

WHEN

When do I report to the Coroner?

You must report the death of a resident to the coroner when :

- * The death is sudden, such as a resident that appeared in good health 1-2 days before their death;
- * The circumstances indicate the death was caused by unnatural or unlawful means, such as a fall;
- * The death occurs under suspicious circumstances;
- * The death is caused by any violence whatsoever;
- * An autopsy, post mortem or inquest is to be held;
- * The death results from unknown or obscure causes;
- * The death is caused by alleged rape or other sexual crimes;
- * The death is due to a contagious or suspected contagious disease, such as a sudden illness with a high fever or rash right before death;
- * The death apparently resulted from drowning, hanging, exposure; strangulation; starvation, alcoholism, suffocation or smothering; or
- * The death occurred within a year after a resident suffered burns or was in an accident.

[Chapter 68.50 RCW](#)



Remember:

If you are unsure whether a resident death should be reported: **REPORT!**

WHERE

DSHS:



Facility/Supported Living

Complaint Hotline: **1-800-562-6078**

Local Law Enforcement:



For emergencies: Call **911**

Contact your local police/sheriff department for non-emergent incidents.

Coroner/Medical Examiner

Find via county at:

<http://www.mrsc.org/countyprofiles/profilesmenu.aspx>



or refer to local phone directory.

DSHS Mandated Reporter Resources online:

<http://www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov/APS/training/training.htm>

*Prepared in cooperation by:
DSHS Residential Care Services
WA Assoc. of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs
WA Assoc. of Coroners*

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

AS A

MANDATED REPORTER

Helpful answers to important commonly asked questions...

WHO

IS A MANDATED REPORTER?

IS A VULNERABLE ADULT?

WHAT

DO I NEED TO REPORT?



WHEN

DO I REPORT?

Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment,
Financial Exploitation
Resident Death

WHERE

DO I FIND CONTACTS & RESOURCES?

Department of Social & Health Services
Local Law Enforcement
County Coroner

WHO

Who is a Mandated reporter?

- * A DSHS employee
- * A provider contracted to provide services to a DSHS client
- * A county coroner or medical examiner
- * An owner or employee of a boarding home, adult family home, nursing home, residential habilitation center, or soldiers' home
- * Any caregiver of vulnerable adults
- * A Social Worker
- * A health care provider covered by RCW 18.130, including physicians, nurses or EMS personnel
- * A Christian Science practitioner
- * An employee of a social service, welfare, mental health, adult day health, adult day care, home health, home care, or hospice agency
- * A Law Enforcement officer
- * Professional school personnel



Who is a Vulnerable Adult?

An adult who:

- * Is 60 years or older who cannot take care of him or herself
- * Has a developmental disability
- * Has a legal guardian
- * Lives in a facility (an adult family home, boarding home, nursing home, residential rehabilitation center, or soldiers' home)
- * Receives services from a licensed health, hospice or home care agency
- * Receives personal care or health services from an individual who is paid for providing the services

WHAT

What do I need to Report?

Abuse: An action (that is not an accident) that injures, intimidates, punishes, or unreasonably confines a vulnerable adult. Abuse can be physical, mental, sexual, or coercive

Possible signs of abuse:

- * Unexplained injuries, bruises
- * Fear, withdrawal or agitation



Abandonment: A person with a responsibility for a vulnerable adult leaves him or her without a way to obtain basic life necessities.

Possible signs of abandonment:

- * A vulnerable adult is left alone in the home
- * A vulnerable adult calls for aid or help

Neglect: A person with a responsibility for a vulnerable adult fails to provide necessary goods or services, fails to prevent physical or mental harm or puts the vulnerable adult in danger.

Self-neglect: The failure of a vulnerable adult (not living in a facility) to provide for his or her own health and safety.

Possible signs of neglect or self-neglect:

- * Sudden decline in physical health, such as weight loss or skin ulcers
- * Untreated injuries or illness

Financial Exploitation: The illegal or improper use of the property, income, resources, or trust funds of the vulnerable adult

Possible signs of financial exploitation:

- * Disappearance of property/possessions
- * Sudden change in a will or a transfer of assets

WHEN

When do I report to DSHS?

If you are a mandated reporter and have reasonable cause to believe **abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation** or **neglect** has occurred to a vulnerable adult you must immediately report to the department.

**Call the DSHS Hotline
1-800-562-6078**

When do I report to Law Enforcement?

You must report to **both DSHS and Law Enforcement** if you witness or suspect any of the following:

- * Physical assault;
- * Sexual abuse; or
- * An incident of physical assault between vulnerable adults which causes more than minor bodily injury.

Incidents between vulnerable adults: If a physical assault between vulnerable adults results in *minor* bodily injury (not requiring more than basic first aid) it must be reported to DSHS. It does not have to be reported to law enforcement *unless*:

- * The injury is on the back, face, head, neck, chest, breasts, groin, inner thigh, buttock, genital or anal areas;
- * A bone has been fractured;
- * The incident involved attempted choking; or
- * There is a pattern of assault between the vulnerable adults.

[RCW 74.34.035](#)

Remember:

You do not need **proof** to report.

If you *suspect* any **criminal mistreatment** or **criminal negligence** of a vulnerable adult has occurred you may also report to law enforcement.