



Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

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 who suspects abuse and does not report it can be held liable for a Class-A misdemeanor.

Additional reporting requirements apply to teachers and other professionals. A professional must report suspected abuse or neglect of a child within 48 hours of suspecting the child has been or may be abused or neglected. (TFC 261.101 (b))* A professional cannot delegate this duty to another person to make the report. Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible to protect the child and for a family to get help.

*For life threatening or emergency situations,
call your local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately, and then make a report to DFPS.*

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

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>. 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. Recent improvements to the site include a registration page, ability for the user to print the report, left side navigation, and spell check. If you have trouble or questions about making a report on the website, call (512) 929-6784 or **1-800-252-5400** for help. (You MUST include the "s" in "https://" to access the site.)

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 a 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 includes (if known):

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

* Texas Family Code Chapter 261.101 (b)

