

Adult Abuse

324.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides members of the Sanibel Fire and Rescue District with guidance regarding when notification is to be made to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) of suspected abuse of certain adults.

324.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Adult abuse - Any offense or attempted offense involving violence or neglect of an adult victim when committed by a person responsible for the adult's care, or any other act that would mandate reporting or notification to a social service agency or law enforcement.

324.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Sanibel Fire and Rescue District to assist victims of adult abuse by making the proper notifications to those responsible for investigating these matters.

324.3 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

Members of the Sanibel Fire and Rescue District shall notify DCF when they have reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult has been or is being abused, neglected, or exploited (§ 415.1034, Fla. Stat.).

For purposes of notification, abuse includes acts and omissions, including threatened acts, by a relative, caregiver, or household member that cause or are likely to cause significant impairment to a vulnerable adult's physical, mental, or emotional health. Abuse also includes self-neglect, or the failure of a caregiver to provide necessary food, clothing, medical services or medication, shelter, and supervision for the vulnerable adult, or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult or any adult age 65 or older (§ 415.102, Fla. Stat.; § 517.34, Fla. Stat.).

For the purposes of defining adult abuse, a vulnerable adult is a person who is 18 years of age or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his/her own care or protection is impaired due to mental, emotional, sensory, long-term physical or developmental disability or dysfunction, brain damage, or the infirmities of aging (§ 415.102, Fla. Stat.).

324.3.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification should occur as follows (§ 415.1034, Fla. Stat.):

- (a) Immediately, or as soon as practicable, by contacting the Florida Abuse Hotline via telephone, fax or the Web-based reporting system.
- (b) To the extent possible, the report should contain:
 1. The name, age, race, sex, physical description and location of each adult alleged to have been abused, neglected or exploited.
 2. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the adult's family members.

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3. The name, address and telephone number of each alleged perpetrator.
4. The name, address and telephone number of the caregiver of the adult, if different from the alleged perpetrator.
5. The name, address and telephone number of the person reporting the alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation.
6. A description of the physical or psychological injuries sustained.
7. The actions taken by the reporter, if any, such as notification of the criminal justice agency.
8. Any other information available to the reporting person that may establish the cause of abuse, neglect or exploitation that occurred or is occurring.

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

Failure to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected adult abuse by a mandated reporter is a misdemeanor and may also result in discipline (§ 415.111, Fla. Stat.).

324.4 RELEASE OF REPORTS

Information related to incidents of adult abuse or suspected adult abuse shall be confidential and may only be disclosed pursuant to state law and the Release of Records Policy.

Requests for information about an incident referred to law enforcement should be referred to the investigating agency.