

# REPORTING ABUSE & NEGLECT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**IF YOU SUSPECT OR OBSERVE ABUSE  
OR NEGLECT OF A PERSON WITH  
A DISABILITY, REPORT TO THE DPPC  
BY CALLING THE 24-HOUR HOTLINE:  
1-800-426-9009 | TTY 711**



## WHAT IS A MANDATED REPORTER?

Mandated Reporters are persons who, as a result of their profession, are more likely to be aware of abuse of individuals with disabilities. Mandated Reporters are required by law to report cases of suspected abuse to DPPC when they have a suspicion that a person with a disability is suffering from a reportable case of abuse or neglect.

For suspected abuse of adults with disabilities, mandated reporting is an individual responsibility. It is up to the individual reporter to be certain that a report of suspected abuse or neglect is filed. Mandated Reporters should not rely on others, such as supervisors or administrators to file reports for them.

All allegations of abuse or neglect should be reported immediately to DPPC's 24 hour-Hotline, regardless of the personal feelings of knowledgeable staff.

## WHAT IS REPORTABLE?

The standard for reporting suspected abuse or neglect in Massachusetts is any situation where there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that abuse or neglect exists. Neglect may include patient-on-patient abuse. Reports involving deaths of individuals with disabilities, even if there is no suspicion that the death is the result of abuse, the caregiver agency is required to immediately provide an oral report of said death to DPPC's 24-hour Hotline.

Mandated Reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report. Non-mandated Reporters are also protected providing the report was made in good faith. Failure to report incidences of suspected abuse and neglect can result in severe consequences for the alleged victim, other potential victims and the mandated reporter. Mandated reporters who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

## WHO ARE MANDATED REPORTERS?

- Persons employed by a state agency within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Persons employed by private agencies providing services to persons with disabilities
- Physicians, Dentists, Nurses
- Medical interns
- Hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons with disabilities
- Medical examiners
- Psychologists
- Chiropractors
- Podiatrists
- Osteopaths
- Public or private school teachers
- Educational administrators
- Guidance or family counselors
- Day care workers
- Probation officers
- Animal control officers
- Social workers
- Foster parents
- Police officers

**DISABLED PERSONS PROTECTION COMMISSION**

**300 GRANITE STREET, SUITE 404, BRAINTREE, MA 02184**

**WEBSITE: [DPPCMass.gov](http://DPPCMass.gov) | PHONE: (617) 727-6465 | EMAIL: [DPPC.Learning@Mass.gov](mailto:DPPC.Learning@Mass.gov)**



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## THE DISABLED PERSONS PROTECTION COMMISSION (DPPC)

The Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is an independent state agency created by legislation in 1987. Massachusetts General Law chapter 19C (M.G.L. c. 19C) established DPPC to protect adults with mental and physical disabilities, between the ages of 18 and 59, from abuse or neglect by their caregiver(s) whether in a private, family, or state care setting. DPPC's enabling statute fills the gap between the child abuse (ages 0-17) and elder abuse (age 60 and over) statutes.

In cases of suspected abuse or neglect of a person with a disability, DPPC:

- Receives and screens reports of suspected abuse and neglect through a 24-Hour Hotline
- Receives and screens reports of all deaths, when an individual has died while in the care of a state or private service provider
- Conducts investigations
- Oversees investigations conducted by other state agencies on DPPC's behalf
- Ensures that appropriate protective services are provided when abuse is substantiated
- Provides training and education
- Provides assistance to callers in clarifying the presence of abuse

## WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL REPORTS ABUSE OR NEGLECT

- Be calm and supportive
- Never agree to keep the abuse secret
- Provide a private setting for the individual to disclose the abuse
- Never blame the victim
- Assure the individual that they did the right thing by reporting the abuse
- Do not investigate
- Immediately report the suspected abuse to DPPC
- Maintain confidentiality – only tell who you must
- In an emergency, call 911

## CONTACT DPPC

Report suspected abuse against adults with disabilities ages 18-59 by calling DPPC's 24-hour Hotline: 1-800-426-9009 | TTY 711

### *Request a Training*

Sign up for DPPC's Reporting Abuse and Neglect of Persons with Disabilities Training by visiting [dppcmass.gov](http://dppcmass.gov) or call 617-727-6465 to explore other training opportunities.

## ADDITIONAL REPORTING HOTLINES

### DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)

For suspected abuse against children ages 0-17  
1-800-792-5200  
TTY 711

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF AGING & INDEPENDENCE (AGE)

For suspected abuse against adults ages 60+  
1-800-922-2275  
TTY 711

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH)

For suspected abuse against all people in long-term care facilities  
1-800-462-5540  
TTY 711