

## **Oklahoma Dependent Adult Abuse Reporting**

Oklahoma has reporting regulations on suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect of vulnerable adults, including adults age eighteen or older who have substantial impairment or lack capacity for self-care and who face harm from maltreatment or failure to meet basic health and safety needs.

### **Who do I contact to report an incident in Oklahoma?**

Oklahoma Human Services operates Adult Protective Services under the Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act, and the state uses a single Abuse and Neglect Hotline to receive reports about suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults.

To report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult in Oklahoma, call the Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 800-522-3511 or submit an online report through OKHotline.org. The hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **How much time do I have to report an incident?**

A person who has reasonable cause to believe a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect, or exploitation must promptly report the concern to the Department of Human Services or to the appropriate law enforcement agency. **Okla. Stat. tit. 43A, § 10-104**

### **What is a “vulnerable adult” in Oklahoma?**

A “vulnerable adult” is an adult with substantial impairment due to mental or physical disability or another cause who is unable to protect self from abuse, neglect, or exploitation or unable to provide for personal care or custody without assistance, including adults under guardianship.

**Okla. Stat. tit. 43A, § 10-103**

### **What situations require a report in Oklahoma?**

You must report when you have reasonable cause to believe a vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, or is living in conditions that involve a serious risk of these harms. This includes situations such as unexplained injuries or signs of physical or sexual abuse, clear lack of food, clothing, shelter, or health care that places health in danger, serious confusion or disability that leaves the person unable to meet essential needs, or misuse of the person’s money or property for someone else’s benefit. Oklahoma’s reporting law uses a “reasonable cause to believe” standard and does not require proof before a report. **Okla. Stat. tit. 43A, § 10-104;**

**Okla. Stat. tit. 43A, § 10-103**

### **What is “abuse,” “neglect,” “exploitation,” and “self-neglect” of a vulnerable adult in Oklahoma?**

“Abuse” of a vulnerable adult means causing or allowing physical pain, injury, sexual abuse, unreasonable restraint, or mental anguish, including threats, intimidation, or other cruel treatment. **43A Okla. Stat. § 10-103(1)**

“Neglect” means failure to provide care or services necessary to maintain a vulnerable adult’s physical and mental health, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and supervision, or failure to protect the person from hazardous conditions. **43A Okla. Stat. § 10-103(16)**

“Exploitation” means the unjust or improper use of a vulnerable adult or the person’s resources for the profit or advantage of another, including misuse of funds, property, or authority. **43A Okla. Stat. § 10-103(7)**

“Self-neglect” means an adult’s inability, due to mental or physical impairment, to perform essential self-care tasks, such as obtaining food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or safety, which results in a serious threat to health or safety. **43A Okla. Stat. § 10-103(21)**

### **Who is a mandatory reporter in Oklahoma?**

Any person who has reasonable cause to believe a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who reports the concern to the Department of Human Services, the municipal police department, or the office of the county sheriff acts as a mandatory reporter, because Oklahoma law places this duty on any person. This duty covers staff, volunteers, health care professionals, social workers, mental health providers, law enforcement officers, staff of domestic violence and sexual assault programs, and others who encounter vulnerable adults.

**Okla. Stat. tit. 43A, § 10-104**

### **Are Clergy mandatory reporters in Oklahoma?**

Yes. **Okla. Stat. tit. 43A, § 10-104(A)**

### **Is there an exception for confidential communication in Oklahoma?**

No. Oklahoma’s Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act requires any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect, or exploitation to report. The statute does not create an exception for clergy based on confidential or privileged communications, and the duty applies even where the information comes through a relationship that normally involves confidentiality. **43A Okla. Stat. § 10-104**

### **Where can I find Oklahoma law on elder and dependent adult abuse?**

Oklahoma’s adult protection rules appear in the Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act in Title 43A of the Oklahoma Statutes, sections 10-101 through 10-110.