



Signs of Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide necessary care or services, leading to physical harm, pain, or emotional distress. It can be intentional or unintentional, often stemming from inadequate staffing or poor management in a long-term care setting. When entering a long-term care facility use your senses to recognize neglect, take notice of red flags, and document and report individual and systematic neglect of residents.

Recognize Signs of Neglect

- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Malnutrition or dehydration
- Poor hygiene
- Over or under medication
- Isolation
- Unclean living conditions
- Unexplained injuries
- Medication not being delivered consistently or at the appropriate times
- Residents calling out for staff members in frustration due to waiting times



Take Notice

Look for red flags that are more immediate signs of neglect. Such as:

- Call bells unanswered or long wait times for assistance.
- Few staff members throughout the facility.
- Residents sleeping in the hallways unattended.
- Ill-informed staff that are unfamiliar with residents and cannot answer basic questions about the resident or their condition and cannot locate the resident's medical record.
- Poor food quality or lack of adequate food.
- Unclean living conditions.
- Staff disregarding residents' rights such as dismissing concerns and ignoring a resident's needs.

Tip

If EMS needs law enforcement to respond to a situation, they can contact their own dispatch by radio or onboard systems, and dispatch will coordinate directly with the police. Some EMS agencies also use direct phone numbers or priority lines to request law enforcement without calling 911.

Reporting Suspected Neglect

If you suspect neglect, it is important to report the suspicions to the appropriate authorities. Know and follow your agency's or station's guidelines for reporting suspected neglect to your supervisor. The resources provided at the end of this brief include links to the agencies that have a responsibility to investigate reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurring in long-term care facilities (LTCF):

- **Licensing and Certification of LTCFs:** This agency is most often a part of the state's larger department of health. They have a responsibility to investigate reports of neglect and if there is a finding of neglect the agency may fine, suspend, or terminate the provider's license and/or Medicare/Medicaid certification.
- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman program(LTCOP):** LTCOP representatives will investigate reported neglect for the purpose of acting as the resident's advocate if requested by the resident or their designated family member to do so.
- **Adult Protective Services (APS):** Every state has an adult protective services program but not every APS program has a responsibility to investigate reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in LTCFs. Check with your state APS program.
- **State Attorney General office:** For reports of widespread, systematic neglect, contact your state's Attorney General's office.



RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov/elder-abuse/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/elder-abuse/about/index.html)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: [cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/certification-compliance/nursing-homes](https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/certification-compliance/nursing-homes)

U.S. Department of Justice: [justice.gov/elderjustice/red-flags-elder-abuse](https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/red-flags-elder-abuse)

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center: [ltombudsman.org/about](https://www.ltombudsman.org/about)

National Adult Protective Services Association: [napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area](https://www.napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area)

National Association of Attorneys General: [naag.org/find-my-ag](https://www.naag.org/find-my-ag)

National Center on Elder Abuse: <https://ncea.usc.edu/identify-abuse>

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care: <https://theconsumervoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/cv-ncea-nh-neglect-list.pdf>

Scan the QR code to watch the accompanying video.



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