

Child Abuse

321.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the reporting of suspected child abuse.

321.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Sanibel Fire and Rescue District to ensure the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) is notified of suspected child abuse as required by law.

321.3 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

Members of the Sanibel Fire and Rescue District shall notify DCF when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child is abused, abandoned, neglected or in need of supervision or care (§ 39.201, Fla. Stat.).

The Medical Examiner shall be notified in all instances where abuse is suspected in the death of a child (§ 39.201, Fla. Stat.).

For purposes of notification, abuse includes the physical, mental or sexual abuse or injury of a child, or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Abandonment includes a situation by which a parent or legal custodian of a child has made no significant contribution to the child's care and maintenance. Neglect includes the failure to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter or medical treatment for a child, or to permit a child to remain in an environment that may significantly impair the child's physical, mental or emotional health (§ 39.01, Fla. Stat.).

321.3.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification should occur immediately, or as soon as practicable, by contacting the Florida Abuse Hotline via telephone, fax or the Web-based reporting system. If the reporting member is an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic, the notification shall contain the reporting member's name (§ 39.201, Fla. Stat.).

The district Emergency Medical Services supervisor should be notified of the incident as soon as practical. A written report shall be prepared and, if requested, forwarded to law enforcement or DCF.

If a child is being transported to a medical facility, the receiving center triage nurse or physician shall be notified of the situation upon the child's arrival.

Failure to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect by a mandated reporter is a felony and may also result in discipline (§ 39.205, Fla. Stat.).

321.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

Reports of child abuse are confidential and will only be released in accordance with the Release of Records Policy.