

# Reporting Abuse and Neglect: What you need to know

Unsure?  
Call us

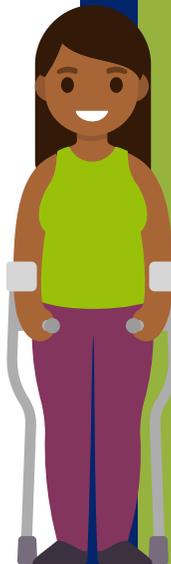
Adult Protective Services relies on **YOU** to be our eyes and ears in the community and to let us know when an adult in need of our help is being abused, neglected or exploited.

## When you make a report, APS will evaluate the report to determine:

- 1 Does the adult meet the definition of an at-risk adult; age 60 or older or adult with a disability?
- 2 Does the individual live in Montana?
- 3 Does the harm meet the definition of adult maltreatment?

### Definition of Vulnerable Adult

-  A person who is 18 or older AND
-  Has a physical, mental or intellectual Disability that puts them at risk AND
-  Is unable to protect him/herself from abuse, neglect and exploitation
-  Non-disabled battered men and women do NOT meet the definition.
-  Crime victims, not targeted based on their vulnerability, do NOT meet the definition.



### Definitions of Adult Maltreatment

-  **Physical Abuse:**  
e.g. Hitting, Kicking, Burning, Restraining, Overmedicating, etc.
-  **Caregiver Neglect:**  
Failure to provide the care a reasonable person would provide.
-  **Self Neglect:**  
Failing to care for oneself due to inability, not lifestyle choice.
-  **Mental Suffering:**  
e.g. Demeaning, Threatening, Yelling, etc.
-  **Financial Exploitation:**  
e.g. Stealing, Scamming, ID Theft, etc.
-  **Sexual Abuse :**  
e.g. Ranges from unwelcome touching to rape

### Jurisdiction

-  The Individual must live in Montana and the Adult maltreatment must have occurred in Montana.



## What APS Does Next



Addresses Emergency Needs 

Investigates Allegations 

Develops a Service Plan 

The APS investigator will determine whether there are emergency needs and, if the individual agrees, will address those needs.

The APS investigator will talk to the alleged victim, other people who might have seen the maltreatment or know more about the situation, and the alleged perpetrator.

The APS investigator will develop a service plan, with the input of the adult, and then connect the individual with available community services to prevent further abuse, neglect or exploitation.



# Signs of Abuse

## What you may observe



### Self Neglect:

- Isn't going to the doctor
- Isn't taking medication as needed
- Doesn't have food/ running water
- Has poor personal hygiene
- Lacks/won't allow needed care
- Wears inappropriate clothing for weather
- Lacks assistive devices (e.g. hearing aids, glasses, walker)
- Home is dirty or unsafe
- Hoarding of objects or animals
- Lacks social/emotional support

If the individual understands the risks but **CHOOSES** not to provide self-care, APS cannot intervene.



### Caregiver Neglect:

Includes the same situations as listed for self neglect **EXCEPT** there is a person who has taken on the responsibility for providing care is failing to do so. It also includes:

Living with or being related to a at-risk adult does not make a person responsible for providing care.

- Failing to provide needed supervision
- Abandonment



### Physical Abuse:

- Bruising
- Injuries about the head and face
- Strangulation
- Fractures
- Burns
- Bed sores
- Over or under medicating the victim
- Force feeding
- Use of restraints



### Mental Suffering (Emotional or Psychological Abuse):

Involves creating emotional pain, distress or anguish using threats, intimidation or humiliation.

- Insults
- Yelling or threats of harm
- Isolation,
- Throwing objects or glaring to project fear and/or intimidation.



### Financial Exploitation:

- Unusual financial activity (e.g. large bank withdrawal or use of ATMs or credit cards not normally used.)
- Missing checks or missing bank statements/records.
- Address or names have been changed on accounts.
- Lack of creature comforts that the individual can afford (e.g. no TV, unpaid utilities).
- Home, healthcare and/or personal care has recently deteriorated.
- Individual is unaware or doesn't understand his/her current financial situation (e.g. thinks he owns a home but doesn't)
- Purchases made without the Individual's knowledge or consent.
- Newly authorized signatures on accounts or forged signatures
- Evidence that the person fell victim to a scam.
- Missing belongings
- Implausible explanations of expenditures
- The person who has control of the individual's money won't spend it on the individual's needs or spends it on themselves.
- New "best friend" has access to the individual's money.



### Sexual Abuse :

- Physical signs (e.g. genital, anal, throat, oral, breast injuries, bruising, bite marks, and sexually transmitted diseases).
- Psycho-social symptoms (e.g. anxiety, agitation, PTSD, attempts to flee, fear, and depression )
- Disclosures and hints
- Eye-witness reports
- Suspicious behavior by alleged abuser, including isolating the individual from others.



Not sure if what you observe is abuse? Call APS and let us figure it out.

## Common Misconceptions Debunked

# APS DOES NOT



-  Force adults to accept help or even participate in the investigation.
-  Have services. We connect individuals to available community services.
-  Have emergency shelter or facility beds in most areas.
-  Force individuals to leave their home or place them in a facility.
-  Control whether or not law enforcement opens an investigation.
-  Fix dysfunctional family dynamics. We don't provide long-term family counseling.

## How to make a report

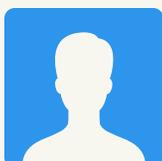
Call **844-277-9300**

or go to <https://www.aps.mt.gov>



Be prepared to provide:

-  The person's **name** and identifying information like age or date of birth
-  The person's **address** and living situation
-  Why the person is **vulnerable to abuse**
-  The **alleged abuser** and their identifying information
-  **People** in individual's life (People who live with or support the victim)
-  A **description of the abusive/ neglectful situation** including (if known):
  -  **Dates** of incidents
  -  **Witnesses** to the abuse
  -  **Specifics** of the abuse such as injuries suffered or amounts stolen.
-  **Your name** and contact information



You have the option of **REPORTING ANONYMOUSLY** but it's very helpful if we can call you if we need more information.

## Confidentiality

*It's the law!*



Just as your doctor cannot tell anyone about your symptoms, your diagnosis or your treatment without a release of information because of HIPPA, APS staff can not tell you whether they opened an investigation, the results of that investigation or whether the adult accepted or refused services because of confidentiality regulations.

# Thank you!



It takes all of us to keep our community safe.  
We appreciate you doing your part!



[www.aps.mt.gov](http://www.aps.mt.gov)