer, select **Next**.

**Creating a New Report**

Select the **Create a New Report** button. The **Reporter Information** page displays. A message at the top of the page warns you that your session expires after 15 minutes of inactivity, so save your work often. You are required to acknowledge that the situation you’re is not an emergency before you can continue by selecting a checkbox. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911.
Next, enter as much information about yourself as possible.

The asterisks indicate the required fields. The **First and Last Name**, **Primary Phone**, **Street Address 1, City** and **State** fields are required. When you’ve entered as much information as possible, select **Continue**.

The **Welcome to the Texas Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Reporting System** page displays. You are required to select whether you are reporting about a child under 18, or adult, age of 18 and older.
For this example, we’ll select the **Child (under the age of 18)** button. When you select a button, the question- **Where did the alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation occur?** and location choices display. Select the location, then select **Continue**.

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**Primary Alleged Victim**

The **Primary Alleged Victim** page displays.

Let’s address the first statement. It reads, **Select the details you know about this person (select all that apply)**. The choices include name, phone number, primary language, special needs, and race, ethnicity, social security number. When you select any of these check boxes, additional fields display. You can toggle the fields by de selecting the check boxes. You can select more than one check box. Always enter as much information as possible.
The asterisks indicate required fields. The required fields include answering the question, **Do you know the alleged victim’s address?**, **Do you know this person’s birthdate?**, and **Gender**. If you select the **No** radio button additional fields display prompting you to enter the city and the state, which is required. The question **Does this person reside inside the city limits?** also displays, and an additional field where you enter directions to the home. Fill out as much information as possible. City, state, and county are required.

If you select the **Yes** radio button, for the address question, additional fields expand below the question. The street address, city, and state fields are required.
If you select **No** for the birth date question, an additional field displays and requires you to enter and approximate age in years. This field is required.

If you select **Yes** to the birthdate question, additional fields expand below the question that prompt you to use the calendar tool to select the birth date of the alleged victim.

Next, select the alleged victim’s gender from the drop-down menu - its required.

The three last fields ask the statements, **Provide details about this person’s school or day care or after school program or workplace including name and address:**, **Where is this person right now?**, and **Share other relevant information about this person.** Enter as much
information as possible in these three fields. Remember to save your information as you work through the report by selecting the Save as Draft button at the bottom of the page. Select Continue.

![Providing details about a person's school/day care or after school program/workplace including name and address.](#)

People Involved
In the People Involved section, provide detailed information about everyone involved in the incident; alleged victims, alleged perpetrators, others living in the home, and anyone one else who can provide information about the incident. As you continue through the questions, you can add multiple people in each category.

First, the People Information page displays.

![People Information page](#)

Depending on which check box or check boxes you select, are prompted to enter additional information after selecting Continue.

If possible, provide the following information for each person involved in the incident you are reporting:

- Names
- Dates of birth/Approximate age
- Phone number
• Primary language
• Special needs
• Race, ethnicity, Social Security Number

You are also asked how each person was involved in the incident you are reporting. Select from the following list.

1. Alleged Victim
2. Alleged Perpetrator
3. Both Alleged Victim and Alleged Perpetrator
4. Neither/Unknown

For this example, we’ll select the all three check boxes—**anyone else in the home, anyone involved living outside the home, and anyone who can provide additional information about the concerns.**
The **Anyone Else in the Home** page displays.
The **How is this person involved in the incident?** and **Gender** fields are required.

The functionality is basically the same as the **Primary Alleged Victim** page. Additional fields display based on your check box selections under the **Select all the details you know about his person** section which include **Name**, **Date of birth/Approximate age**, **Phone number**, **Primary language**, **Special needs**, and **Race, ethnicity, Social Security Number**. Make your selections and enter the required information.
For this example, we’ll select the **Date of birth/Approximate age** check box. When you select the check box, the **Do you know this person’s birthdate?** Question displays. Select the **Yes** or **No** radio button.

If you select **Yes**, you’ll use the calendar icon to choose the birthdate. If you select **No**, you’re prompted to enter approximate age.

Select gender from the drop-down menu - this field is required. Then enter any additional information in the **Provide details about this person’s school/day care or after school program/workplace including name and address:**, **Where is this person right now?**, and **Share other**
relevant information about this person: in the text entry boxes and select Continue.

When you select Continue, the People in the Home Summary page displays. Review the information on the page. You can edit or delete the entry by selecting the Delete or Edit buttons near the bottom of the page. If you want to add another person, select the Add Another Entry button below the Delete and Edit buttons.

If all the information is correct, select Continue.
When you select continue, the **Anyone Involved Outside the Home** page displays because we selected the checkbox on the **People Information** page. Depending on which check box or check boxes you select, you will be prompted to enter additional information just like the previous pages.

Fill out all the fields to the best of your knowledge. Responses to the **How is this person involved in the incident?** and gender questions are required.
When you’re done, select **Continue**. The **People Involved Outside the Home Summary** page displays. Review the information on the page. You can edit or delete the entry by selecting the **Delete** or **Edit** buttons near the bottom of the page. If you want to add another person, select the **Add Another Entry** button below the **Delete** and **Edit** buttons.

If all the information is correct, select **Continue**.

### People Involved Outside the Home Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anyone Involved Outside the Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select all the details you know about this person:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is this person related to the primary alleged victim?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>How is this person involved in the incident?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither/Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gender:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provide details about this person’s school/day care or after school program/workplace including name and address:

Where is this person right now?

Share other relevant information about this person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you want to add anyone else involved outside the home?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Add Another Entry</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Save as Draft] [Back] [Continue]
Because we selected the **Anyone With Knowledge of the Situation** check box on the **People Information** page, the **Anyone With Knowledge of the Situation** page displays. Depending on which check box or check boxes you select, you will be prompted to enter additional information just like the previous pages.

### Anyone With Knowledge of the Situation

If you leave this page without pressing the "Continue" or "Save as Draft" button, your information on this page will be lost.

*Required Field*

Select all the details you know about this person:

- [ ] Name
- [ ] Address
- [ ] Phone number
- [ ] Primary Language

Fill in the fields to the best of your knowledge and select **Save as Draft**, then **Continue**.

### Anyone With Knowledge of the Situation

If you leave this page without pressing the "Continue" or "Save as Draft" button, your information on this page will be lost.

*Required Field*

Select all the details you know about this person:

- [ ] Name
- [ ] Address
- [ ] Phone number
- [ ] Primary Language

How is this person related to the primary alleged victim?

Select One

What additional information can this person provide?

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The summary page displays, you can edit, delete, or add another entry. If everything is correct, select **Continue**.

**What Happened?**

In the **What Happened?** section, provide details on the specific allegations and events regarding your concern.

Provide specific concerns you have and reasons for reporting the incident. Be very detailed in your descriptions. Use specific dates and names. Avoid using pronouns. The descriptions provided are used to decide whether your report needs an investigation. DFPS will not contact you for clarification when making this decision.

**Allegations**

An allegation is a formal claim against someone which prompts an investigation. Allegation definitions for children and adults are different. Most abuse and neglect allegations are covered by these topics:

- **1. Abandonment and refusal to accept parental responsibility** are where the parent or caregiver left the child in a potentially harmful situation and did not plan to return for the child.
2. **Emotional Abuse** is an emotional or mental injury caused by the parent or caregiver that results in an observable effect on the child.
   - Psychological state - Concerns about the child's mental stability, as demonstrated by mood, behavior, and thoughts.

3. **Fetal Alcohol/Drug Exposure** - Example: A newborn is experiencing physical harm because of mother’s drug or alcohol use during the pregnancy. Examples of physical harm include but are not limited to physical manifestations of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Effect, or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.

4. **Medical Neglect** is an emotional or mental injury caused by the parent or caregiver that results in an observable effect on the child.

5. **Neglectful Supervision** means improper supervision of a child left alone which could have resulted in substantial harm.

6. **Physical Abuse** is deliberate actions resulting in injuries to a child or genuine threats of such actions or concerns about physical injuries of an unexplained or suspicious nature.

7. **Sexual Abuse** includes:
   - Sexual indecency, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
   - Failing to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct to a child.
   - Using the child for the creation of obscene or pornographic material.

8. **Trafficking**
   - Labor trafficking - parent or caregiver forcing a child into labor or services that are unhealthy or harmful to the child.
   - Sex trafficking - parent or caregiver receiving compensation for forcing a child to engage in prostitution or other sex acts.

9. **Other** - situations that don’t fit the defined allegations.

Each allegation you select requires you fill in information about what you observed. Though accurate terms are important when reporting abuse or neglect, you might not find an exact match. If you are reporting something that does not fit into defined allegations, you may select **Other** and explain the abuse you are reporting. Our trained staff reviews your report and determine an allegation. For the full list of up-to-date terms that are useful for reporting abuse, please follow the links to the online terms and definitions.

- [Child Protective Services](#)
Describe Each Allegation
After you have selected the allegation(s) associated with your report, you will be asked to describe each allegation. For each allegation, you will be asked to provide the information listed below.

1. Select the Alleged Victim
2. Select the Alleged Perpetrator
3. Provide as many details as possible so that we may know how to respond

Step by Step Example
Follow these step by step instructions to fill out the What Happened? section.

The Allegation page displays. Select check box next to each of your allegations, then select Continue. For this demo, we’ll select Medical neglect and Neglectful supervision.

The next pages populate depending on your selection. For example, we selected Medical neglect and Neglectful supervision, so the next two pages that display will ask for details about those allegations.
Let’s review the **Medical Neglect** page. Select the check box next to the name of the alleged victim under the question, **Who is the alleged victim?** The names that appear here are based upon the people you enter in the **People Involved** section. Then answer the questions to the best of your ability.

The **Does the child require medication?** displays conditional fields. If you select **Yes**, you are prompted to enter details about what medicine and if it is not being administered as prescribed.

When you’re done entering all the information, select **Continue**.
The **Medical Neglect Summary** page populates and displays a summary of your entries. Use the **Delete** or **Edit** buttons to delete or edit. Use the **Add Another Entry** button to add another medical neglect allegation. When everything is correct, select **Continue**.

The **Neglectful Supervision** page displays. Select the check box next to the name of the alleged victim under the **Who is the alleged victim?** question. The names that appear are based on the people you entered in the **People Involved** section. Fill in all the fields to the best of your ability. The yes and no questions are conditional. If you select **Yes**, additional fields populate, and you’re prompted to enter more information. When you’re done entering the information, select **Continue**.
The **Neglectful Supervision Summary** page displays. You can use the **Edit** and **Delete** buttons to edit or delete the entry. Use the **Add Another Entry** button to add another allegation. When you’re sure all the information is correct, select **Continue**.

**Linking the Allegation(s) to a Person(s)**
If there are multiple people involved and all the details of the alleged incident are the same for each person, select all the people for the allegation and fill out the allegation once.
If there are multiple people involved, but the details of the alleged incident are different for each person, select the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, and fill out the incident details for those people. When you finish, select **Continue**.
A summary page displays where you can select **Add Another Entry** for the allegation.

## Neglectful Supervision Summary

**Neglectful Supervision**
You indicated you are concerned about neglectful supervision.

Who is the alleged victim?

Who is the alleged perpetrator?

When did the incident happen? If there is not a specific date, provide a timeframe.

Is the child left unattended?

Was the child injured?

Do you have other concerns about neglectful supervision?

To add another allegation of neglectful supervision, select the “Add Another Entry” button. Otherwise select the “Continue” button.
Selecting **Add Another Entry** takes you to the same **Allegation** page again, so you can select another combination of alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, and then fill out the incident details for those people.

**Neglectful Supervision**

*If you leave this page without pressing the “Continue” or “Save as Draft” button, your information on this page will be lost.

*Required Field

You indicated you are concerned about neglectful supervision.

**Who is the alleged victim?**

☐ [Name]

**Who is the alleged perpetrator?**

☐ [Name]

**When did the incident happen? If there is not a specific date, provide a timeframe.**

☐ [Date]

**Is the child left unattended?**

☐ Yes  ☐ No

**Was the child injured?**

☐ Yes  ☐ No

**Do you have other concerns about neglectful supervision?**

☐ [Other concerns]
Safety Concerns

The **Safety Concerns** page displays. In this section, provide details regarding domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, living conditions, and other safety concerns.

Answer the questions and select **Continue**.

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**Safety Concerns**

If you leave this page without pressing the "Continue" or "Save as Draft" button, your information on this page will be lost.

*Required Field*

**Explain if there are concerns about weapons:**

**Explain if anyone is affiliated with a gang:**

**Explain if there are people, pets, or conditions that could be a danger:**

[Save as Draft] [Back] [Continue]
**Family Dynamics and Living Conditions**

The *Family Dynamics and Living Conditions* page displays. Select the check box next to the concerns about the alleged victim’s family dynamics and living conditions from the list. For this demo, we’ll select **Domestic violence** and **Living conditions**.

The next pages that display depend on your selections on the *Family Dynamics and Living Conditions* page. Since we selected **Domestic violence** and **Living conditions**, the next page that displays is **Domestic violence**. Enter the information about severity, frequency, weapons, injuries, and other concerns. When you’re done entering all the information, select **Continue**.

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**Domestic Violence**

If you leave this page without pressing the "Continue" or "Save as Draft" button, your information on this page will be lost.

*Required Field

You indicated you are concerned about domestic violence.

**Describe your concerns about domestic violence including the severity and frequency:**

**Explain if weapons are used or objects thrown during the incidents of domestic violence:**

**Explain if the child has ever been injured or intervened in an incident of domestic violence:**

**Do you have other concerns about domestic violence?**
The **Living Conditions** page displays. Enter the information about safety hazards, non-working utilities, negative effects of living conditions, and other concerns. When you’ve entered all the information, select **Continue**.

You indicated you are concerned about the living conditions.

**Explain if there are health and/or safety hazards present that would endanger the child:**

**Explain if the utilities are not working (water, gas, and/or electric):**

**Explain if there are negative effects to the child due to the living conditions:**

**When was the last time you saw the living conditions?**

**Do you have other concerns about the living conditions?**
Report Summary
The Report Summary page displays. Scroll down and review all the information. You can use the Edit and the Delete and Edit buttons to remove or modify the information you entered. You can use the Add Another Entry button to add more info. When you’re sure all the information is correct, select Finish.
Submit Confirmation

The **Submit Confirmation** page displays and shows a summary of your report. You can scroll down to review the summary and print the page by selecting the **Print This Page** button.

The submit confirmation message provides a confirmation number and the report submit date. There’s also a link to start another report, a link to a survey where you can provide feedback about your experience, a link to the DFPS website, and a link to frequently asked questions.
Select **Home** to return to the **List of Reports** page.

**List of Reports**

This video shows you how to view, filter, and sort your reports.

This page displays a list of your submitted and unsubmitted reports. You can select **Continue** in the **Action** column to resume work on an unsubmitted report. If the report has been submitted, you can select the link in the **Confirmation Number** column to open an incident summary.

If you open the incident summary, select the **Home** link to return to the **List of Reports** page.

You can select the **Filter** or the **Settings** icons to sort your reports. You can also activate the filter by selecting the drop-down arrows in any of the columns.
The filters allow you to sort the list by date submitted, name of victim, report decision, confirmation number, report id, date draft created and action for unsubmitted reports, and automatically submitted for reports that have been submitted automatically. The date filter allows you to filter by manually entering the date or selecting the **Sort Ascending, Sort Descending**, or **Hide Column** buttons.

Use the filter choices **Sort Ascending, Sort Descending, Remove Sort,** and **Hide Column** buttons to sort the information in the other columns.