



The Importance of Documentation and Reporting of Abuse and Neglect

Documentation may not be the most enjoyable part of your job, but as you know, accurately recording events and incidents is required and essential to completing your work on each call. It is your responsibility to document in a detailed and objective manner what you suspect is abuse. Do not assume that others will make a report. A report of abuse or neglect should be made as soon as possible upon your observation or awareness of the situation and in keeping with the policies of your agency or station.

It is okay, expected, and helpful for reporting authorities to have multiple reports of the same incident. Reporting abuse and neglect is important for helping the victim get the assistance, support, and justice they deserve; as well as for preventing others from becoming victimized.

What Are the Requirements for Reporting?

It is helpful to know your state's requirement for mandatory reporting of abuse by first responders and your agency's or station's policy regarding the process for reporting alleged abuse. At a minimum, a report of suspected abuse or neglect should be made to your supervisor.

You should also report the incident to the state agency responsible for investigating abuse and neglect in long-term care facilities; and any other entity or individual as designated by your agency's policies or state law.

Reports of suspected abuse and neglect should include the basics of **Who, What, Where, and When**. Additional relevant facts are necessary and impactful in helping the authorities and in assisting the victim in seeking justice. Clearly and objectively document your assessment of the individual, and what you observed, heard, and were told, and by whom. If you are quoting an individual on scene, it is best to use quotation marks around the statements, rather than to characterize what is being said. Include information about the environment and any other relevant observations.



Guidance and Tips

- If allowed by your departmental policy and state law, and if the resident gives permission, document evidence with camera or video.
- Avoid notes that are personal and opinionated and that characterize events rather than describing events objectively.
- Include any measurements that are helpful such the length and width of a bruise.
- Include eyewitness quotes.
- Complete documentation in a timely manner and promptly submit to your supervisor.
- Documentation may serve as legal evidence.
- Refer reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation to the appropriate authorities in your jurisdiction and state.
- 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.



RESOURCES

Contact information for state licensing agencies:

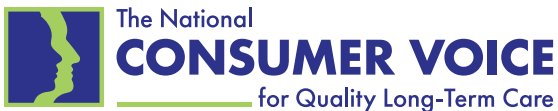
[cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/quality-safety-oversight-general-information/contact-information](https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/quality-safety-oversight-general-information/contact-information)

Contact information for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs: theconsumervoicework.org/get-help

Documenting residents' concerns in long-term care:

theconsumervoicework.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/CV_PracticalPointersBrochure_digital.pdf

Scan the QR code to watch the accompanying video.



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This resource was produced by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care with support from the Elder Justice Initiative, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this resource are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.