

When should an incident be reported to DPPC?

This document is intended to serve as a guide to help staff determine when an incident should be reported to DPPC. As a professional serving and supporting individuals with disabilities, it is your job to support individuals to be safe and healthy. As a mandated reporter, you have a legal responsibility to report suspected abuse or you may be subjected to penalty of law.

When Should a Report to DPPC be made?

A report to DPPC should be made if there is reasonable cause to believe that an individual has been injured, harmed, mistreated, exposed to risk, or been subjected to inhumane treatment due to the actions, inactions, or negligence of a caregiver or provider. A reasonable cause to believe is a standard that is less than “probable cause”, but more than a non-specific suspicion, “hunch”, or gut feeling.

A report to DPPC should be made if there is a reasonable cause to believe that there has been:

- Physical abuse, the use of physical force against someone in a way that injures or causes pain to that person
- Emotional/verbal abuse, the use of threatening, humiliating, or intimidating words or actions
- Neglect/omission of care, failing to provide needed care for a person resulting in injury, or placing them at risk
- Sexual abuse, when someone is forced to engage in unwanted, sexual activity or exploitation
- Financial exploitation, the illegal or improper use of another person's funds, property or assets

A report to DPPC should also be made if an individual with a disability supported by DDS has died, regardless of whether or not abuse or neglect is suspected.

Some Considerations

- After considering all of the information known to you, ask yourself: Is it reasonable of me to believe that abuse or mistreatment may have occurred? Does it make sense?
 - If you cannot decide, make the report. It is better to err on the side of reporting.
- It can be challenging to apply the reasonable cause to believe standard to an injury of unknown origin. Consider the following:
 - The severity of the injury
 - The location of the injury on the body – is it in a place that is likely to happen as a result of a fall, or bumping into something?
 - The type of injury – are there patterns of bruises or other indications that it was caused by another person?
 - Are there changes in the mood and behavior of the person that could indicate that they have been abused?
 - Is there documentation or are there witnesses who can explain how the injury occurred in an accidental manner?

- Peer to peer violence does not, alone, meet the standard for a reportable condition because the abuse was not perpetrated by a caregiver or provider. However, the fact that peer-to-peer violence occurred may be related to omission of care if a caregiver or provider was negligent in their support and attention to individuals. In that case, the incident should be reported to DPPC.
- Behavioral incidents, such as missing persons or self-injurious incidents, may also be related to omission of care. Again, you should ask yourself whether the caregiver or provider was neglectful in their support of an individual. If so and that led to the behavioral incident, report the incident.
- Unexpected hospital visits, including emergency room visits, should be called into DPPC. If there is reasonable cause to believe that the individual required a hospital/ER visit as a result of the actions, inactions, or negligence of a caregiver or provider.

Reporting to DPPC

Your job is to report the incident to DPPC. DPPC will review the report and investigate or will refer the complaint for investigation/review.

Call the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) at 1-800-426-9009.

In case of emergency call 911 first and then call DPPC.

The DPPC has a 24 hour hotline; you can call them at any time.

If the individual is at risk of being abused again, contact someone in your agency who can provide for their immediate safety while an investigation or review is ongoing.