

Training Bulletin

Professional Staff's Role as a Mandated Reporter Child Abuse/Neglect and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse and Neglect September 2015

As a Sheriff's Department employee, you are legally required to report known or suspected cases of both child abuse or neglect, and elder/dependent adult abuse or neglect, that are observed by you or reported to you in your capacity as a Sheriff's Department employee, or within the scope of your employment. All employees of local law enforcement agencies are "mandated reporters," regardless of assignment or position. Sheriff's Policy and Procedure sections 6.17 and 6.19 are being revised to include Professional Staff and their duties as provided by Penal Code sections 11165.7, 11166 and 11167 (relative to child abuse and neglect), and Welfare and Institutions Code section 15630 (relative to elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect). For definitions and examples of what can constitute abuse and neglect, refer to these code sections and the current Policy and Procedure sections attached to this training bulletin. This bulletin describes your reporting requirements.

Child Abuse and/or Neglect Reporting

If you observe a crime in progress, report it immediately to a sworn department member or call 911.

All incidents or suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect that are observed by, or reported to, Professional Staff in their capacity as a Sheriff's Department employee or within the scope of that employment, shall be reported to any police, sheriff or county welfare department. This reporting must take place immediately or as soon as practically possible. If you call San Diego Child Welfare Services' (CWS) hotline and have to leave a message, be specific in your description of what you saw or heard. Your name, business address and telephone number must be included with your report; however, your identity is confidential and may only be disclosed to agencies receiving or investigating mandated reports. Your identity can not be disclosed to the Sheriff's Department as your employer, except with your consent or a court order.

A Suspected Child Abuse Report (Form SS-8572) must also be completed and forwarded to any police, sheriff or county welfare department. Complete all sections of the form to the best of your knowledge. Make and keep a copy of the form for your records. Calling the CWS hotline, completing the form, and submitting it to sworn member of the Sheriff's Department will fulfill your duties as a mandated reporter. A sample of the form is attached to this training bulletin and is also available on the Sheriff's Home Page → References and Resources → Resources → Mandated Reporter Child Abuse Form.

Steps to Reporting:

1. Call the Child Welfare Services' 24-hour hotline at 858-560-2191, or any police or sheriff department (this call must take place immediately, or as soon as practically possible)
2. Complete the Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Form (SS-8572) and make a copy for your records
3. Within 36 hours of receiving the information, submit the Form SS-8572 in person or via fax to any police, sheriff or county welfare department (i.e., San Diego's Child Welfare Services)

If you have questions about your responsibilities as a mandated reporter of child abuse or neglect, contact your supervisor. In the event your supervisor is not available, the Sheriff's Child Abuse Unit is available to provide guidance (858-974-2310, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).

