



Reporting Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

If you suspect:

- A child is being abused or neglected.
- An adult with a disability or 65 or older is being abused, neglected, financially exploited, or is in a state of self-neglect.

Report by:

Phone: 1-800-252-5400

Call the Texas DFPS Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide.

Online at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](http://www.txabusehotline.org)¹

Report online if victim is not in immediate danger.

If the person is in immediate danger, call 911 or local police first. Then call the Texas Abuse Hotline.

Mandatory Reporting

By law, everyone in Texas is a mandated reporter. Professionals may not delegate the duty to report to anyone else. The mandatory reporting requirement applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including attorneys, clergy,

medical professionals, social workers, and mental health professionals.

Preparing to Make the Report

Please – gather your notes, files or documentation before making your report. This will help us move through your report efficiently in order to best serve you and vulnerable Texans.

As much as possible, please have the following information ready:

Identification:

- Names
- Dates of Birth
- Social Security Numbers

Relevant Locations:

- Home address
- School or daycare
- Employer

Additional Details:

- Primary Language
- Disability
- Other special needs

Partial information is still useful for locating the people involved. Even an approximate age or street name helps.

¹ <http://www.txabusehotline.org>

The Hotline cannot answer questions about ongoing cases.

If you are trying to get in touch with DFPS regarding an ongoing case, you will need to contact your local DFPS office. You can find your local office number on the [DFPS Website](#).²

Your identity is confidential

DFPS staff are required by law to keep the reporter's identity confidential. Giving your name and contact information allows field investigators to contact you if they need additional information. Your identity may be revealed to a judge, law enforcement in certain situations or other entities that investigate abuse or neglect, or to other persons only when ordered by the court.

What about confidentiality laws?

Generally, federal privacy laws, such as HIPAA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), have exceptions that allow the sharing of otherwise confidential information for the purpose of reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

Failure to report child abuse is against the law.

Failure to report child abuse and neglect is against the law. If you knowingly fail

to make a report of child abuse and neglect, you may have committed a Class A misdemeanor or, in some cases, a state jail felony.

False reports are against the law.

False reports are against the law. You may be subject to civil and/or criminal liability if you knowingly file a false report.

Good faith reports are immune from liability.

You are protected from civil or criminal liability as long as you make a report in good faith and without malicious intent. This is true even if DFPS determines that there was no abuse or neglect.

The Texas Family Code also specifies that an employer may not suspend or terminate the employment of, or otherwise discriminate against, a person who is a professional and who makes a report about suspected child abuse or neglect in good faith.

References

Requirements under the law can be found in the Texas Family Code 261.101 through 261.110, Texas Human Resources Code Chapter 48.101(2), 42 United States Code 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i), and 45 Code of Federal Regulations Section 164.512(b)(1)(ii).

² http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/offices.asp