

# What You Should Know About Mandated Reporting



OFFICE OF  
CHILD ABUSE  
PREVENTION  
California Department of Social Services

*grow strong families*

## A Summary Of Mandated Reporter Responsibilities In California

California Penal Code (PC 11165) defines child abuse as any of the following:

- A child is physically injured by other than accidental means;
- A child is subjected to willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment;
- A child is abused or exploited sexually;
- A child is neglected by a parent or caretaker who fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision.

### Who are mandated reporters?

Mandated reporters are professionals who have regular contact with children and are therefore legally required to report suspected child abuse. In California there are 46 professions defined as mandated reporters. The full list of mandated reporters can be found in Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code. Mandated reporters include the following:



#### CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Any employee of a child care institution, foster parent, group home personnel, and personnel of residential care facilities



#### MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

A physician, surgeon, psychiatrist, dentist, resident, intern, chiropractor, licensed nurse



#### SCHOOL PERSONNEL

A teacher, instructional aide, teacher's assistant, administrator, board member, or any employee of a school district or private school



#### LAW ENFORCEMENT

A police officer, probation officer, parole officer, peace officer, investigator, inspector



#### MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL WORKERS

A clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, clinical counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist



#### CLERGY

A priest, minister, rabbi, imam, religious practitioner, or similar functionary of a church, temple, or recognized organization

# How To Report Suspected Child Abuse Or Neglect

- 1. In An Emergency, Call 911!**
- 2. Call Your County Child Welfare Department Hotline, Police, Or Sheriff's Department To Make A Report**

A written Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) must be completed within 36 hours of receiving information which prompted concerns about suspected abuse or neglect. The written report should include as much of the following information as possible:

- Date(s) and description(s) of the injuries or dangers;
- Identity of perpetrator(s) and their relationship/s to the child;
- Whether the perpetrator has ongoing access to the child;
- Witness(es) to the incident(s) and how they may be reached;
- Present condition/status of the child (for example: in need of medical attention);
- The location of the child;
- Statement from the child(ren), when possible.

It may be helpful to complete the SCAR form prior to the phone report. The form can be found on the Office of Attorney General's website:

[https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss\\_8572.pdf](https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss_8572.pdf)

### 3. Understand Your Legal Protections

California provides civil and criminal immunity from prosecution for persons who make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in good faith.

Persons who are not legally mandated to make a report may make anonymous reports. However, those who are mandated reporters must identify themselves. Information regarding the identity of mandated reporters will remain confidential.

**You should NOT take steps to investigate the abuse on your own. This fact-finding is the role of Child Welfare Services and law enforcement.**



### How To Contact Child Protective Services

If you suspect that a child's health or safety is jeopardized due to abuse or neglect by their parents or another care taker who has custody of the child, contact the child protective agency in your county. You may also contact the police or county sheriff. Each county has a 24-hour Hotline staffed by trained socialworkers. To obtain contact information for all counties, visit the California Department of Social Services website at [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov).



**The initial telephone report should be made immediately or as soon as practically possible.**

### Consequences Of Not Reporting

When an incident of known or suspected child abuse or neglect is not reported, there are great consequences for the health and wellbeing of the child. Also, a mandated reporter who fails to report an incident as required by law may be found guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months confinement in a county jail, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both imprisonment and a fine.