

South Carolina Dependent Adult Abuse Reporting

South Carolina has reporting regulations on suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults, including adults with physical or mental impairments and adults who depend on caregivers and who face risk of harm in homes, facilities, or community settings.

Who do I contact to report an incident in South Carolina?

South Carolina Adult Protective Services, within the Department of Social Services, investigates reported abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults living in the community or licensed facilities.

To report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult in South Carolina, call the Abuse & Neglect Reporting Hotline at 888-CARE4US (888-227-3487), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How much time do I have to report an incident?

Mandatory reporters who, in professional capacity or within the scope of employment, have reason to believe a vulnerable adult has been or is likely to be abused, neglected, or exploited must report the information to the proper state investigative agency immediately and no later than twenty-four hours after learning of the incident. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-25**

What is a “vulnerable adult” in South Carolina?

A “vulnerable adult” is a person age eighteen or older whose ability to provide for personal care or protection is substantially impaired due to physical or mental condition, including impairment from aging such as organic brain damage, advanced age, or physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction, and includes residents of facilities. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-10**

What is “abuse,” “neglect,” “exploitation,” and “self-neglect” of a vulnerable adult in South Carolina?

“Abuse” means physical abuse, psychological abuse, or sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult, including infliction of physical injury, use of unreasonable confinement, and behavior that causes mental anguish. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-10(1)**

“Neglect” means the failure or omission of a caregiver to provide the care, goods, or services necessary to maintain the health or safety of a vulnerable adult, including food, clothing, medicine, shelter, supervision, and medical services. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-10(6)**

“Self-neglect” means the inability of a vulnerable adult, due to physical or mental impairment, to provide for own essential needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, or safety, so that health or safety is threatened. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-10(8)**

“Exploitation” means causing or requiring a vulnerable adult to engage in activity or labor that is improper, illegal, or against the person’s will, or improperly using the person’s funds, assets, or property for another’s profit or advantage. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-10(3)**

Who is a mandatory reporter in South Carolina?

A person who works as a physician, nurse, dentist, optometrist, other medical or allied health professional, mental health or intellectual disability specialist, social worker, public assistance

worker, school teacher, school counselor, caregiver, staff member or volunteer of an adult day care center or facility, or as a law enforcement officer is a mandatory reporter for suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. Any other person with actual knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited also reports under this section.

S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-25

Are Clergy mandatory reporters in South Carolina?

No. **S.C. Code Ann. § 43-35-25(A)**

Where can I find South Carolina law on elder and dependent adult abuse?

South Carolina adult protection laws appear in Title 43, Chapter 35 of the South Carolina Code.