

## How to report...

If you suspect abuse of a person who is elderly or disabled, you are required by law to report it.

Contact law enforcement AND the appropriate abuse reporting agency

If the person lives in a residence or a state-managed facility:

Call the Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide at: **1-800-252-5400**

For non-emergencies: make a report through the secure web site and receive a response within 24 hours at: **www.txabusehotline.org**

If the person lives in a licensed home or other institution:

Contact the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) at: **1-800-458-9858**

Report instances of fraud (home equity fraud, telemarketing fraud, mail fraud, health fraud) to the Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division at: **1-800-621-0508**.

## What is Guardianship?

Guardianship is a legal process used to protect adults who are incapacitated, as defined by the Texas Probate Code. A guardian is a court-appointed person or entity (such as a state agency) that makes decisions on behalf of an incapacitated person.

If you have questions about the role of a guardian or how to become a guardian for someone you know, contact the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services at 512-438-3739.

## Who can help?

The Victim Services Unit within the Travis County Sheriff's Office can provide assistance with information about your case status, Crime Victims' Rights, Crime Victim Compensation, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to appropriate helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.



## Resources

### Adult Protective Services

(512) 834-3195 -Travis County Office  
[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adult\\_Protection](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adult_Protection)

### Texas Dept of Aging and Disability Services

(512) 438-3011  
[www.dads.state.tx.us](http://www.dads.state.tx.us)

### Area Agency on Aging of The Capital Area

1 (888) 622-9111 or (512) 916-6062  
[www.aaacap.org](http://www.aaacap.org)

### Family Eldercare

(512) 450-0844  
[www.familyeldercare.org](http://www.familyeldercare.org)

### Office of the Attorney General Crime Victims Compensation

1 (800) 983-9933  
[www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov)

## Crimes Against Elderly and Disabled Persons

### Victim Services Unit

5555 Airport Blvd  
Austin, TX 78751  
512-854-9709



Name/ID Number:

Direct Number:

Mailing Address:

PO Box 1748  
Austin, TX 78767

## Crimes Against Elderly and Dependent Adults

Elderly and disabled persons are vulnerable to becoming victims of crime because they are often dependent on others for their care.

Elder and dependent adult abuse is defined as the mistreatment or neglect of an elderly person or disabled adult. These abuse victims include adults 65 years of age and over and dependent adults 18 to 64 years of age who are physically, developmentally, or cognitively disabled.

Both the Texas Penal Code and the Human Resource Code address the criminal and civil investigations of these types of crime and mistreatment.

Examples of crimes against elderly and disabled adults include:

- Injury to an Elderly or Disabled Person: intentionally or recklessly causing bodily injury, serious mental deficiency, or impairment to the person.
- Sexual Assault, Aggravated Sexual Assault, Attempted Sexual Assault
- Financial Crimes: Theft, Forgery, Fraudulent use of ID, Securing Execution of Document by Deception, Credit or Debit Card Abuse, Fraudulent Transfer of Motor Vehicle

## Adult Maltreatment

As is the case with children, maltreatment of elderly and dependent adults is not always a *criminal* offense, but is nevertheless serious and potentially deadly. The warning signs of adult maltreatment include individual physical and behavioral signs as well as signs from caregivers and signs of financial abuse.

## Warning Signs

The following descriptions are not necessarily proof of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, but they may be clues that a problem exists.

### Physical Signs

- Injury that has not been cared for properly
- Injury that is inconsistent with explanation for its cause
- Pain from touching
- Cuts, puncture wounds, burns, bruises, welts
- Dehydration or malnutrition without illness-related cause
- Poor coloration
- Sunken eyes or cheeks
- Inappropriate administration of medication
- Soiled clothing or bed
- Frequent use of various hospitals or health care providers (doctor-shopping)
- Lack of basic necessities such as food, water, or utilities
- Lack of personal effects/items, or pleasant living environment
- Forced isolation

### Behavioral Signs

- Fear
- Anxiety, agitation
- Anger
- Isolation, withdrawal
- Depression
- Non-responsiveness, resignation, ambivalence
- Contradictory statements, implausible stories
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Confusion or disorientation

### Signs by Caregiver

- Prevents elder from speaking to or seeing visitors
- Anger, indifference, aggressive behavior toward elder
- History of substance abuse, mental illness, criminal behavior, or family violence
- Lack of affection toward elder
- Flirtation or coyness as possible indicator of inappropriate sexual relationship
- Conflicting accounts of incidents
- Withholds affection
- Talks of elder as a burden

### Signs of Financial Abuse

- Sudden changes in financial accounts or banking practices.
- Unexplained withdrawal of money by a person accompanying the victim.
- Adding additional names on accounts or bank signature cards.
- Unapproved withdrawal of funds using an ATM card.
- Sudden changes in a will or other financial documents.
- Unexplained missing funds or valuables.
- Providing substandard care.
- Unpaid bills despite having enough money.
- Forged signature for financial transactions or for the titles of property.
- Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a person's affairs and possessions.
- Unexplained sudden transfer of assets.
- Providing unnecessary services.
- A complaint of financial exploitation.