

Adult Abuse

311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the investigation and reporting of suspected abuse of certain adults who may be more vulnerable than others. This policy also addresses mandatory notification for Colorado State University Police Department members as required by law.

311.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Adult abuse - Any offense or attempted offense involving violence or neglect of an adult victim when committed by a person responsible for the adult's care, or any other act that would mandate reporting or notification to a human service agency or law enforcement.

311.2 POLICY

The Colorado State University Police Department will investigate all reported incidents of alleged adult abuse and ensure proper reporting and notification as required by law.

311.3 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

Members of the Colorado State University Police Department should notify the county department of human or social services when the member (CRS § 26-3.1-102):

- (a) Observes the mistreatment or self-neglect of an at-risk adult.
- (b) Has reasonable cause to believe that an at-risk adult has been mistreated or is self-neglecting.
- (c) Has reasonable cause to believe that an at-risk adult is in imminent risk of mistreatment or self-neglect.

Cross reporting to social services is mandatory for at-risk adults who have an intellectual and developmental disability or are seventy years of age or older (CRS § 18-6.5-102; CRS § 18-6.5-108).

For purposes of notification, mistreatment includes abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any act by a person with a relationship to the at-risk adult even when it does not rise to the level of abuse, caretaker neglect, or exploitation but causes harm to the health, safety, or welfare of an at-risk adult (CRS § 26-3.1-101).

Notification is not required for someone who was merely present when a qualified person self-administered a prescribed medical aid-in-dying medication (CRS § 25-48-116).

311.3.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification should occur as follows (CRS § 26-3.1-102; CRS § 18-6.5-108):

- (a) Notification should occur as soon as practicable.

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- (b) Written report should be forwarded within 24 hours.
- (c) The report should contain the following, if known:
 - 1. The name, address, and age of the adult victim.
 - 2. The name and address of the adult's caretaker, if any.
 - 3. The nature and extent of any injuries.
 - 4. The nature and extent of the condition that may reasonably result in abuse.

311.4 QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS

Qualified investigators should be available to investigate cases of adult abuse. These investigators should:

- (a) Conduct interviews in appropriate interview facilities.
- (b) Be familiar with forensic interview techniques specific to adult abuse investigations.
- (c) Present all cases of alleged adult abuse to the prosecutor for review.
- (d) Coordinate with other enforcement agencies, social service agencies and facility administrators as needed.
- (e) Provide referrals to therapy services, victim advocates, guardians and support for the victim and family as appropriate.
- (f) Participate in or coordinate with multidisciplinary investigative teams as applicable (CRS § 26-3.1-103).

311.5 INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTING

All reported or suspected cases of adult abuse require investigation and a report, even if the allegations appear unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Investigations and reports related to suspected cases of adult abuse should address, as applicable:

- (a) The overall basis for the contact. This should be done by the investigating officer in all circumstances where a suspected adult abuse victim is contacted.
- (b) Any relevant statements the victim may have made and to whom he/she made the statements.
- (c) If a person is taken into protective custody, the reasons, the name and title of the person making the decision, and why other alternatives were not appropriate.
- (d) Documentation of any visible injuries or any injuries identified by the victim. This should include photographs of such injuries, if practicable.
- (e) Whether the victim was transported for medical treatment or a medical examination.
- (f) Whether the victim identified a household member as the alleged perpetrator, and a list of the names of any other potential victims or witnesses who may reside in the residence.

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- (g) Identification of any prior related reports or allegations of abuse, including other jurisdictions, as reasonably known.
- (h) Previous addresses of the victim and suspect.
- (i) Other potential witnesses who have not yet been interviewed, such as relatives or others close to the victim's environment.
- (j) Whether a death involved the Colorado End-of-Life Options Act (CRS § 25-48-119):
 - (a) Whether an individual knowingly or intentionally forged or altered a request for medical aid-in-dying medication to end an individual's life without the individual's authorization.
 - (b) Whether an individual knowingly or intentionally concealed or destroyed a rescission of a request for medical aid-in-dying medication.
 - (c) Whether an individual knowingly or intentionally coerced or exerted undue influence on a person with a terminal illness to request medical aid-in-dying medication or to destroy a rescission of a request for such medication.

An ombudsman should be called to the scene if the abuse occurred in a long-term care facility (CRS § 26-11.5-101 et seq.).

Any unexplained death of an adult who was in the care of a guardian or caretaker should be considered as potential adult abuse and investigated similarly.

311.6 PROTECTIVE CUSTODY

Before taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody when facts indicate the adult may not be able to care for him/herself, the officer should make reasonable attempts to contact the county department of human or social services. Generally, removal of an adult abuse victim from his/her family, guardian, or other responsible adult should be left to the welfare authorities when they are present or have become involved in an investigation.

Generally, members of this department should remove an adult abuse victim from his/her family or guardian without a court order only when no other effective alternative is reasonably available and immediate action reasonably appears necessary to protect the victim. Prior to taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody, the officer should take reasonable steps to deliver the adult to another qualified legal guardian, unless it reasonably appears that the release would endanger the victim or result in abduction. If this is not a reasonable option, the officer shall ensure that the adult is delivered to the county department of human or social services.

Whenever practicable, the officer should inform a supervisor of the circumstances prior to taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody. If prior notification is not practicable, officers should contact a supervisor promptly after taking the adult into protective custody.

When adult abuse victims are under state control or have a state-appointed guardian or there are other legal holdings for guardianship, it may be necessary or reasonable to seek a court order on behalf of the adult victim to either remove the adult from a dangerous environment (protective custody) or restrain a person from contact with the adult.

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311.7 INTERVIEWS

311.7.1 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS

Absent extenuating circumstances or impracticality, officers should audio record the preliminary interview with a suspected adult abuse victim. Officers should avoid multiple interviews with the victim and should attempt to gather only the information necessary to begin an investigation. When practical, investigating officers should defer interviews until a person who is specially trained in such interviews is available.

311.7.2 DETAINING VICTIMS FOR INTERVIEWS

An officer should not detain an adult involuntarily who is suspected of being a victim of abuse solely for the purpose of an interview or physical exam without his/her consent or the consent of a guardian unless one of the following applies:

- (a) Exigent circumstances exist, such as:
 1. A reasonable belief that medical issues of the adult need to be addressed immediately.
 2. A reasonable belief that the adult is or will be in danger of harm if the interview or physical exam is not immediately completed.
 3. The alleged offender is a family member or guardian and there is reason to believe the adult may be in continued danger.
- (b) A court order or warrant has been issued.

311.8 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

When an adult abuse investigation requires a medical examination, the investigating officer should obtain consent for such examination from the victim, his/her guardian, or the agency or entity having legal custody of the adult. The officer should also arrange for the adult's transportation to the appropriate medical facility.

In cases where the alleged offender is a family member, guardian, or agency or entity having legal custody and is refusing to give consent for the medical examination, officers should notify a supervisor before proceeding. If exigent circumstances do not exist or if state law does not provide for officers to take the adult for a medical examination, the supervisor should consider other government agencies or services that may obtain a court order for such an examination.

311.9 DRUG-ENDANGERED VICTIMS

A coordinated response by law enforcement and social services agencies is appropriate to meet the immediate and longer-term medical and safety needs of an adult abuse victim who has been exposed to the manufacturing, trafficking or use of narcotics.

311.9.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Investigations supervisor should:

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- (a) Work with professionals from the appropriate agencies, including the county department of human or social services, other law enforcement agencies, medical service providers, and local prosecutors, to develop community-specific procedures for responding to situations where there are adult abuse victims endangered by exposure to methamphetamine labs or the manufacture and trafficking of other drugs.
- (b) Activate any available interagency response when an officer notifies the Investigations supervisor that he/she has responded to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where an adult abuse victim is present or where evidence indicates that an adult abuse victim lives at the scene.
- (c) Develop a report format or checklist for use when officers respond to drug labs or other narcotics crime scenes. The checklist will help officers document the environmental, medical, social, and other conditions that may affect the adult.

311.9.2 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Officers responding to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where an adult abuse victim is present or where there is evidence that an adult abuse victim lives should:

- (a) Document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions of the adult, using photography as appropriate and the checklist or form developed for this purpose.
- (b) Notify the Investigations supervisor so an interagency response can begin.

311.10 STATE MANDATES AND OTHER RELEVANT LAWS

Colorado requires or permits the following:

311.10.1 RECORDS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Records Division is responsible for (CRS § 26-3.1-102; CRS § 18-6.5-108):

- (a) Providing a copy of the adult abuse report to social services as required by law.
- (b) Retaining the original adult abuse report with the initial case file.

311.10.2 RELEASE OF REPORTS

Information related to incidents of adult abuse or suspected adult abuse shall be confidential and may only be disclosed pursuant to state law and the Records Maintenance and Release Policy (CRS § 26-3.1-102).

311.11 TRAINING

The Department shall provide training on best practices in adult abuse investigations to members tasked with investigating these cases (CRS § 24-31-313; CRS § 26-3.1-106). The training should include:

- (a) Participating in multidisciplinary investigations, as appropriate.
- (b) Conducting interviews.
- (c) Availability of therapy services for adults and families.
- (d) Availability of specialized forensic medical exams.

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- (e) Cultural competence (including interpretive services) related to adult abuse investigations.
- (f) Availability of victim advocates or other support.