
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Purpose of the Child Abuse Reporting Law

The purpose of the law is to protect children who have been non-accidentally injured, sexually exploited, or deprived of the right to minimal nurture, health, and safety by their parents, custodian, or guardian.

Who must report child abuse or neglect?

By law, mandated reporters are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to CPS or to the appropriate law enforcement agency. It is the law's intent that these designated persons, who are in positions to identify children who are at risk from abuse and neglect, will report suspected child abuse and neglect so that the need for protective services can be assessed.

Academic, administrative, and athletic employees, including student employees, must make a report directly to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). These reports must be made at the first opportunity and never later than 48 hours after having reasonable cause to believe a child suffered abuse or neglect. Any other employee, who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, must report such abuse or neglect immediately to the University Police.

Exception: The reporting requirement does not apply to the discovery of abuse or neglect that occurred during childhood if it is discovered after the child has become an adult. However, if there is reasonable cause to believe other children are or may be at risk of abuse or neglect by the accused, the reporting requirement does apply.

What are the definitions I should know?

- a) Child: Under the law, anyone under age 18 is a child.
- b) Abuse: Sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by anyone under circumstances that cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety; or, the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or who provides care to the child. (RCW 26.44.020)
- c) Negligent treatment or maltreatment is further defined as "an act or a failure to act, or cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction, that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety.

When should I report?

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, the report must be made at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than 48 hours. The report must include the identity of the accused, if known.

Where can I get more information?

The University Police receives reports and provides guidance on employees' reporting obligations. Contact 359-6310 for assistance.

Where to Report:

Spokane DCFS: (509) 363-3550; Toll Free: 1-800-557-9671; After hours: 1-800-562-5629

Child Abuse and Neglect hotline, 24-hour 7-day a week hotline: 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276)

Campus Police: 509- 359-6300

Cheney Police: 509-535-9233

In an emergency, call 911.

What information will I be asked to provide?

The name, address, and age of the child and parent(s) or guardians,

The nature and extent of the child abuse or neglect,

Any information about previous incidences of abuse or neglect,

Whether the mother or father is of Indian ancestry.

Must I give my name?

As a mandated reporter, you are required by law to report. When you give your name, it will be documented that you have met your legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Can I be sued for making a report?

Any person who in good faith makes a report or gives testimony in regard to possible child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability.

What if I do not report?

For a mandated reporter to knowingly fail to make a report, or cause a report to be made, is a gross misdemeanor.