



What is Mandatory Reporting?

Mandatory reporter laws seek to end child abuse and maltreatment by increasing **state** awareness of unsafe family environments. Relevant state authorities discover suspected abuse by requiring professionals with maximal interaction with children to report suspected harm. State laws are a result of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, which requires states to create reporting procedures as a condition of receiving federal funds.¹

Although well-intentioned, mandatory reporting laws invite increased state involvement into family life and are not well-suited to fixing the underlying causes of child maltreatment. The guiding standard for making a report is one of “reasonable suspicion” that a child has been or is in immediate danger of being abused or neglected by their parent or guardian, but there is little consensus on the boundaries of reasonable suspicion, which leads to imprecise reporting.

Does Mandatory Reporting Stop Child Abuse?

Evidence suggests that mandatory reporting does little to mitigate child abuse. Nationwide data is instructive:

- Total reports: 4.1 million
- Reports screened in (*determined credible at first look*): 2.4 million
- Approximate percentage of reports that are substantiated (*determined credible upon investigation*): less than 400,000²

While 16.3% of screened-in reports were substantiated, only 9% of the total reports were associated with a substantiated finding. This means that 91 out of every 100 reports is either screened out or found to be false after investigation. Of those remaining 9 out of 100, 6 are screened in for neglect which often just means poverty. There are 11.9 million children living in poverty in the U.S, of those 3.5 million are under age 5, and 1.6 million are living in extreme poverty (less than \$1061 per month for a family of four).³

The theory behind the hotlines is that you will catch more abusers by casting a wide net, and when you catch abusers children who have been harmed will be healed. But that’s not what happens. Studies have repeatedly shown that in typical cases children left in their own homes do better than those placed in foster care.⁴ Mandatory reporting does not decrease child abuse.⁵ In fact, it undermines trust between families and teachers, schools, and health care providers.⁶

¹The Children’s Bureau, “Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect,” Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, April, 2019.

² The Children’s Bureau, “Child Maltreatment 2017: Summary of Key Findings,” Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 2019, 2. It is hard to arrive at precise numbers because States track differently, and some reports involve multiple children or the same children multiple times.

³ Children’s Defense Fund, “New Census Data Reveals Continued Child Poverty Crisis in America,” September 10, 2019.

⁴ Ferol E. Mennen et. al. "Do Maltreated Children who Remain Home Function Better than Those who are Placed?" 32 Child Youth Serv. Rev. 12 (2010).

⁵ W.K. Grace et. al., "Universal Mandatory Reporting Policies and the Odds of Identifying Child Physical Abuse," 107 AJPH 5 (May 20017).

⁶ Kelley Fong, "Concealment and Constraint: Child Protective Services Fears and Poor Mothers’ Institutional Engagement," 97 Social Forces 4 (June 2019); Jill R. McTavish et. al., "Mandated reporters' experiences with reporting child maltreatment: a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies," 7 BJM Open 10 (October 2017).



Mandatory Reporter Laws by State



Alabama Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Ala. Code §26-14-3 et. seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, pharmacists, physical therapists, nurses, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, “any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to a child”
- Public and private K-12 teachers, employees, officials
- Employees of public higher education; members of the clergy
- LEOs; social workers; daycare workers
- Members of the clergy
- Mental health professionals

In addition to these specified professions, Alabama law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁷

Do I have to tell my boss? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting. Alabama law punishes any employer who “discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect” with a class C misdemeanor.⁸

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report must be made when the child is *known or suspected* of being a victim of abuse or neglect.⁹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language here appears contradictory: it directs you to report only those facts of which you have actual knowledge, or that you subjectively suspect. The statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, etc)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

⁷ Ala. Code §26-14-4: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected **may** report.”

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your name in the report. Further, your identity will only be revealed if it is found that you have made a false report.¹⁰

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

In Alabama, only the clergy-penitent privilege is permitted. This means that any information a member of the clergy discovers as part their clerical duties **may not** be used as the basis of a report.¹¹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁰ *Id.*, §26-14-8.

¹¹ *Id.*, §26-14-10.



Alaska Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Alaska Stat. §§47.17.020; 47.17.023

Who is required to make a report?

- Health practitioners or administrative officers of institutions
- Teachers and school administrators, including athletic coaches, of public and private schools
- Volunteers who interact with children in a public or private school for more than 4 hours a week
- Peace officers or officers of the Department of Corrections
- Members of a child fatality review team or the multidisciplinary child protection team
- Childcare providers
- Persons who process or produce visual or printed matter, either privately or commercially
- Paid employees of domestic violence and sexual assault programs, crisis intervention and prevention programs, or organizations that provide counseling or treatment to individuals seeking to control their use of drugs or alcohol

In addition to these specified professions, Alaska law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹²

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Under Alaska law, making a report to your supervisor does not relieve you of your duty to report.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report must be made when, in the performance of his or her occupational or appointed duties, a reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has suffered harm as a result of abuse or neglect.¹³

A person providing—either privately or commercially—film, photo, visual, printed-matter processing, production, or finishing services; or computer installation, repair, or other services; or internet or cellular telephone services; who in the process of providing those services observes a film, photo, picture, computer file, image, or other matter and has reasonable cause to suspect that the film, photo, picture, computer file, image, or other matter visually depicts a child engaged in conduct described in §11.41.455(a) (sexual exploitation of a minor or child pornography) shall immediately **report the observation** to the nearest law enforcement agency.¹⁴

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much clearer: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards for

¹² Alaska Stat. §47-17-020: “Mandated reporters **may** report cases that come to their attention in their nonoccupational capacities. Any other person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been harmed may report.”

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*, §47.17.023



child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You do not have to provide your personal information in the report you make.¹⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Alaska law doesn’t recognize specific professional privileges as grounds to withhold a report.

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁵ *Id.*



Arizona Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Arizona Rev. Stat. §13-3620

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, physician’s assistants, optometrists, dentists, behavioral health professionals, nurses, psychologists.
- School personnel
- Social workers
- Peace officers
- Child welfare investigators
- Child protective services workers
- Domestic violence victim advocates
- Sexual assault victim advocates
- Members of the clergy, priests, or Christian Science practitioners
- Psychologists, counselors
- Parents, stepparents, or guardians
- Any other person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of minors

In addition to these specified professions, Arizona law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person *reasonably believes* that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense, or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature.¹⁷

A ‘reportable offense’ means any of the following:

- Any offense listed in chapters 14 and 35.1 of this title or § 13-3506.01
- Surreptitious photographing, videotaping, filming, or digitally recording or viewing a minor pursuant to § 13-3019
- Child sex trafficking pursuant to § 13-3212
- Incest pursuant to § 13-3608
- Unlawful mutilation pursuant to § 13-1214

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages

¹⁶ Ariz. Rev. Stat. §13-3620: “Any other person who reasonably believes that a minor is a victim of abuse or neglect **may** report.”

¹⁷ *Id.*



overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you must submit your name and contact information to the Department of Child Safety.¹⁸ The Department is instructed to “take whatever precautions it determines are reasonably necessary to protect the identity and safety of a person who reports child abuse or neglect.”¹⁹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Arizona recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²⁰

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁸ *Id.*, §8-455.

¹⁹ *Id.*, 8-807.

²⁰ *Id.*, 13-3620.



Arkansas Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Ann. Code §12-18-401 et. seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Dentists and dental hygienists
- Licensed nurses, physicians, mental health professionals or paraprofessionals, surgeons, resident interns, osteopaths, and medical personnel who may be engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons
- Employees or volunteers at reproductive health-care facilities
- Public or private school counselors; school officials, including, without limitation, institutions of higher education; and teachers
- Coroners
- Domestic abuse advocates and domestic violence shelter employees or volunteers
- Employees of the Department of Human Services
- Employees working under contract for the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human Services
- Judges, law enforcement officials, peace officers, and prosecuting attorneys
- Social workers and juvenile intake or probation officers
- Court-appointed special advocate program staff members or volunteers
- Attorneys ad litem
- Employees of a child advocacy center or a child safety center
- Sexual abuse advocates or volunteers who work with victims of sexual abuse
- Child abuse advocates or volunteers who work with child victims of abuse or maltreatment as employees of a community- based victim service or a mental health agency
- Victim/witness coordinators
- Victim assistance professionals or volunteers
- Employees of the Crimes Against Children Division of the Department of Arkansas State Police
- Childcare, daycare, or foster care workers
- Clergy members, which includes ministers, priests, rabbis, accredited Christian Science practitioners, or other similar functionaries of a religious organization
- An individual not otherwise identified in this subsection who is engaged in performing his or her employment duties with a nonprofit charitable organization other than a nonprofit hospital
- Foster parents

In addition to these specified professions, Arkansas law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²¹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are not required to report to your superiors at work if you make a report of child abuse, nor do you need their permission to report. However, the law allows employers of mandatory reporters to require notification of a report if they so choose.²²

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

An individual listed as a mandatory reporter shall immediately notify the child abuse hotline in the following circumstances:

- He or she has *reasonable cause to suspect* that a child has been subjected to maltreatment, has died as a result of maltreatment, or died suddenly and unexpectedly.

²¹ Ark. Ann. Code. §12-18-401: “Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect child maltreatment **may** report.”

²² *Id.*, 12-18-402(c); 12-18-204



- He or she **observes** a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would **reasonably** result in maltreatment.²³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. At first glance, the observation of “conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in maltreatment” is much clearer: when you see harmful or potentially harmful conditions for children, you must report. However, this language facilitates many kinds of behavior to be classified as dangerous and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You may make an anonymous report through the child abuse hotline, but if you report online or via facsimile, you must provide your name, phone number, and email address.²⁴ Your identity will be protected unless a court determines you knowingly made a false report.²⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Arkansas recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²⁶

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²³ *Id.*, 12-18-402

²⁴ *Id.*, 12-18-1302

²⁵ *Id.*, 12-18-909.

²⁶ *Id.*, 12-18-402(c); 12-18-803.



California Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Cal. Pen. Code §11165.7 et seq

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists, residents, interns, podiatrists, chiropractors, licensed nurses, dental hygienists, optometrists, marriage and family therapists, or social workers
- State or county public health employees who treat minors for venereal diseases or other conditions
- Coroners and medical examiners
- Teachers, teacher's aides, administrators, and employees of public or private schools
- Employees or administrators of public or private postsecondary institutions
- Athletic coaches, athletic administrators, or athletic directors employed by any public or private schools
- Athletic coaches, including, but not limited to, assistant coaches or graduate assistants involved in coaching at public or private postsecondary institutions
- Head Start program teachers
- Public assistance workers
- Animal control or humane society officers
- Social workers, probation officers, and parole officers
- Employees of school district police or security departments
- District attorney investigators, inspectors, or local child support agency caseworkers
- Peace officers and firefighters, except for volunteer firefighter
- Employees of police departments, county sheriff's departments, county probation departments, or county welfare departments
- Employees or volunteers of a court-appointed special advocate program
- Administrators or employees of day camps, youth centers, or youth recreation programs
- Administrators or employees of licensed community care or child daycare facilities
- Alcohol and drug counselors
- Commercial film and photographic print or image processors
- Computer technicians
- Child visitation monitors
- Foster parents, group home personnel, and personnel of residential care facilities
- Clergy members and custodians of records of clergy members
- Volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children are not mandated reporters but are encouraged to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect and are further encouraged to report known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect.

In addition to these specified professions, California law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²⁷

If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are not required to report to your superiors at work if you make a report of child abuse, nor do you need their permission to report. You will not suffer any negative employment consequences for reporting.

²⁷ Cal. Pen. Code §11165.7; 11166: “Any other person who reasonably suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect **may** report.”



If you and a colleague both become aware of information that would compel you to report, you may determine which of you makes the report on behalf of you both. Although your employer may institute a notification system within the organization, they are not allowed to compel you to disclose your identity as a reporter.²⁸

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when the following circumstances apply:

- A mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the reporter knows or **reasonably suspects** is the victim of abuse or neglect.
 - For the purposes of this article, ‘reasonable suspicion’ means that it is *objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect*. ‘Reasonable suspicion’ does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect; any ‘reasonable suspicion’ is sufficient. For the purposes of this article, the pregnancy of a minor does not, in and of itself, constitute a basis for a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse.
- Commercial film and photographic print processors have knowledge of or observe any film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide depicting a child under age 16 engaged in an act of sexual conduct.
- Commercial computer technicians have knowledge of or observe, within the scope of their professional capacity or employment, any representation of information, data, or an image, including, but not limited to, any computer hardware software, file, floppy disk, data storage medium, CD-ROM, computer-generated equipment, or computer-generated image, that is retrievable in perceivable form and that is intentionally saved, transmitted, or organized on an electronic medium, depicting a child under age 16 engaged in an act of sexual conduct.²⁹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much more clear: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards for child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation

²⁸ *Id.*, §11166(h)-(i).

²⁹ *Id.*



- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must include your name, business address, and telephone number, as well as your qualifying job title in your report. However, if you are not a mandatory reporter, your identity is not required in the report.³⁰

Your identity as a reporter is confidential and will only be released:

- Among agencies reviewing mandated reports
- To the prosecutor in a criminal prosecution or in an action initiated under § 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code arising from alleged child abuse
- To counsel appointed pursuant to § 317(c) of the Welfare and Institutions Code
- To the county counsel or prosecutor in a proceeding under part 4 (commencing with section 7800) of division 12 of the Family Code or § 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code
- To a licensing agency when abuse or neglect in out-of-home care is reasonably suspected
- When the reporter waives confidentiality
- By court order.³¹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent privilege applies as the only recognized privileged communication in California. However, this privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.³²

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

³⁰ *Id.*, §11167.

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*, §11166.



Colorado Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Colo. Rev. Stat. §19-3-304 et. seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, surgeons, physicians in training, child health associates, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, hospital personnel, dental hygienists, physical therapists, pharmacists, or registered dieticians
- Emergency medical service providers
- Registered naturopathic doctors
- Public or private school officials or employees
- Educators providing services through a Federal special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children, as provided for in 42 U.S.C. § 1786
- Social workers, Christian Science practitioners, mental health professionals, psychologists, professional counselors, and marriage and family therapists
- Workers in the State Department of Human Services
- Juvenile parole and probation officers
- Child and family investigators
- Officers and agents of the State Bureau of Animal Protection and animal control officers
- The child protection ombudsman
- Peace officers, firefighters, or victim's advocates
- Officials or employees of county departments of health, human services, or social services
- Veterinarians
- Commercial film and photographic print processors
- Counselors, marriage and family therapists, or psychotherapists
- Directors, coaches, assistant coaches, or athletic program personnel employed by private sports organizations or programs
- Persons registered as psychologist candidates, marriage and family therapist candidates, or licensed professional counselor candidates
- Officials or employees of county departments of health, human services, or social services
- Clergy members, including priests; rabbis; duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of a church; members of religious orders; or recognized leaders of any religious bodies

In addition to these specified professions, Colorado law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.³³

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A mandated reporter has **reasonable cause** to know or suspect child abuse or neglect.
- A reporter has observed a child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would **reasonably result** in abuse or neglect.
- Commercial film and photographic print processors have knowledge of or observe any film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide depicting a child engaged in an act of sexual conduct.³⁴

³³ Colo. Rev. Stat. §19-3-304: “Any other person **may** report known or suspected child abuse or neglect.”

³⁴ *Id.*



What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much clearer: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards for child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Your report must contain your name, address, and occupation, but your identity as a reporter will be protected.³⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

In Colorado, only the clergy-penitent privilege is permitted. This means that any information a member of the clergy discovers as part their clerical duties **may not** be used as the basis of a report.³⁶ As a result, the physician-patient and psychologist-client privileges are not permitted as a grounds for failing to report suspected or observed child abuse or neglect.³⁷

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

³⁵ *Id.*, §19-3-307.

³⁶ *Id.*, §19-3-304.

³⁷ *Id.*, §19-3-311.



Connecticut Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§17a-101; 53a-65

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, surgeons, residents, interns, nurses, medical examiners, dentists, dental hygienists, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, physician assistants, pharmacists, or physical therapists
- Psychologists or other mental health professionals
- Emergency medical services providers
- School employees, as defined by § 53a-65
 - The term ‘school employee’ includes teachers, substitute teachers, school administrators, school superintendents, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, physicians, school paraprofessionals, or coaches employed by a local or regional board of education or a private elementary, middle, or high school or any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with student.
- Social workers
- Police officers, juvenile or adult probation officers, or parole officers
- Employees of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Public Health, and the Office of Early Childhood who are responsible for the licensing of child daycare centers, group daycare homes, family daycare homes, or youth camps
- The Child Advocate and any employee of the Office of Child Advocate
- Family relations counselor trainees or family services supervisors employed by the Judicial Department
- Any person paid to care for a child in any public or private facility, child daycare center, group daycare home, or family daycare home that is licensed by the State
- Members of the clergy
- Alcohol and drug counselors, marital and family therapists, professional counselors, sexual assault counselors, or domestic violence counselors
- Licensed behavior analysts

In addition to these specified professions, Connecticut law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.³⁸

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting, and your employer may not impede your report. Although the Department of Children and Families has a separate procedure for investigating reports of abuse or neglect at schools, your duty as a reporter does not change.³⁹

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when, in the ordinary course of his or her employment or profession, a reporter has *reasonable cause to suspect or believe* the following of any child under age 18:

- Has been abused or neglected
- Has had a nonaccidental physical injury or an injury that is at variance with the history given of the injury

³⁸ Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-103: “Any mandated reporter acting outside his or her professional capacity, or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected **may** report.”

³⁹ *Id.*, §17a-101b(d); 17a-101e(a).



- Is placed at imminent risk of serious harm

Any school employee shall report when, in the ordinary course of his or her employment or profession, he or she has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any person who is being educated by the technical high school system or a local or regional board of education, other than as part of an adult education program, is a victim of abuse and the perpetrator is a school employee. A mandated reporter's suspicion or belief may be based on factors, including, but not limited to, observations, allegations, facts, or statements by a child, victim, or a third party. Such suspicion or belief does not require certainty or probable cause.⁴⁰

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to provide your information. If you do provide your information, you may request that it be held confidential, with the following exceptions:

- An employee of the department for reasons reasonably related to the business of the department
- A law enforcement officer for purposes of investigating the following:
 - Abuse or neglect of a child or youth
 - An allegation that the individual falsely reported the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or youth
- A State’s attorney for purposes of investigating or prosecuting the following:
 - Abuse or neglect of a child or youth
 - An allegation that the individual falsely reported the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or youth
- An assistant attorney general or other legal counsel representing the department
- A judge of the Superior Court and all necessary parties in a court proceeding pursuant to § 17a-112 or 46b-129, or a criminal prosecution involving child abuse or neglect

⁴⁰ *Id.*, §17a-101a.



- A state child care licensing agency
- The executive director of any institution, school, or facility or superintendent of schools pursuant to §17a-101i.⁴¹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Not addressed by the statute.

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁴¹ *Id.*, §§17a-101d; 17a-103; 17a-28(f). §17a-101i requires the Department of Children and Families to notify and provide records to an employing superintendent of schools when it has substantiated abuse of any child by a licensed or certified school employee, whether or not the victim is a student in the employing school or school system.



Delaware Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Del. Ann. Code Tit. 16, §903, 905, 909

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, interns, residents, nurses, medical examiners
- Other persons in the healing arts, including persons licensed to render services in medicine, osteopathy, or dentistry
- Hospitals or health-care institutions
- The Medical Society of Delaware
- School employees
- Social workers
- Law enforcement agencies

In addition to these specified professions, Delaware law requires “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁴²

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

“A report is required when the reporter *knows or in good faith suspects* child abuse or neglect.”⁴³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

⁴² Del. Ann. Code 16-903: “Any person who knows or in good faith suspects child abuse or neglect **shall** make a report.”

⁴³ *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You may make an anonymous report, but the Department has the right to request your name and address when making a report. The confidentiality of the reporter's identity is not addressed in the statute.⁴⁴

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges are recognized.⁴⁵

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁴⁴ *Id.*, §905.

⁴⁵ *Id.*, §909.



District of Columbia Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

D.C. Ann. Code §4-1321.02 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, psychologists, medical examiners, dentists, chiropractors, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, or persons involved in the care and treatment of patients
- School officials, teachers, or athletic coaches
- Child and Family Services Agency employees, agents, and contractors
- Law enforcement officers or humane officers of any agency charged with the enforcement of animal cruelty laws
- Department of Parks and Recreation employees, public housing resident managers, social service workers, or daycare workers
- Human trafficking counselors
- Domestic violence counselors or mental health professionals

In addition to these specified professions, D.C. law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁴⁶

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Yes, you must notify the leader of your institution when you become aware of facts that would compel you to report, and then that person or their agent must make a formal report of the suspected or known abuse. This does not relieve you of your duty to report should your supervisor fail to do so.⁴⁷

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A mandated reporter ***knows or has reasonable cause to suspect*** that a child known to him or her in his or her professional or official capacity has been or is in immediate danger of being a mentally or physically abused or neglected child.
- A health professional, law enforcement officer, or humane officer, except an undercover officer whose identity or investigation might be jeopardized, ***has reasonable cause to believe*** that a child is abused as a result of inadequate care, control, or subsistence in the home environment due to exposure to drug-related activity.
- A mandated reporter ***knows or has reasonable cause to suspect*** that a child known to him or her in his or her professional or official capacity has been, or is in immediate danger of being, the victim of sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse; the child was assisted, supported, caused, encouraged, commanded, enabled, induced, facilitated, or permitted to become a prostitute; the child has an injury caused by a bullet; or the child has an injury caused by a knife or other sharp object that was caused by other than accidental means.
- A licensed health professional who in his or her own professional or official capacity ***knows*** that a child under 12 months of age is diagnosed as having a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ D.C. Ann. Code §4-1321.02: “Any other person who knows or has reason to suspect that a child is being abused and neglected **may** report.”

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Id.*



What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must provide your name, occupation and contact information when making a report. The Department may not release your information without your consent.⁴⁹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Attorney-client privilege is the only privilege recognized in D.C.⁵⁰

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁴⁹ *Id.*, §4-1302.03.

⁵⁰ *Id.*, 4-1321.02(b); 4-1321.05.



Florida Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Fla. Ann. Stat. §39.201 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, osteopaths, medical examiners, chiropractors, nurses, or hospital personnel
- Other health or mental health professionals
- Practitioners who rely solely on spiritual means for healing
- Teachers or other school officials or personnel
- Social workers, daycare center workers, or other professional child care, foster care, residential, or institutional workers
- Law enforcement officers or judges

In addition to these specified professions, Florida law requires “any person” with knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁵¹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Under Florida law, making a report to your supervisor does not relieve you of your duty to report.⁵²

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A person *knows or has reasonable cause to suspect* that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected.
- A person *knows* that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care.⁵³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages

⁵¹ Fla. Ann. Stat. §39-201: “Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child’s welfare or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care **shall** report such knowledge or suspicion to the department. Any person who knows or who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by an adult other than a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child’s welfare **shall** report such knowledge or suspicion to the department. Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of childhood sexual abuse or the victim of a known or suspected juvenile sexual offender **shall** report such knowledge or suspicion to the department.”

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*



overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are required to provide your name to the hotline staff when reporting.⁵⁴ Your information will be kept confidential unless you provide your written consent to disclose it.⁵⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only attorney-client, clergy-penitent are permitted.⁵⁶

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁵⁴ *Id.*, §39.201.

⁵⁵ *Id.*, and at §39.202.

⁵⁶ *Id.*, §39.204



Georgia Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Geo. Ann. Code §§19-7-5; 16-12-100

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, physician assistants, residents, interns, hospital and medical personnel, podiatrists, dentists, or nurses
- Reproductive health-care facility or pregnancy resource center personnel and volunteers
- Teachers, school administrators, school counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, or school psychologists
 - The term ‘school’ means any public or private prekindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, technical school, vocational school, college, university, or institution of postsecondary education.
- Social workers
- Child welfare agency personnel (as that agency is defined by § 49-5-12) or child-counseling personnel
- Child service organization personnel (includes any organization—whether public, private, for-profit, not-for-profit, or voluntary—that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children)
- Law enforcement personnel
- Psychologists, counselors, or marriage and family therapists

In addition to these specified professions, Georgia law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁵⁷

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are mandated to make your report to your supervisor to satisfy your statutory duty. That person is then charged with reporting to authorities.⁵⁸

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A reporter has **reasonable cause to believe** that child abuse has occurred.
- A person who processes or produces visual or printed matter has **reasonable cause to believe** that the visual or printed matter submitted for processing or producing depicts a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.⁵⁹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

⁵⁷ Georgia Ann. Code §19-7-5: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused **may** report.”

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*, and at 16-12-100.



What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to provide your personal information, but the release of any reports will protect the identity of the reporter.⁶⁰

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent privilege applies as the only recognized privileged communication in Georgia. However, this privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.⁶¹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁶⁰ *Id.*, 49-5-41.

⁶¹ *Id.*, 19-7-5(g).



Hawaii Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Haw. Rev. Stat. §350-1.1 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, physicians in training, psychologists, dentists, nurses, osteopathic physicians and surgeons, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, pharmacists, and other health-related professionals
- Medical examiners or coroner
- Employees or officers of any public or private school
- Employees or officers of any public or private agency or institution, or other individuals, providing social, medical, hospital, or mental health services, including financial assistance
- Employees or officers of any law enforcement agency, including, but not limited to, the courts, police departments, departments of public safety, correctional institutions, and parole or probation offices
- Employees of any public or private agency providing recreational or sports activities
- Child care employees or employees or officers of any licensed or registered child care facility, foster home, or similar institution

In addition to these specified professions, Hawaii law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁶²

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You must notify your supervisor in addition to making a report to authorities.⁶³

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when, in his or her professional or official capacity, a reporter has *reason to believe* that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that *there exists a substantial risk* that child abuse or neglect may occur in the *reasonably foreseeable* future.⁶⁴

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation

⁶² Haw. Rev. Stat. §350-1.3: “Any other person who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that cause the person to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred **may** report.”

⁶³ *Id.*, §350-1.1.

⁶⁴ *Id.*



- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Although you are not explicitly required to provide your information, the Department must make a "reasonable good-faith effort to maintain the confidentiality of the name of a reporter who requests that his or her name be confidential."⁶⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Hawaii law doesn't recognize specific professional privileges as grounds to withhold a report, but notes that "physician-patient, psychologist-client, husband-wife, and victim-counselor privileges are not grounds for failing to report."⁶⁶

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁶⁵ *Id.*, §350-1.4.

⁶⁶ *Id.*, §350-5.



Idaho Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Ida. Ann. Code §16-1605 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, residents on hospital staffs, interns, nurses or coroners
- Teachers or daycare personnel
- Social workers or law enforcement personnel

In addition to these specified professions, Idaho law requires “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁶⁷

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You must notify your employer or the person in charge of your place of employment if you work in a hospital or similar institution. That person or their agent will then make the report, relieving you of your duty to report.⁶⁸

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A person has *reason to believe* that a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected.
- A person *observes* a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would *reasonably result* in abuse, abandonment, or neglect.⁶⁹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

At first glance, the observation of “conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in maltreatment” is much clearer: when you see harmful or potentially harmful conditions for children, you must report. However, this language facilitates many kinds of behavior to be classified as dangerous, and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

⁶⁷ Ida. Ann. Code §16-1605: “Any person who has reason to believe that a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected **is required to** report.”

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.*



- Family separation
 - Suspended school attendance for impacted children
 - Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
 - Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
 - Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Your name is not specifically required by statute, and the confidentiality is not addressed.

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Idaho recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.⁷⁰

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁷⁰ *Id.*, and 16-1606.



Illinois Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Ill. Comp. stat. Ch. 325, §5/4; Ch. 720, §5/11-20.2

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, residents, interns, hospital administrators and personnel, surgeons, dentists, dental hygienists, osteopaths, chiropractors, podiatric physicians, physician assistants, or substance abuse treatment personnel
- Coroners
- Medical examiners
- Emergency medical technicians, acupuncturists, or crisis line or hotline personnel
- Social workers, social services administrators, or domestic violence program personnel
- School personnel, including administrators and employees, educational advocates, or truant officers
- Personnel of institutions of higher education
- Members of a school board or the Chicago Board of Education
- Members of the governing body of a private school
- Social workers, social services administrators, or domestic violence program personnel
- Law enforcement officers or probation officers
- Field personnel of the Departments of Healthcare and Family Services, Juvenile Justice, Public Health, Human Services, Corrections, Human Rights, or Children and Family Services
- Supervisors and administrators of general assistance under the Illinois Public Aid Code
- Animal control officers or Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare field investigators
- Funeral home directors or employees
- Directors or staff assistants of nursery schools or childcare centers
- Recreational or athletic program or facility personnel
- Early intervention providers, as defined in the Early Intervention Services System Act
- Licensed professional counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, or their assistants
- Foster parents, homemakers, or childcare workers
- Members of the clergy
- Commercial film and photographic print processors or computer technicians

In addition to these specified professions, Illinois law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁷¹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are required to make a report to the Department of Children and Family Services, and you may also notify your superiors.⁷²

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A reporter has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child known to him or her in his or her professional capacity may be abused or neglected.
- A physician, physician’s assistant, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, medical technician, certified nursing assistant, social worker, or licensed professional counselor of any office, clinic,

⁷¹ Ill. Comp. Stat. Ch. 325, §5/4: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is abused or neglected **may** report.”

⁷² *Id.*



or any other physical location that provides abortions, abortion referrals, or contraceptives has **reasonable cause to believe** a child known to him or her in his or her professional or official capacity may be an abused child or a neglected child.

- Commercial film and photographic print processors or computer technicians have **knowledge of or observe** any film, photograph, videotape, negative, slide, computer hard drive, or any other magnetic or optical media that depicts a child engaged in any actual or simulated sexual conduct.⁷³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much clearer: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards for child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you’ll need to provide your name, occupation, and contact information when making a report. Your information will remain confidential.⁷⁴

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Illinois recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.⁷⁵

⁷³ *Id.*, and Ch. 720, §5/11-20.2.

⁷⁴ *Id.*, Ch. 325, §5/7.9, 5/11.1a.

⁷⁵ *Id.*, and Ch. 735, §5/8-803.



Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).



Indiana Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Ind. Ann. Code §31-33-5-1 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

Indiana law doesn't specify any particular profession to report, but rather requires "any person who has *reason to believe* that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect must report."⁷⁶

If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at "a medical or other institution, school, facility, or agency," you should report directly to Department of Child Services or the local law enforcement agency. Once you've reported, you must notify the person in charge of your institution of your report. If your duty arises from your capacity at a licensed hospital, you must notify the individual in charge of the hospital, who is then required to make an official report. However, this notification does not relieve you of your duty to report if you do not believe a report has been made. You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting.⁷⁷

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

"In addition to any other duty to report arising under this article, an individual who has *reason to believe* that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report as required by this article."⁷⁸

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the "reasonable cause" standard's broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you're trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

⁷⁶ Ind. Ann. Code §31-33-5-1.

⁷⁷ *Id.*, §§31-33-5-2; 31-33-5-2.5; 31-33-5-3; 31-33-5-5.

⁷⁸ *Id.*, §31-33-5-1.



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you must include your name and contact information.⁷⁹ While the subject of your report has a right to receive a copy of it, your information will be redacted for your safety.⁸⁰

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Indiana does not recognize any privilege as grounds for failing to report, and specifically points to spousal privilege, healthcare provider-patient privilege, and communications by a licensed social worker, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, mental health counselor, addiction counselor, or clinical addiction counselor, school counselor, or psychologist and a client as not exempted from reporting.⁸¹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁷⁹ *Id.*, §31-33-7-4.

⁸⁰ *Id.*, §31-33-18-2.

⁸¹ *Id.*, §31-32-11-1.



Iowa Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Iowa Ann. Stat. §§232.69; 728.14

Who is required to make a report?

- Health practitioners
- Employees or operators of healthcare facilities
- School employees, certified paraeducators, coaches, or instructors employed by community colleges
- Employees or operators of Head Start centers
- Social workers or psychologists
- juvenile detention or juvenile shelter care facilities, foster care facilities, or mental health centers
- Employees of Department of Human Services institutions
- Peace officers, counselors, or mental health professionals
- Employees or operators of childcare centers
- Family development and self-sufficiency grant programs, substance abuse programs or facilities
- Employees, operators, owners, or other persons who perform duties for certified children’s residential facilities
- Commercial film and photographic print processors

In addition to these specified professions, Indiana law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁸²

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting. Iowa law holds any employer who retaliates against an employee for making a report civilly liable.⁸³

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A reporter, in the scope of his or her professional practice or employment responsibilities, *reasonably believes* that a child has been abused.
- A commercial film and photographic print processor *has knowledge of or observes* a visual depiction of a minor engaged in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of a prohibited sexual act.⁸⁴

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much more clear: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards

⁸² Iowa Ann. Stat. §232.69: “Any other person who believes that a child has been abused **may** report.”

⁸³ *Id.*, §§232.70; 232.73A.

⁸⁴ *Id.*, §§232.69; 728.14.



for child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you need to provide your name and address.⁸⁵ The subject of your report will be made aware that a report has been made about them, but your information will remain confidential.⁸⁶

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Iowa law doesn’t recognize specific professional privileges as grounds to withhold a report, and specifically notes spousal and health practitioner-patient privilege as insufficient grounds to fail to report.⁸⁷

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁸⁵ *Id.*, §232.70.

⁸⁶ *Id.*, §232.71B.

⁸⁷ *Id.*, §232.74.



Kansas Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Kan. Ann. Stat. §38-2223 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Persons providing medical care or treatment, including persons licensed to practice the healing arts, dentistry, and optometry
- Persons engaged in postgraduate training programs approved by the State Board of Healing Arts
- Licensed professional or practical nurses
- Chief administrative officers of medical care facilities
- Teachers, school administrators, or other employees of an educational institution that the child is attending
- Firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, law enforcement officers, juvenile intake and assessment workers, court services officers, community corrections officers, case managers, and mediators
- Employees or volunteers for any organization, whether for profit or not-for-profit, that provides social services to pregnant teenagers, including, but not limited to, counseling, adoption services, and pregnancy education and maintenance
- Persons licensed by the State to provide mental health services, including psychologists, clinical psychotherapists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, behavioral analysts, professional counselors, and registered alcohol and drug abuse counselors
- Licensed childcare providers or their employees at the place where the childcare services are being provided to the child

In addition to these specified professions, Kansas law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁸⁸

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting. Kansas law punishes any employer who retaliates against an employee who complies with mandatory reporting laws with a class B misdemeanor.⁸⁹

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

“A report is required when a reporter has *reason to suspect* that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental, or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse.”⁹⁰

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

⁸⁸ Kan. Ann. Stat. §38-2223: “Any person who has reason to suspect that a child may be in a child in need of care **may** report.”

⁸⁹ *Id.*, §38-2224.

⁹⁰ *Id.*, §38-2223.



What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to provide your name when you report. If you do report, any information disclosed about the case will not contain your information or any identifying information.⁹¹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Kansas law doesn’t recognize specific professional privileges as grounds to withhold a report, and specifically notes the physician-patient privilege, psychologist-client privilege, or social worker-client privilege as insufficient grounds to fail to report.⁹²

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁹¹ *Id.*, §38-2212.

⁹² *Id.*, §38-2249.



Kentucky Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Ken. Rev. Stat. §620.030 et seq

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, osteopathic physicians, nurses, coroners, medical examiners, residents, interns, chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, or health professionals
- Teachers, school personnel
- Peace officers
- Social workers
- Childcare personnel

Kentucky law is not limited to the above specified professions to report, but rather requires “any person who *knows or has reasonable cause to believe* that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused **shall** immediately report.”⁹³

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

The statute doesn’t specifically require you to make an additional report to your supervisor, but requires any supervisor who does receive a report from an employee to make a report to the relevant authorities. Making a report to your supervisor does not relieve you of your duty to report.⁹⁴

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person *knows or has reasonable cause to believe* that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused.⁹⁵

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages

⁹³ Ken. Rev. Stat. §620.030: “Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is a victim of human trafficking, as defined in § 529.010, immediately **shall** cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency or the State police, the cabinet or its designated representative, the Commonwealth’s attorney, or the county attorney by telephone or otherwise. This subsection shall apply regardless of whether the person believed to have caused the human trafficking of the child is a parent, guardian, fictive kin person in a position of authority, person in a position of special trust, or person exercising custodial control or supervision.”

⁹⁴ *Id.*, §620.030(1).

⁹⁵ *Id.*, §620.030.



overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to provide your personal information with your report. If you do provide your information, it will only be disclosed to legitimately serve the interest of the investigation, and is not likely to become public.⁹⁶

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Kentucky recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.⁹⁷

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

⁹⁶ *Id.*, §620.050(11).

⁹⁷ *Id.*, §620.030(4).



Louisiana Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

La. Children's Code Art. 603(17)

Who is required to make a report?

- Health practitioners, including physicians, surgeons, physical therapists, dentists, residents, interns, hospital staff, podiatrists, chiropractors, nurses, nursing aides, dental hygienists, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, optometrists, medical examiners, or coroners
- Teaching or childcare providers, including public or private teachers, teacher's aides, instructional aides, school principals, school staff members, bus drivers, coaches, professors, technical or vocational instructors, technical or vocational school staff members, college or university administrators, college or university staff members, social workers, probation officers, foster home parents, group home or other childcare institutional staff members, personnel of residential home facilities, daycare providers, or any individual who provides such services to a child in a voluntary or professional capacity.
- School coaches, including, but not limited to, public technical or vocational school, community college, college, or university coaches and coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics
- Police officers or law enforcement officials
- Parenting coordinators
- Court-appointed special advocates
- Mental health/social service practitioners,⁹⁸ including psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage or family counselors, social workers, members of the clergy, or aides
- Members of the clergy, including priests, rabbis, duly ordained clerical deacons or ministers, Christian Science practitioners, or other similarly situated functionaries of a religious organization
- Commercial film and photographic print processors
- Mediators
- Organizational or youth activity providers, including administrators, employees, or volunteers of any day camp, summer camp, youth center, or youth recreation programs or any other organization that provides organized activities for children

In addition to these specified professions, Louisiana law permits "any other person" to make a report of child abuse or neglect.⁹⁹

If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed in the statutes.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A reporter has *cause to believe* that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect.

⁹⁸ "Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, when representing a child in a case arising out of this code, a mental health or social service practitioner shall not be considered a mandatory reporter under the following limited circumstances: When the practitioner is engaged by an attorney to assist in the rendition of professional legal services to that child; When the information that would serve as the basis for reporting arises in furtherance of facilitating the rendition of those professional legal services to that child; When the information that would serve as the basis for reporting is documented by the mental health/social service practitioner." Id., Art. 603(17); 609

⁹⁹ La. Child. Code Art. 609: "Any other person who has cause to believe that a child's health is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect **may** report."



- A commercial film or photographic print processor has **knowledge of or observes** any film, photograph, videotape, negative or slide depicting a child, whom he or she knows or should know is under age 17, that constitutes child pornography.
- A physician has **cause to believe** that a newborn was exposed in utero to an unlawfully used controlled dangerous substance, as determined by a toxicology test upon the newborn that may be administered without the consent of the newborn’s parent or guardian. Positive test results shall not be admissible in a criminal prosecution
- A physician **observes** symptoms of withdrawal in a newborn or other observable and harmful effects in his or her physical appearance or functioning that the physician has **cause to believe** are due to the chronic or severe use of alcohol by the mother during pregnancy.¹⁰⁰

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a highly subjective standard. However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge and observation standard here require more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you must include your name and address.¹⁰¹ Your information will only be disclosed in the event that you knowingly make a false report.¹⁰²

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

In Louisiana, only the clergy-penitent privilege is permitted. This means that any information a member of the clergy discovers as part their clerical duties **may not** be used as the basis of a report.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*, Art. 609, 610.

¹⁰¹ *Id.*, Art. 610.

¹⁰² La. Rev. Stat. §46:56(F)(8)(b).

¹⁰³ *Id.*, Art. 603(17); 609.



Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).



Maine Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Maine Rev. Stat. Tit. 22, §4011-A.

Who is required to make a report?

- Allopathic or osteopathic physicians, residents, interns, emergency medical services persons, medical examiners, physician’s assistants, dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, chiropractors, podiatrists, or registered or license, practical nurses, home health aides, medical or social service workers, psychologists
- Teachers, guidance counselors, school officials
- School bus drivers or attendants
- Social workers
- Law enforcement officials, State or municipal fire inspectors, or municipal code enforcement officials
- Court-appointed special advocates or guardians ad litem
- Chairs of professional licensing boards that have jurisdiction over mandated reporters
- Humane agents employed by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- Sexual assault counselors or family or domestic violence victim advocates
- Youth camp administrators or counselors
- Homemakers
- Childcare personnel
- Mental health professionals
- Clergy members
- Any person who has assumed full, intermittent, or occasional responsibility for the care or custody of the child, regardless of whether the person receives compensation
- Any person affiliated with a church or religious institution who serves in an administrative capacity or has otherwise assumed a position of trust or responsibility to the members of that church or religious institution, while acting in that capacity, regardless of whether the person receives compensation.

In addition to these specified professions, Maine law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁰⁴

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a member of the staff of a medical or public or private institution, agency, or facility,” you may report to the person in charge of that institution, or directly to the Department. In addition, if you report to the person in charge, you must provide written confirmation of your report, including your name, the date and time of the report, and a summary of the incidents that lead you to report. Your employer may not retaliate against you for making a report.¹⁰⁵

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- The person ***knows or has reasonable cause to suspect*** that a child is or is likely to be abused or neglected or that a suspicious death has occurred.

¹⁰⁴ Maine Rev. Stat. Tit. 22, §4011-A: “Any person **may** make a report if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected or that there has been a suspicious child death.”

¹⁰⁵ *Id.*



- A child who is under 6 months of age or otherwise non-ambulatory ***exhibits evidence*** of the following:
 - Fracture of a bone
 - Substantial bruising or multiple bruises
 - Subdural hematoma
 - Burns
 - Poisoning
 - Injury resulting in substantial bleeding, soft tissue swelling, or impairment of an organ

A health-care provider involved in the delivery or care of an infant ***knows or has reasonable cause to suspect*** that the infant has been born affected by illegal substance use or is demonstrating withdrawal symptoms that have resulted from or have likely resulted from prenatal drug exposure that require medical monitoring or care beyond standard newborn care, whether the prenatal exposure was to legal or illegal drugs, or has fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

A mandatory reporter shall report to the department if the person ***knows or has reasonable cause to suspect*** that a child is not living with the child’s family. Although a report may be made at any time, a report must be made immediately if there is ***reason to suspect*** that a child has been living with someone other than the child’s family for more than 6 months or if there is ***reason to suspect*** that a child has been living with someone other than the child’s family for more than 12 months pursuant to a power of attorney or other nonjudicial authorization.¹⁰⁶

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.*, and §4011-B.



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you need to include your name, occupation, and contact information.¹⁰⁷ The department will protect the identity of reporters and other persons as appropriate when disclosing information in the records to a child named in a report, the child's parent, custodian, or caregiver, or a party to a child protection proceeding.¹⁰⁸

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the clergy-penitent privilege is permitted. Specifically, spousal and physician- and psychotherapist-patient privilege are noted as insufficient grounds to fail to report.¹⁰⁹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*, §4012.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.*, §4008.

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*, §§4011-A and 4015.



Maryland Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Mary. Fam. Law §5-704.

Who is required to make a report?

- Health practitioners
- Educators
- Human service workers
- Police officers

In addition to these specified professions, Maryland law requires “any person who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹¹⁰

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a hospital, public health agency, childcare institution, juvenile detention center, school, or similar institution,” you must make your report to the head of that institution, who is then required to report to relevant authorities.¹¹¹

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A mandatory reporter is required to report when, acting in a professional capacity, the person has *reason to believe* that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect. Other persons shall report when they have *reason to believe* that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.¹¹²

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

¹¹⁰ Md. Fam. Law §5-705. *See also* §5-704.1: “An individual **may** notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency if the individual has reason to believe that a parent, guardian, or caregiver of a child allows the child to reside with or be in the regular presence of an individual, other than the child’s parent or guardian, who is registered as a child sex offender and, based on additional information, poses a substantial risk of sexual abuse to the child.”

¹¹¹ *Id.*, §5-704.

¹¹² *Id.*, and §5-705.



While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include personal information in your report. Any disclosure of a report or record concerning child abuse or neglect must make provisions to protect the identity of the reporter or any other person whose life or safety is likely to be endangered by disclosing the information.¹¹³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges are permitted.¹¹⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹¹³ Md. Hum. Serv. Code §1-202(c).

¹¹⁴ Md. Fam, Law, §§5-704, 5-705.



Massachusetts Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Mass. Gen. Laws CH. 119, §21 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, medical interns, hospital personnel, medical examiners, psychologists, emergency medical technicians, dentists, nurses, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, osteopaths, allied mental health and human services professionals, drug and alcoholism counselors, psychiatrists, or clinical social worker
- Persons in charge of a medical or other public or private institution, school, or facility or that person's designated agent.
- Public or private schoolteachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, or childcare workers
- Persons paid to care for or work with children in any public or private facility, home, or program that provides childcare or residential services to children
- Persons who provide the services of childcare resource and referral agencies, voucher management agencies, family childcare systems, or childcare food programs
- Licensors of the Department of Early Education and Care or school attendance officers
- Probation officers, clerk-magistrates of a district court, parole officers, social workers, foster parents, firefighters, police officers, or animal control officers
- The child advocate
- Persons paid to care for or work with children in any public or private facility, home, or program that provides childcare or residential services to children
- Priests, rabbis, clergy members, ordained or licensed ministers, leaders of any church or religious body, or accredited Christian Science practitioners
- Persons performing official duties on behalf of a church or religious body that are recognized as the duties of a priest, rabbi, clergy, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, or accredited Christian Science practitioner
- Persons employed by a church or religious body to supervise, educate, coach, train, or counsel a child on a regular basis.

In addition to these specified professions, Massachusetts law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹¹⁵

If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a medical or other public or private institution, school, or facility,” you must make your report to the head of that institution, who is then required to report to relevant authorities. You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting.¹¹⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A mandated reporter must report when, in his or her professional capacity, he or she has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from any of the following:

- Abuse inflicted upon the child that causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse

¹¹⁵ Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 119, §51A: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse or neglect **may** file a report.”

¹¹⁶ *Id.*, §51A(a), (h).



- Neglect, including malnutrition
- Physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth
- Being a sexually exploited child
- Being a human trafficking victim, as defined by chapter 233, § 20M¹¹⁷

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

While you must include your name in the report, the statute does not address its confidentiality.¹¹⁸

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent privilege applies as the only recognized privileged communication in Massachusetts. However, this privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.¹¹⁹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹¹⁷ *Id.*, §51A.

¹¹⁸ *Id.*

¹¹⁹ *Id.*



Michigan Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Mich. Comp. Laws §722.623 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, physician assistants, dentists, dental hygienists, medical examiners, nurses, persons licensed to provide emergency medical care, or audiologists
- School administrators, counselors, or teachers
- Regulated childcare providers
- Psychologists, marriage and family therapists, licensed professional counselors, social workers, or social work technicians
- Persons employed in a professional capacity in any office of the friend of the court
- Law enforcement officers
- Members of the clergy
- Department of Human Services employees, including eligibility specialists, family independence managers, family independence specialists, social services specialists, social work specialists, social work specialist managers, or welfare services specialists
- Any employee of an organization or entity that, as a result of Federal funding statutes, regulations, or contracts, would be prohibited from reporting in the absence of a State mandate or court order

In addition to these specified professions, Michigan law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹²⁰

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “of a hospital, agency, or school,” you must notify the head of that institution that you have made a report, and furnish them with a written copy of your report to the Department. Notifying your superiors does not relieve you of your duty to report. You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting.¹²¹

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a reporter has *reasonable cause to suspect* child abuse or neglect.¹²²

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-

¹²⁰ Mich. Comp. Laws §722.624: “Any other person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect **may** report.”

¹²¹ *Id.*, §722.623.

¹²² *Id.*



inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your name in the report. If you do include your information, it cannot be disclosed absent your consent or judicial order.¹²³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client or clergy-penitent privilege can be grounds for not reporting.¹²⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹²³ *Id.*, §§722.625; 722.627.

¹²⁴ *Id.*, §722.631.



Minnesota Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Minn. Ann. Stat. §626.556, Subd. 3

Who is required to make a report?

- A professional or professional's delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, childcare, education, social services, correctional supervision, probation or correctional services, or law enforcement
- A member of the clergy who received the information while engaged in ministerial duties

In addition to these specified professions, Minnesota law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹²⁵

If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

As a mandatory reporter, your report should be directed to the licensing agency responsible for the facility in which the suspected abuse occurred.¹²⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a reporter *knows or has reason to believe that* a child is being neglected or sexually or physically abused or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding 3 years.¹²⁷

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard's broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you're trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children

¹²⁵ Minn. Ann. Stat. §656.556, Subd. 3: “Any person **may** voluntarily report to the local welfare agency, agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, police department, county sheriff, Tribal social services agency, or Tribal police department if the person knows, has reason to believe, or suspects a child is being or has been neglected or subjected to physical or sexual abuse.”

¹²⁶ *Id.*, Subd. 3(c). “A person mandated to report physical or sexual child abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility shall report the information to the agency responsible for licensing the facility or a nonlicensed personal care provider organization. A health or corrections agency receiving a report may request the local child welfare agency to provide assistance. A board or other entity whose licensees perform work within a school facility, upon receiving a complaint of alleged maltreatment, shall provide information about the circumstances of the alleged maltreatment to the commissioner of education.”

¹²⁷ *Id.*, Subd. 3.



- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you must include your name and address.¹²⁸ You are not specifically required to include your name in the report. Further, your identity will only be revealed if it is found that you have made a false report, and anyone who improperly discloses your information could be charged with a misdemeanor.¹²⁹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Minnesota recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.¹³⁰

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹²⁸ *Id.*, Subd. 7.

¹²⁹ *Id.*, Subd. 11.

¹³⁰ *Id.*, Subd.3, 8.



Mississippi Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Miss. Ann. Code §43-21-353

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, dentists, interns, residents, or nurses
- Public or private school employees or childcare givers
- Psychologists, social workers, family protection workers, or family protection specialists
- Attorneys, ministers, or law enforcement officers

In addition to these specified professions, Mississippi law requires “all other persons” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹³¹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed in the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person has *reasonable cause to suspect* that a child is abused or neglected.¹³²

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

¹³¹ Miss. Ann. Code §43-21-353: “All other persons who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected **must** report.”

¹³² *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must include the names and addresses of all witnesses to the suspected abuse, including yours if you are a material witness to the abuse. The information will not be disclosed.¹³³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Not addressed by the statute.

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹³³ *Id.*



Missouri Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Mo. Rev. Stat. §§210.115; 352.400; 5783.215

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, residents, interns, nurses, hospital and clinic personnel, or other health practitioners
- Daycare center workers or other childcare workers, teachers, principals, or other school officials
- Psychologists, mental health professionals, or social workers
- Ministers, including clergypersons, priests, rabbis, Christian Science practitioners, or other persons serving in a similar capacity for any religious organization
- Juvenile officers, probation or parole officers, peace officers, law enforcement officials, or jail or detention center personnel
- Volunteers or personnel of community service programs that offer support services for families in crisis to assist in the delegation of any powers regarding the care and custody of a child by a properly executed power of attorney
- Other persons with responsibility for the care of children
- Film and photographic print processors; computer providers, installers, or repair persons; or internet service providers

In addition to these specified professions, Missouri law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹³⁴

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If two or more staffers at a medical institution become aware of information that would compel you to report, you may determine which of you makes the report on behalf of you all. You will not suffer adverse consequences for making a report, and your employer must make any technology you need available to you.¹³⁵

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required under the following circumstances:

- A reporter has *reasonable cause to suspect* that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.
- A reporter *observes* a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.
- A film and photographic print processor *has knowledge of or observes* any film, photograph, videotape, negative, slide, or computer-generated image or picture depicting a child younger than age 18 engaged in an act of sexual conduct.¹³⁶

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to

¹³⁴ Mo. Rev. Stat. §210.115: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect **may** report.”

¹³⁵ *Id.*

¹³⁶ *Id.*, and at 573.215.



standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much more clear: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards for child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must include your name, address, and contact information with your report.¹³⁷ Your information will be kept confidential from any individual named in your report, but could be disclosed for investigatory purposes in the course of the investigation of your report.¹³⁸

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client or clergy-penitent privilege may be grounds for failure to report.¹³⁹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹³⁷ *Id.*, S210.130.

¹³⁸ *Id.*, §210.150.

¹³⁹ *Id.*, §210.140.



Montana Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Mont. Ann. Code §41-3-201; 15-6-201(2)(b)

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, residents, interns, members of hospital staffs, nurses, osteopaths, chiropractors, podiatrists, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, optometrists, or any other health professionals
- Teachers, school officials, or school employees who work during regular school hours
- Operators or employees of any registered or licensed daycare or substitute care facility, or operators or employees of childcare facilities
- Mental health professionals or social workers
- Religious healers
- Foster care, residential, or institutional workers
- Members of the clergy, as defined in § 15-6-201(2)(b)
 - The term ‘clergy’ includes any of the following:
 - An ordained minister, priest, or rabbi
 - A commissioned or licensed minister of a church or church denomination that ordains ministers if the person has the authority to perform substantially all the religious duties of the church or denomination
 - A member of a religious order who has taken a vow of poverty
 - A Christian Science practitioner
- Guardians ad litem or court-appointed advocates authorized to investigate a report
- Peace officers or other law enforcement officials

In addition to these specified professions, Montana law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁴⁰

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A reporter **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect**, as a result of information received in his or her professional or official capacity, that a child is abused or neglected.
- A health-care professional involved in the delivery or care of an infant **knows** that the infant is affected by a dangerous drug.¹⁴¹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

¹⁴⁰ Mont. Rev. Stat. §41-3-201: “Any other person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected **may** report.”

¹⁴¹ *Id.*



What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.¹⁴²

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent privilege applies as the only recognized privileged communication. However, this privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.¹⁴³

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁴² *Id.*, §41-3-205.

¹⁴³ *Id.*, §41-3-201.



Nebraska Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-711 et seq.

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, medical institutions, or nurses
- School employees
- Social workers
- The inspector general appointed under § 43-4317

In addition to these specified professions, Nebraska law requires “all other persons” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁴⁴

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A reporter has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.
- A reporter **observes** a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result in abuse or neglect.¹⁴⁵

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

At first glance, the observation of “conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in maltreatment” is much clearer: when you see harmful or potentially harmful conditions for children, you must report. However, this language facilitates many kinds of behavior to be classified as dangerous, and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants

¹⁴⁴ Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-711.: “All other persons who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect **must** report.”

¹⁴⁵ *Id.*



- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must include your name address,¹⁴⁶ but that information will remain confidential.¹⁴⁷

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The physician-patient, counselor-client, and husband-wife privileges shall not be grounds for failing to report.¹⁴⁸

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁴⁶ *Id.*

¹⁴⁷ *Id.*, §28-719.

¹⁴⁸ *Id.*, §28-714.



Nevada Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Nev. Rev. Stat. §432B.220

Who is required to make a report?

- Persons providing services licensed or certified in this State pursuant to, without limitation, hospitals, physicians and other medical personnel, psychologists, therapists, social workers, and counselors, as described in chapters 450B, 630, 630A, 631, 632, 633, 634, 634A, 635, 636, 637, 637B, 639, 640, 640A, 640B, 640C, 640D, 640E, 641, 641A, 641B, and 641C
- Any personnel of a licensed medical facility engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons or an administrator, manager, or other person in charge of the medical facility upon notification of suspected abuse or neglect of a child by a member of the staff of the medical facility
- Coroners
- Members of the clergy, Christian Science practitioners, or religious healers
- Employees of public or private schools and any volunteers serving at such schools
- Persons who maintain or are employed by facilities that provide care for children, children's camps, or other public or private facilities, institutions, or agencies furnishing care to children
- Persons licensed to conduct foster homes
- Officers or employees of law enforcement agencies or adult or juvenile probation officers
- Except as otherwise provided below, attorneys
- Persons who maintain, are employed by, or serve as volunteers for agencies or services that advise persons regarding abuse or neglect of a child and refer them to persons and agencies where their requests and needs can be met
- Persons who are employed by or serve as volunteers for a youth shelter
- Any adult person who is employed by an entity that provides organized activities for children, including, without limitation, any person who is employed by a school district or public school

In addition to these specified professions, Nevada law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁴⁹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A reporter, in his or her professional capacity, *knows or has reason to believe* that a child is abused or neglected.
- A reporter has *reasonable cause to believe* that a child has died as a result of abuse or neglect.
- A medical services provider who delivers or provides medical services to a newborn infant, in his or her professional or occupational capacity, *knows or has reasonable cause to believe* that the newborn infant has been affected by prenatal illegal substance abuse or has withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Nev. Rev. Stat. §432B.220: “Any other person **may** report.”

¹⁵⁰ *Id.*



What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

This is not specifically required in the statutes. Child welfare agencies may release information about the case to the following individuals, as long as any information about the reporter is kept confidential.

- The proposed guardian or proposed successor guardian of a child
- A parent or legal guardian of the child and his or her attorney
- A child age 14 or older over whom a guardianship is sought
- Upon written consent of the parent, any officer of this State or a city or county, or a legislator, to investigate the activities or programs of a child welfare agency

Further, your identity will only be revealed if it is found that you have made a false report or reported in bad faith.¹⁵¹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent privilege applies only to penitential communications. The attorney-client privilege is accepted only if the client:

- Has been or may be accused of committing the abuse or neglect
- Is the victim of the abuse or neglect, is in foster care, and did not give consent to the attorney to report the abuse or neglect¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *Id.*, §432B.290.

¹⁵² *Id.*, and at §432B.25; 432B.250. *See*: “Nothing in this section shall be construed as relieving an attorney from either of the following: The duty to report the abuse or neglect of a child, except as otherwise provided above; Complying with any ethical duties of attorneys, including, without limitation, any duty to take reasonably necessary



Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

actions to protect his or her client if the client is not capable of making adequately considered decisions because of age, mental impairment, or any other reason.”



New Hampshire Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

New Hamp. Rev. Stat. §169-C:29

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, surgeons, county medical examiners, psychiatrists, residents, interns, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, nurses, hospital personnel, or Christian Science practitioners
- Teachers, school officials, nurses, or counselors
- Daycare workers or any other child or foster care workers
- Social workers
- Psychologists or therapists
- Priests, ministers, or rabbis

In addition to these specified professions, New Hampshire law requires “all other persons” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁵³

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person has *reason to suspect* that a child has been abused or neglected.¹⁵⁴

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

¹⁵³ New Hampshire Rev. Stat. §169-C:29: “All other persons who have reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected **must** report.”

¹⁵⁴ *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.¹⁵⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client privilege is permitted.¹⁵⁶

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*, §170-G:8-a.

¹⁵⁶ *Id.*, §169-C:32.



New Jersey Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
NJ Ann. Stat. §9:6-8.10

Who is required to make a report?

New Jersey law does not require any specific professionals to report. Rather, “Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse, including sexual abuse, or acts of child abuse shall report.”¹⁵⁷

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person has *reasonable cause to believe* that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.¹⁵⁸

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not statutorily required to include your information, but all information you provide will remain confidential.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ NJ Rev. Stat. §9:6-8.10.

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*

¹⁵⁹ *Id.*, §9:6-8.10a.



Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Not addressed by the statute.

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).



New Mexico Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
NM Ann. Stat. §32A.4-3

Who is required to make a report?

- Licensed physicians
- Residents or interns
- Law enforcement officers or judges
- Registered nurses or visiting nurses
- Teachers or school officials
- Social workers acting in their official capacity Members of the clergy

In addition to these specified professions, New Mexico requires “Every person who knows or has a reasonable suspicion that a child is an abused or a neglected child shall report the matter immediately.”¹⁶⁰

**If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?
Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?**

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person *knows or has a reasonable suspicion* that a child is abused or neglected.¹⁶¹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

¹⁶⁰ New Mexico Ann. Stat. §32A-4.3.

¹⁶¹ *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You will need to supply enough information for your identity to be verified prior to the start of any investigation.¹⁶² None of your information will be released to a parent, guardian, or legal custodian.¹⁶³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

New Jersey recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.¹⁶⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁶² *Id.*, §32A-4.5.

¹⁶³ *Id.*, §32A-4.33.

¹⁶⁴ *Id.*, §§32A-4.3; 32A-4.5.



New York Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
NY Soc. Serv. Law §413

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, physician assistants, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, dental hygienists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, residents, interns, psychologists, registered nurses, social workers, or emergency medical technicians
- Licensed creative arts therapists, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, or psychoanalysts
- Hospital personnel or Christian Science practitioners
- School officials, including, but not limited to, teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, or administrators
- Full- or part-time compensated school employees required to hold temporary coaching licenses or professional coaching certificates
- Social services workers, daycare center workers, providers of family or group family daycare, or any other childcare or foster care worker
- Employees of publicly-funded emergency shelters for families with children
- Directors of children’s overnight camps, summer day camps, or traveling summer day camps
- Employees or volunteers in residential care facilities for children that are licensed, certified, or operated by the Office of Children and Family Services
- Mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, alcoholism counselors, or all persons credentialed by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
- Employees of health home-care agencies or home- and community-based services who are expected to have regular and substantial contact with children
- Peace officers, police officers, district attorneys or assistant district attorneys, investigators employed in the office of a district attorney, or other law enforcement officials

In addition to these specified professions, New York law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁶⁵

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency,” you must make your report to the head of that institution, who is then required to report to relevant authorities. You will not suffer any adverse consequences for reporting.¹⁶⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when the reporter has *reasonable cause to suspect* that either of the following is true:

- A child coming before him or her in his or her professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child.
- The parent, guardian, custodian, or other person legally responsible for the child comes before the reporter and states from personal knowledge facts, conditions, or circumstances that, if correct, would render the child an abused or maltreated child.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ New York Soc. Serv. Law §414: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or maltreated **may** report.”

¹⁶⁶ *Id.*, §413.

¹⁶⁷ *Id.*



What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must include your name and contact information.¹⁶⁸ This information will remain confidential.¹⁶⁹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Notwithstanding the privileges set forth in article 45 of the civil practice law and rules, and any other provision of law to the contrary, mandated reporters who make a report that initiates an investigation of an allegation of child abuse or maltreatment are required to comply with all requests for records made by a child protective services agency relating to the report.¹⁷⁰

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁶⁸ *Id.*, §415.

¹⁶⁹ *Id.*, §422-a.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.*, §415. See <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/CVP/4503>



North Carolina Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

North Carolina Gen. Stat. §7B-301

Who is required to make a report?

North Carolina law does not require any specific professionals to report. Rather, “Any person or institution that has cause to suspect abuse or neglect shall report.”¹⁷¹ Additionally, All persons who have cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent or has died as the result of maltreatment shall report.”¹⁷²

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a reporter has *cause to suspect* that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent or has died as the result of maltreatment.¹⁷³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

¹⁷¹ N. Car. Gen. Stat. §7B-301.

¹⁷² *Id.*

¹⁷³ *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You must include your name, address, and telephone number.¹⁷⁴ Your information will remain confidential except to the extent necessary to support an investigation of your report.¹⁷⁵

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.¹⁷⁶

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁷⁴ *Id.*

¹⁷⁵ *Id.*, §7B-302.

¹⁷⁶ *Id.*, §7B-310.



North Dakota Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

N. Dak. Cent. Code §§50-25.1-03; 25-01-01

Who is required to make a report?

- Dentists, dental hygienists, optometrists, medical examiners or coroners, or any other medical or mental health professionals
- Tier 1, tier 2, tier 3, or tier 4 mental health professionals, as defined under § 25-01-01
 - Tier 1 mental health professionals include licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, physicians, or physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses.
 - Tier 2 mental health professionals include licensed independent clinical social workers, professional clinical counselors, marriage and family therapists, addiction counselors, and registered nurses.
 - Tier 3 mental health professionals include licensed associate professional counselors, master social workers, baccalaureate social workers, professional counselors, associate marriage and family therapists, occupational therapists, practical nurses, behavior analysts, vocational rehabilitation counselors, school psychologists, and human relations counselors.
 - Tier 4 mental health professionals include direct care associates or technicians
- Religious practitioners of the healing arts
- Schoolteachers, administrators, or school counselors
- Childcare workers or foster parents
- Police or law enforcement officers, juvenile court personnel, probation officers, or division of juvenile services employees
- Licensed social workers, family services specialists, or childcare licensors
- Members of the clergy

In addition to these specified professions, North Dakota law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁷⁷

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You will not suffer any adverse consequences for reporting.¹⁷⁸

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a reporter has *knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect* that a child is abused or neglected, if the knowledge or suspicion is derived from information received by that person in that person’s official or professional capacity.

A person who has *knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect* that a child is abused or neglected based on images of sexual conduct by a child discovered on a workplace computer shall report the circumstances to the department.¹⁷⁹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child

¹⁷⁷ N. Dak. Cent. Code §50-25.1-03: “Any other person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected **may** report.”

¹⁷⁸ *Id.*, §§ 50-25.1-04; 50-25.1-09.1.

¹⁷⁹ *Id.*, §50-25.1-03.



abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.¹⁸⁰

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report. The clergy-penitent privilege is limited only to penitential communications.¹⁸¹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁸⁰ *Id.*, §50-25.1-11.

¹⁸¹ *Id.*, and §50-25.1-10.



Ohio Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
Ohio Rev. Code §2151.421

Who is required to make a report?

- Attorneys
- Physicians, interns, residents, dentists, podiatrists, nurses, or other health-care professionals
- Licensed psychologists, school psychologists, or marriage and family therapists
- Speech pathologists or audiologists
- Coroners
- Administrators or employees of child daycare centers, certified childcare agencies, or other public or private children services; residential camps; child day camps; or private, nonprofit therapeutic wilderness camps agencies
- Teachers, school employees, or school authorities
- Persons engaged in social work or the practice of professional counseling
- Peace officers or agents of county humane societies
- Persons, other than clerics, rendering spiritual treatment through prayer in accordance with the tenets of a well-recognized religion
- Professional employees of a county Department of Job and Family Services who works with children and families
- Superintendents or regional administrators employed by the Department of Youth Services
- Superintendents, board members, or employees of county boards of developmental disabilities; investigative agents contracted with by a county board of developmental disabilities; employees of the Department of Developmental Disabilities; employees of a facility or home that provides respite care; employees of a home health agency; or employees of an entity that provides homemaker services
- Persons performing the duties of an assessor or third party employed by a public children's services agency to assist in providing child- or family-related services
- Court-appointed special advocates or guardians ad litem

In addition to these specified professions, Ohio law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁸²

**If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?
Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?**

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a mandated person is acting in an official or professional capacity and **knows or suspects** that a child under age 18 or a person under age 21 with a developmental disability or physical impairment has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child.¹⁸³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report. However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This

¹⁸² Ohio Rev. Code §2151.421: “Any other person who suspects that a child has suffered or faces a threat of suffering from abuse or neglect **may** report.”

¹⁸³ *Id.*



discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

While not required to provide your personal information when you make a report, you must provide that information if you wish to receive updates about the case. Your information will remain confidential.¹⁸⁴

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The attorney-client, physician-patient, and clergy-penitent privileges are recognized as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report, except under the following conditions:

“If all the following apply, the client, patient, or penitent in the relationship is deemed to have waived any testimonial privilege with respect to any communication the attorney, physician, or cleric receives, and the attorney, physician, or cleric shall make a report with respect to that communication

- The client, patient, or penitent, at the time of the communication, is either a child under age 18 or a mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or physically impaired person under age 21.
- The attorney, physician, or cleric knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in similar position to suspect, as a result of the communication or any observations made during that communication that the client, patient, or penitent has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the person.
- The abuse or neglect does not arise out of the person’s attempt to have an abortion without the notification of her parents, guardian, or custodian in accordance with § 2151.85.”¹⁸⁵

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁸⁴ *Id.*

¹⁸⁵ *Id.*



Oklahoma Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Okla. Ann. Stat. Tit. 10A, §1-2-101; Tit. 21, §1021.4

Who is required to make a report?

- All persons
- Commercial film and photographic print processors or computer technicians

In addition to these specified professions, Oklahoma law requires “every person to has reason to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁸⁶

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You will not suffer any negative consequences for reporting, and any employer or supervisory who takes retaliatory action as a result of your report shall be held civilly liable.¹⁸⁷

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- Any person has *reason to believe* that a child under age 18 is a victim of abuse or neglect.
- A physician, surgeon, other health-care professional (including doctors of medicine, licensed osteopathic physicians, residents, and interns), or midwife is involved in the prenatal care of expectant mothers or the delivery or care of infants and an infant *tests positive* for alcohol or a controlled dangerous substance or is diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
- A commercial film and photographic print processor or computer technician *has knowledge of or observes* any film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide depicting a child engaged in an act of sexual conduct.¹⁸⁸

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. A knowledge standard applies to the positive testing of a newborn, and requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

At first glance, the observation of sexual exploitation of a minor requirement is much clearer: when you see visual matter that depicts sexual treatment of children, you must report. However, the standards for child pornography vary by state and are inherently subjective. Again, the best course of action is to keep a consistent set of criteria when you report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages

¹⁸⁶ Okla Ann. Stat. Tit. 10A, § 1-2-101.

¹⁸⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸⁸ *Id.*, and at Tit. 21, §1021.4.



overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.¹⁸⁹

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

No privilege shall relieve any person of the requirement to report.¹⁹⁰

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁸⁹ *Id.*, Tit. 10A §1-2-101.

¹⁹⁰ *Id.*



Oregon Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
Ore. Rev. Stat. §§419B.010

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, physician assistants, naturopathic physicians, interns, residents, optometrists, chiropractors, dentists, nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, nurse's aides, home health aides, or employees of in-home health services
- School employees, including employees of higher education institutions (such as community colleges and public and private universities)
- Employees of the Department of Human Services, the Oregon Health Authority, the Early Learning Division, the Youth Development Council, the Office of Child Care, the Oregon Youth Authority, a local health department, a community mental health program, a community developmental disabilities program, a county juvenile department, a licensed child-caring agency, or an alcohol and drug treatment program
- Peace officers
- Members of the clergy
- Psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, or marriage and family therapists
- Certified foster care or childcare providers
- Attorneys or court-appointed special advocates
- Firefighters or emergency medical technicians
- Members of the Legislative Assembly
- Physical, speech, or occupational therapists
- Audiologists or speech-language pathologists
- Employees of the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission directly involved in investigations or discipline by the commission
- Operators of preschool or school-age recorded programs Employees or a private agency or organization facilitating the provision of respite services for parents pursuant to a properly executed power of attorney
- Employees of organizations providing child-related services or activities, including youth groups or centers, scout groups or camps, or summer or day camps
- Coaches, assistant coaches, or trainers of athletes, if compensated and if the athlete is a child
- Personal support and home care workers

In addition to these specified professions, Oregon law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁹¹

**If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?
Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?**

You must make a report directly to relevant authorities regardless of your employer’s institutional procedures.¹⁹²

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any public or private official has *reasonable cause to believe* that any child with whom the official comes in contact has suffered abuse.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Ore. Rev. Stat. §419B.015: “Any person **may** voluntarily make a report.”

¹⁹² *Id.*, §419B.010.

¹⁹³ *Id.*



What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.¹⁹⁴

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client, clergy-penitent, and psychologist- or psychiatrist-client privileges are recognized as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.¹⁹⁵

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

¹⁹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁹⁵ *Id.*, §419B.015.



Pennsylvania Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Penn. Cons. Stat. Tit. 23, §6311

Who is required to make a report?

- Persons licensed or certified to practice in any health-related field
- Medical examiners, coroners, or funeral directors
- Employees of licensed health-care facilities who are engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of individuals
- School employees
 - A ‘school employee’ is an individual who is employed by a school or who provides an activity or service sponsored by a school. The term does not apply to administrative personnel unless that person has direct contact with children.
 - A school is a facility providing elementary, secondary, or postsecondary educational services, including public and nonpublic schools, vocational-technical schools, and institutions of higher education.
- Employees of a childcare service or public library
- A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization
- Any person, paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the person’s role in a program, activity, or service, is a person responsible for the child’s welfare or has direct contact with children
- Employees of a social services agency
- A peace officer or law enforcement official
- An emergency medical services provider
- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above who has direct contact with children
- An independent contractor
- An attorney affiliated with an agency, institution, or other entity, including a school or established religious organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or control of children
- A foster parent
- An adult family member who is a person responsible for the child’s welfare and provides services to a child in a family living home, community home for individuals with an intellectual disability, or licensed host home for children

In addition to these specified professions, Pennsylvania law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.¹⁹⁶

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency,” you must make your report to the head of that institution, who is then required to report to relevant authorities. Any intimidation or retaliation against a reporter is subject to other sanctions.¹⁹⁷

What standards am I expected to follow?

¹⁹⁶ Penn. Cons. Stat. Tit. 23 §6312: “Any person **may** make an oral or written report of suspected child abuse, which may be submitted electronically, if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse.”

¹⁹⁷ *Id.* §6311.



What the law says:

A mandated reporter shall make a report of suspected child abuse if he or she has *reasonable cause* to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation, and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service.
- The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization, or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child.
- A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
- An individual age 14 or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.¹⁹⁸

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

A written report of suspected child abuse, which may be submitted electronically, shall include the name, telephone number, and email address of the person making the report.¹⁹⁹

While the subject of your report may request a copy, your information will remain confidential, except to the extent necessary to support an investigation of your report, or if a court finds that you knowingly made a false report.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹⁹ *Id.*, §6313.

²⁰⁰ *Id.*, §6340.



Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Pennsylvania recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²⁰¹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁰¹ *Id.*, §6311.1.



Rhode Island Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Rhode Island Gen. Laws §40-11-6

Who is required to make a report?

- Any physician, duly certified registered nurse practitioner, or other health-care provider is required to report.

In addition to these specified professions, Rhode Island law requires “any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been abused to or neglected” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²⁰²

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when the following apply:

- A person has **reasonable cause to know or suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected.
- The following apply to a physician, nurse practitioner, or other health-care provider:
 - He or she is involved in the delivery or care of infants born with, or **identified as being affected by**, substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
 - He or she has **cause to suspect** that a child brought to them for treatment is an abused or neglected child.
 - He or she determines that a child younger than age 12 is suffering from any sexually transmitted disease.²⁰³

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard applies to the identification of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or substance abuse, and requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants

²⁰² Rhode Island Gen. Laws, §40-11-3(a).

²⁰³ *Id.*, and §40-11-6.



- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Not addressed by the statute.

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Only the attorney-client privilege is recognized as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²⁰⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁰⁴ *Id.*, §40-11-11.



South Carolina Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

South Carolina Ann. Code §63-7-310

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, nurses, dentists, optometrists, medical examiners, or coroners
- Employees of county medical examiner's or coroner's offices
- Any other medical, emergency medical services, mental health, or allied health professionals
- Members of the clergy, including Christian Science practitioners or religious healers
- Clerical or non-clerical religious counselors who charge for services
- School teachers, counselors, principals, assistant principals, or school attendance officers
- Social or public assistance workers, substance abuse treatment staff, or childcare workers in a childcare center or foster care facility
- Foster parents
- Police or law enforcement officers or juvenile justice workers
- Undertakers, funeral home directors, or employees of a funeral home
- Persons responsible for processing films or computer technicians
- Judges
- Volunteer non-attorney guardians ad litem serving on behalf of the South Carolina Guardian Ad Litem Program or the Richland County Court-Appointed Special Advocates program

In addition to these specified professions, South Carolina law permits “and encourages...[a] person who has reason to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse and neglect” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²⁰⁵

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are required to make a report to the Department of Children and Family Services, and you may also notify your superiors, and you will not suffer any adverse consequences for reporting.²⁰⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a reporter, in his or her professional capacity, receives information that gives him or her *reason to believe* that a child has been or may be abused or neglected.²⁰⁷

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-

²⁰⁵ S. Car. Ann. Code §63-7-310.

²⁰⁶ *Id.*, and at §63-7-315.

²⁰⁷ *Id.*, §63-7-310.



inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.²⁰⁸

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent and attorney-client privilege are the only privileged communication recognized as a valid ground to withhold a report. However, the clerical privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.²⁰⁹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁰⁸ *Id.*, §63-7-330.

²⁰⁹ *Id.*, §63-7-420.



South Dakota Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

South Dakota Ann. Laws §26-8A-3

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, dentists, osteopaths, chiropractors, optometrists, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, religious healing practitioners, podiatrists, hospital interns or residents, nurses, or coroners
- Teachers, school counselors, or officials
- Licensed or registered child welfare providers
- Mental health professionals or counselors, psychologists, social workers, chemical dependency counselors, employees or volunteers of domestic abuse shelters, or religious healing practitioners
- Employees or volunteers of child advocacy organizations or child welfare service providers
- Parole or court services officers or law enforcement officers
- Any safety-sensitive position (as defined in § 23-3-64), including any law enforcement officer authorized to carry firearms and any custody staff employed by any agency responsible for the rehabilitation or treatment of any adjudicated adult or juvenile.

In addition to these specified professions, South Dakota law permits “any other person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²¹⁰

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a hospital or similar institution,” you must make your report to the head of that institution, who is then required to report to relevant authorities. IF your duty arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a public or private school—whether accredited or unaccredited, as a teacher, school nurse, school counselor, school official, or administrator—or any person providing services pursuant to § 13-27-3 shall notify the school principal or school superintendent or designee of suspected abuse or neglect,” and the principal or superintendent will report to the relevant authorities.²¹¹

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a reporter has *reasonable cause to suspect* that a child has been abused or neglected.²¹²

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages

²¹⁰ S. Dak. Ann. Laws §26-8A-3: “Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child younger than age 18 has been abused or neglected **may** report.”

²¹¹ *Id.*, §§26-8A-6; 26-8A-7.

²¹² *Id.*, §26-8A-3.



overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential, unless a subject of the report requests it within 30 days, or it is found that you have made a false report.²¹³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The following privileges may not be claimed as a reason for not reporting:

- Physician-patient
- Husband-wife
- School counselor-student
- Social worker-client

This language suggests that only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges are recognized as legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²¹⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²¹³ *Id.*, 26-8A-11.1.

²¹⁴ *Id.*, §26-8A-15.



Tennessee Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Tenn. Ann. Code §§37-1-403; 37-1-605

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, osteopaths, medical examiners, chiropractors, nurses, hospital personnel, or other health or mental health professionals
- Teachers, other school officials or personnel, or daycare center workers
- Other professional childcare, foster care, residential, or institutional workers
- Social workers
- Practitioners who rely solely on spiritual means for healing
- Judges or law enforcement officers
- Neighbors, relatives, or friends
- Authority figures at community facilities, including any facility used for recreation or social assemblies or for educational, religious, social, health, or welfare purposes, including, but not limited to, facilities operated by schools, the Boy or Girl Scouts, the YMCA or YWCA, the Boys and Girls Club, or church or religious organizations
- Other persons

In addition to these specified professions, Tennessee law requires “any person who has knowledge that a child has been harmed by abuse or neglect” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²¹⁵

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are not required to report to your superiors at work if you make a report of child abuse, nor do you need their permission to report.²¹⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A person has **knowledge** that a child has been harmed by abuse or neglect.
- A person is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from an injury that **reasonably** appears to have been caused by abuse.
- A person **knows or has reasonable cause** to suspect that a child has been sexually abused.
- A physician diagnoses or treats any sexually transmitted disease in a child age 13 or younger or diagnoses pregnancy in an unemancipated minor.
- Any school official, personnel, employee, or member of the board of education who is aware of a report or investigation of employee misconduct on the part of any employee of the school system that in any way involves known or alleged child abuse, including, but not limited to, child physical or sexual abuse or neglect, shall immediately upon knowledge of such information notify the Department of Children’s Services or law enforcement official of the abuse or alleged abuse.²¹⁷

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This

²¹⁵ Tenn. Ann. Code §§37-1-403; 37-1-605.

²¹⁶ *Id.*, §37-1-403.

²¹⁷ *Id.* §§37-1-403; 37-1-605.



discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard here requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you supply will remain confidential except to the extent necessary to support an investigation of your report.²¹⁸

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The following privileges may not be claimed:

- Husband-wife
- Psychiatrist-patient or psychologist-patient

This language suggests that only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges are recognized as legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²¹⁹

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²¹⁸ *Id.*, §37-1-409.

²¹⁹ *Id.*, §37-1-411.



Texas Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
Tex. Fam. Code §261.101

Who is required to make a report?

For purposes of the reporting laws, persons required to report include professionals who are licensed or certified by the State or who are employees of facilities licensed, certified, or operated by the State and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which licensure or certification is required, have direct contact with children. Professionals include the following:

- Teachers or daycare employees
- Nurses, doctors, or employees of a clinic or health-care facility that provides reproductive services
- Juvenile probation officers or juvenile detention or correctional officers

In addition to these specified professions, Texas law requires “a person who has cause to believe that a child has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect” to “immediately” make a report of child abuse or neglect.²²⁰

**If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?
Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?**

You are not required to report to your superiors at work if you make a report of child abuse, nor do you need their permission to report. Any employer who imposes adverse consequences or retaliation will be subject to other sanctions.²²¹

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person has *cause to believe* that a child has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect.

In addition, a person or professional shall make a report if the person or professional has *cause to believe* that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and the person or professional determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child, an elderly person, or person with a disability.²²²

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-

²²⁰ *Tex. Fam. Code §261.101*

²²¹ *Id.*, and at §261.110.

²²² *Id.*, §261.101.



inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential except to the extent necessary to support an investigation of your report and to maintain the safety of all participants.²²³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Texas law doesn't recognize specific professional privileges as grounds to withhold a report.²²⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²²³ *Id.*, 261.101, 261.201.

²²⁴ *Id.*, §§261.101; 261.202.



Utah Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Utah Ann. Code §62A-4a-403

Who is required to make a report?

Any person, including any person licensed under the Medical Practice Act or the Nurse Practice Act, is required to report.

In addition to these specified professions, Utah law requires “Any person who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²²⁵

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a person has *reason to believe* that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.²²⁶

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

²²⁵ *Utah Ann. Code §62A-4a-403.*

²²⁶ *Id.*



Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.²²⁷

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Utah recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²²⁸

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²²⁷ *Id.*, §62A-4a-412(3)(b).

²²⁸ *Id.*, § §§ 62A-4a-403; 62A-4a-412(5).



Vermont Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Vermont Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, §4913

Who is required to make a report?

- Health-care providers, including physicians, surgeons, osteopaths, chiropractors, physician assistants, resident physicians, interns, hospital administrators, nurses, medical examiners, emergency medical personnel, dentists, psychologists, and pharmacists
- Individuals who are employed or contracted and paid by a school district or an approved or recognized independent school, including school superintendents, headmasters, teachers, student teachers, school librarians, school principals, and school guidance counselors
- Childcare workers
- Mental health professionals and social workers
- Police officers and probation officers
- Employees, contractors, and grantees of the Agency of Human Services who have contact with clients
- Camp owners, camp administrators, and camp counselors
- Members of the clergy

In addition to these specified professions, Vermont law permits “any other concerned person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²²⁹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

You are not subject to adverse consequences as a result of your report.²³⁰

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when a mandated reporter *reasonably suspects* the abuse or neglect of a child.²³¹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)

²²⁹ Vermont Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, §4913.

²³⁰ *Id.*

²³¹ *Id.*



- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Yes, you need to include your name address, and any other contact information in your report.²³², your identity will only be revealed if it is found that you have made a false report, or if providing your information is found to not pose a threat to your safety or the persons you mention in your report.²³³

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Vermont recognizes only the attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²³⁴

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²³² *Id.*, §4914.

²³³ *Id.*, §4913.

²³⁴ *Id.*



Virginia Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Virginia Ann. Code §63.2-1509

Who is required to make a report?

- Persons licensed to practice medicine or any of the healing arts
- Hospital residents or interns and nurses
- Social workers, family-services specialists, or probation officers
- Teachers or other employees at public or private schools, kindergartens, or nursery schools
- Persons providing full-time or part-time childcare for pay on a regular basis
- Mental health professionals
- Law enforcement officers, animal control officers, or mediators
- Professional staff employed by private or State-operated hospitals, institutions, or facilities to which children have been placed for care and treatment
- Persons age 18 or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children
- Court-appointed special advocates
- Persons age 18 or older who have received training approved by the Department of Social Services for the purposes of recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect
- Persons employed by a local department who determine eligibility for public assistance
- Emergency medical services providers, unless such providers immediately report the matter directly to the attending physician at the hospital to which the child is transported
- Persons employed by public or private institutions of higher education, other than an attorney who is employed by a public or private institution of higher education as it relates to information gained in the course of providing legal representation to a client
- Athletic coaches, directors, or other persons age 18 or older employed by or volunteering with private sports organizations or teams
- Administrators or employees age 18 or older of public or private day camps, youth centers, and youth recreation programs
- Ministers, priests, rabbis, imams, or duly accredited practitioners of any religious organization or denomination usually referred to as a church

In addition to these specified professions, Virginia law permits “any person who suspects that a child is abused or neglected” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²³⁵

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as “a teacher, staff member, resident, intern, or nurse in the course of professional services in a hospital, school, or similar institution,” you may make your report to the head of that institution, who is then required to report to relevant authorities. The head of the institution must then furnish you with confirmation of their report.²³⁶

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when, in his or her professional or official capacity, a reporter has *reason to suspect* that a child is abused or neglected. For purposes of this section, ‘reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected’ shall include the following:

²³⁵ Virginia Ann. Code §63.2-1510.

²³⁶ *Id.*, §63.2-1509.



- A finding made by a health-care provider within 6 weeks of the birth of a child that the child was born affected by substance abuse or experiencing withdrawal symptoms resulting from in utero drug exposure
- A diagnosis made by a health-care provider within 4 years following a child’s birth that the child has an illness, disease, or condition that, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, is attributable to maternal abuse of a controlled substance during pregnancy
- A diagnosis made by a health-care provider within 4 years following a child’s birth that the child has a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder attributable to in utero exposure to alcohol
-

When ‘reason to suspect’ is based upon this subsection, that fact shall be included in the report along with the facts relied upon by the person making the report.²³⁷

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your name in the report. Further, your identity will only be revealed if it is found that you have made a false report.²³⁸

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Virginia recognizes only the clergy-penitent privileges as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report. This privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.²³⁹

²³⁷ *Id.*

²³⁸ *Id.*, §63.2-1514.

²³⁹ *Id.*, §63.2-1509; 63.2-1519.



Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).



Washington Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Wash. Rev. Code §26.44.030

Who is required to make a report?

- Practitioners, county coroners, or medical examiners
- Law enforcement officers
- Professional school personnel
- Registered or licensed nurses, social service counselors, psychologists, or pharmacists
- Employees of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- Licensed or certified childcare providers or their employees
- Employees of the Department of Social and Health Services
- Juvenile probation officers
- Placement and liaison specialists, responsible living skills program staff, or HOPE center staff
- State family and children’s ombudsman or any volunteer in the ombudsman’s office
- Host home programs
- Persons who supervise employees or volunteers who train, educate, coach, or counsel children or have regular unsupervised access to children
- Department of Corrections personnel
- Any adult with whom a child resides
- Guardians ad litem and court-appointed special advocates
- The reporting requirement also applies to administrative and academic or athletic department employees, including student employees, of public and private institutions of higher education.

In addition to these specified professions, Washington law permits “any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²⁴⁰

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?

Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

Not addressed by the statute.

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A reporter has *reasonable cause* to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
- Any person, in his or her official supervisory capacity with a nonprofit or for-profit organization, has *reasonable cause* to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect caused by a person over whom he or she regularly exercises supervisory authority.
- Department of Corrections personnel observe offenders or the children with whom the offenders are in contact and, *as a result of these observations, have reasonable cause* to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
- Any adult has *reasonable cause* to believe that a child who resides with him or her has suffered severe abuse.²⁴¹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This

²⁴⁰ Wash. Rev. Code §26.44.030.

²⁴¹ *Id.*



discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

Though not explicitly required, the Department must make reasonable efforts to discover the identity of the reporter, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.²⁴²

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

No privileged communications may be used as the basis for a report unless the patient or client provides written waiver of the privilege.²⁴³

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁴² *Id.*

²⁴³ *Id.*, and at §26.44.060.



West Virginia Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report
West Virginia Ann. Code §49-2-803

Who is required to make a report?

- Medical, dental, or mental health professionals
- Christian Science practitioners or religious healers
- Teachers or other school personnel
- Social service, childcare, or foster care workers
- Emergency medical services personnel
- Peace officers, law enforcement officials, or humane officers
- Members of the clergy
- Circuit court judges, family court judges, employees of the Division of Juvenile Services, or magistrates
- Youth camp administrators, counselors, employees, coaches, or volunteers of entities that provide organized activities for children
- Commercial film or photographic print processors

In addition to these specified professions, Alaska law permits others to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²⁴⁴

**If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice?
Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?**

You may make a report to your superiors if you work at a hospital, school, or similar institution, but that does not relieve you of your duty to report to the relevant authorities.²⁴⁵

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

Any mandatory reporter who has *reasonable cause to suspect* that a child is neglected or abused or observes the child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse or sexual assault, shall report the circumstances to the Department of Health and Human Resources.

In any case where the reporter *believes* that the child suffered serious physical abuse or sexual abuse or sexual assault, the reporter shall also immediately report, or cause a report to be made, to the State police and any law enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the complaint.²⁴⁶

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it's important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

²⁴⁴ West Virginia Ann. Code §49-2-803 “Nothing in this article is intended to prevent individuals from reporting suspected abuse or neglect on their own behalf. In addition to those persons and officials specifically required to report situations involving suspected abuse or neglect of children, any other person **may** make a report if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected in a home or institution or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.”

²⁴⁵ *Id.*

²⁴⁶ *Id.*



Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall remain confidential.²⁴⁷

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

West Virginia recognizes only the attorney-client privilege as a legitimate basis for failing to make a report.²⁴⁸

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁴⁷ *Id.*, §49-5-101.

²⁴⁸ *Id.*, §49-2-811.



Wisconsin Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Wisc. Ann. Stat. §49.981

Who is required to make a report?

- Physicians, coroners, medical examiners, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, acupuncturists, other medical or mental health professionals, physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, dietitians, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, emergency medical technicians, or emergency medical services practitioners
- Schoolteachers, administrators, or counselors
- School employees not otherwise specified above
- Childcare workers in childcare centers, group homes, or residential care centers, or childcare providers
- Alcohol or other drug abuse counselors, marriage and family therapists, professional counselors, or members of the treatment staff employed by or working under contract with a county department or a residential care center for children and youth
- Social workers, public assistance workers (including financial and employment planners), emergency medical responders, police or law enforcement officers, mediators, or court-appointed special advocates
- Members of the clergy or a religious order, including brothers, ministers, monks, nuns, priests, rabbis, or sisters

In addition to these specified professions, Wisconsin law permits “any person” to make a report of child abuse or neglect.²⁴⁹

If I’m a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

No person making a report in good faith may be discharged from employment, disciplined, or otherwise discriminated against in regard to employment or threatened with any such treatment for so doing.²⁵⁰

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A mandatory reporter is required to report when he or she has *reasonable cause to suspect* that a child seen by him or her in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected or when he or she has reason to believe that a child seen by him or her in the course of professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur.

A health-care provider shall report if he or she has *reason to suspect* any of the following regarding a child in the provider’s care:

- That sexual intercourse or sexual contact occurred or is likely to occur with a caregiver
- That the child suffered or suffers from a mental illness or mental deficiency that rendered or renders the child temporarily or permanently incapable of understanding or evaluating the consequences of his or her actions
- That the child, because of his or her age or immaturity, was or is incapable of understanding the nature or consequences of sexual intercourse or sexual contact

²⁴⁹ Wisc. Ann. Stat. §49.981: “Any person not specified above, including an attorney, who has reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected or who has reason to believe that a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur **may** report.”

²⁵⁰ *Id.*



- That the child was unconscious at the time of the act or for any other reason was physically unable to communicate unwillingness to engage in sexual intercourse or sexual contact
- That another participant in the sexual contact or sexual intercourse was or is exploiting the child
- That the provider has any reasonable doubt as to the voluntariness of the child’s participation in the sexual contact or sexual intercourse.²⁵¹

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)
- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it’s important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of “reasonable cause” as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

You are not specifically required to include your information, and any information you do include shall be withheld from the subject of the report.²⁵²

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

The clergy-penitent privilege applies as the only recognized privileged communication in Wisconsin. However, this privilege is limited only to penitential communications, and if clergy receives information outside their clerical capacity, they could be mandated to report.²⁵³

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁵¹ *Id.*

²⁵² *Id.*

²⁵³ *Id.*



Wyoming Mandatory Reporters: What to Know Before Making a Report

Wyo. Ann. Stat. §14-3-205

Who is required to make a report?

All persons.²⁵⁴

If I'm a mandatory reporter, do I have to make a separate report, or does telling my boss suffice? Will making a report or failing to make a report impact my job?

If your duty to report arises from your capacity as a staffer at “a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency,” you must make your report to the head of that institution, who is then also required to report to relevant authorities. This does not relieve you of your independent duty to report. You will not suffer adverse consequences as a result of your report.²⁵⁵

What standards am I expected to follow?

What the law says:

A report is required when any of the following apply:

- A **person knows or has reasonable cause to believe or suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected.
- A person **observes** any child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.
- Any physician, physician’s assistant, or nurse practitioner who examines a child and **finds reasonable cause** to believe the child is a victim of child abuse or neglect and has reasonable cause to believe that other children residing in the same home also may be a victim of child abuse or neglect shall report to law enforcement the results of the examination and facts supporting reasonable cause with respect to the other child or children.²⁵⁶

What this means for you as a mandatory reporter:

The operative statutory language directs you to follow a reasonableness standard—could a child objectively be at risk of abuse or neglect? However, conditions surrounding potential reports of child abuse are rarely objectively clear cut, and the statute invites heavy discretion from the reporter. This discretion, in turn, can have widely varying impacts on different groups, and so it’s important to try to standardize the criteria used in the reporting decision. The knowledge standard applies to the observations made by a layperson or the examination of a child by healthcare professionals, and requires more than a reasonable cause to believe a child is in danger and demands actual facts to substantiate the report.

What happens when I make a report?

Traditional reporter training suggests that making a report is the only way to prevent harm to a child or their family. Sometimes it feels like the “reasonable cause” standard’s broad sweep encourages overreporting—after all, you’re trying to prevent child suffering. But relying on a strategy of over-inclusivity can also harm the family, as a visit from state officials has far-reaching consequences, including:

- Family separation
- Suspended school attendance for impacted children
- Incarceration of parents with outstanding warrants
- Termination of state social services (including probation, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, among others)

²⁵⁴ Wyo. Ann. Stat. §14-3-205.

²⁵⁵ *Id.*, §14-3-205)(b).

²⁵⁶ *Id.*, §§ 14-3-205; 14-3-206.



- Social and emotional stress for children

While reports of abuse ought to be made with the best intentions of the family in mind, it's important to recognize the cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences in parenting and family standards as they apply to your own definitions of "reasonable cause" as you work through the decision to report.

Do I need to submit any personal information with my report? Will anyone outside the Department know I made a report?

The report must include any available photographs, videos, and x-rays with the identification of the person who created the evidence and the date the evidence was created.²⁵⁷ The statute does not address disclosure of this information.

Are any communications I have as an above-listed professional exempt from reporting?

Wyoming recognizes spousal, attorney-client, and clergy-penitent privilege as a valid ground for not making a report. Additionally, the statute recognizes privilege between a family violence and sexual assault advocate and victim.²⁵⁸

Is there anything I can do to mitigate the harmful effects of a report?

If you have to make a report, you can mitigate the harm by limiting your report to only the information that is required, you can disclose that you are reporting to the family and help the family prepare and respond, you can also include information that contextualizes the situation you are reporting (poverty, for example), or include information about the strengths of the family (including that they are benefiting from your relationship with them and you do not want reporting to undermine that).

²⁵⁷ *Id.*, § 14-3-206.

²⁵⁸ *Id.*, §14-3-210.