

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES OVERVIEW

What Must be Reported to APS?

Any incident in which a vulnerable adult suffers harm from abandonment, abuse, exploitation, neglect or self-neglect. Care coordinators are encouraged to use the "Report of Harm for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults" form on page D-6 to report incidents to APS staff. Should this form be inaccessible or not usable for any reason, care coordinators are instructed NOT to delay reporting. The care coordinator must then use the (800) 478-9996 phone number or other timely means of communication with APS staff.

To Whom Should Reports be Made?

Reports should be made to the central reporting number for the Division of Senior Services within 24 hours at 1-800-478-9996. Reports can be made to local law enforcement agencies in the event that a report cannot be made to APS. Local law enforcement agencies are mandated to investigate and take appropriate action to protect vulnerable adults.

Is there Immunity from Liability?

Persons who make reports in good faith are immune from liability and protected by law from retaliation.

How is Confidentiality Protected?

Investigatory reports and reports of the abandonment, abuse, exploitation, neglect or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult are confidential and are not subject to public inspection and copying. Investigative reports may be used by appropriate agencies or individuals inside and outside the state in connection with investigations or judicial proceedings involving the abandonment, abuse, exploitation, neglect or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult. Individuals who report abandonment, abuse, exploitation, neglect or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult may remain anonymous.

Who is Required to Report?

- Physicians or other licensed health care providers
- Mental health professionals, including licensed marital and family therapists.
- Pharmacists
- Nursing home, residential care, and health care facility administrators
- Guardians and conservators
- Police officers
- Village public safety officers
- Village health aides
- Social workers
- Members of the clergy
- Employees of service grant agencies funded by Department of Administration for the provision of services to older Alaskans, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Any person may report

Designation of Others to Provide Protective Services

Alaska law authorizes the Division of Senior Services to designate and train other state agencies, community service providers, or individuals to provide protective services.

Guiding Principles of Adult Protection

- When interests compete, the adult client is the person APS is charged to serve; not the community concerned about safety, the landlord concerned about property, citizens concerned about crime or morality, or families concerned about their own health or finances.
- When interests compete, the adult client is in charge of decision-making until she or he voluntarily delegates responsibility to another or the court grants responsibility to another.
- Freedom is more important than safety. The person can choose to live in harm or even self-destructively provided she or he has the capacity to choose, does not harm others, and commits no crime.
- In the ideal case, protection of adults seeks to achieve simultaneously, and in order of importance: freedom, safety, least disruption of life-style and least restrictive care alternative.

Examples of Adult Protective Services:

- Information and Referral
- Investigation of Reports
- Protective Placement
- Guardianship or Conservatorship Counseling
- Linking Clients to Community Resources
- Training and designation of local community resources to provide services.

We are here to help you. Our services are voluntary. We will not force you to move or do anything against your own will. We are here to help you live in a safe and healthy environment and receive the services you need. Please contact our office if you need help or have any questions.

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<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dsds/aps.htm>