

## Why should you make a report?

Since victims may be reluctant to report, they need YOU to assist them in getting them the help they need. And it's easy. Simply make a phone call to Adult Protective Services (APS).

You should call even if you only suspect abuse. Proof is not required. The social worker will ask you questions to determine whether or not an investigation is needed.

You are protected from any liability as long as you make the report in good faith.

Unless you routinely provide care or social services to elders or dependent adults, you have the option of remaining anonymous.

## What happens after you report?

No two reports are handled in the same way. If the victim is in immediate danger, an APS worker will respond right away. When there is less risk, it may be 3 to 10 days before the APS worker visits the victim.

If you have given your name in the report, an APS worker may call you to get more details about the situation. Your identity will not be revealed to the victim or the abuser.

## What will APS do?

An APS worker will interview the victim alone to determine the facts of the situation. The APS worker may also interview family members and the suspected abuser.

If the abuse is criminal, the APS worker will make a report to the police. The APS worker will also work to keep the family together, while eliminating the abuse, if that is the victim's desire.

The APS worker will consult with the victim about what community services are available to insure his or her safety. With the victim's consent, the APS worker will arrange for the needed services and monitor that they are providing for the client's safety.

In those cases where the victim appears to be LEGALLY incompetent, the APS worker may make a referral to the Public Guardian to determine if a conservatorship is necessary.

**APS can not** force people to take help. Adults have the right to refuse APS assistance unless they are under a conservatorship.

**APS can not** force people to go into a nursing home. APS is committed to helping adults stay in their own homes as long as they can safely do so.

**APS can not** tell you what happened as the result of your report. The APS worker can only discuss the victim's case with other agencies directly involved in providing services to the client.



How you can  
protect  
Elder  
and  
Dependent  
Adults

1-800-491-7123

**APS**

**(Adult Protective Services)**



Riverside County  
Department of Public Social Services

DPSS 3524 (REV. 11/06)

# Recognizing Abuse

**Under California law, abuse of an elder** (person 65 or older) **or dependent adult** (person with a mental or physical disability) **is a crime.** Abuse is defined as:

**Physical Abuse** including hitting, punching, dragging, pulling hair or arms, burning, pinching, restraining, over or under medicating, etc.

**Sexual Abuse** including sexual battery, rape, and spousal rape. It can also include convincing a victim, who is mentally retarded or mentally impaired, to have sex.

**Neglect** including failure to provide:

- needed care
- basic body hygiene
- clean, safe housing
- adequate food and liquid
- clean, appropriate clothing
- medical aids such as glasses and walkers
- supervision for demented or developmentally delayed (mentally retarded) individuals.

**Psychological Abuse** including the caretaker being violent, aggressive, controlling, uncaring or threatening withdrawing care or nursing home placement. The abuse may also include isolating the victim from friends and family.

**Abandonment** means leaving the victim without care when the average person would know that this would endanger the victim.

**Self Neglect** is failure to provide one's self with needed care, food, shelter and clothing because of a mental or physical disability. Self neglect is NOT a crime but needs to be reported so the individual can receive help.

**Financial Abuse** including taking or using a victim's money or other assets for any wrongful purpose or using undue influence to get a victim to sign documents (i.e. will, property transfer, etc.)

**Call to report consumer fraud  
C.A.R.E. Program  
(Curtailling Abuse Related to the Elderly)  
1-800-476-7506**

## Anyone can become a victim...

Abuse happens to men and women, rich and poor, healthy and ill, and to all ethnic and cultural groups. Although individuals who are dependent on others for their care are the most likely to be abused, even healthy, active seniors can become victims.

## ...and anyone can be an abuser

The abuser is often a trusted family member, caretaker or friend. Caretaker stress, substance abuse, financial problems and personal problems can all cause a well meaning person to become abusive.

## Victims are often reluctant to ask for help

Victims sometimes fear what will happen to them if they accuse their caregiver of abuse. They worry that they will be left without care or will be forced into a nursing home. Victims who have been independent all their lives often feel guilty about how much care they need. They excuse the caregiver's failure as their fault for demanding too much. Victims are often embarrassed about their situations. In extreme abuse cases, the victim may fear retaliation.

When the abuser is a family member, reporting is even more difficult. Many believe that "if only" they were more independent or a better spouse or a stronger parent, the abuse would not occur. They don't want the abuser forced out of the house or jailed. They just want the abuse to stop.

**Call APS  
to report abuse  
1-800-491-7123  
24 hours a day**