

MANDATORY REPORTING Information Sheet for Missouri:

Who is required to report?:

In Missouri ministers and other “persons with responsibility for the care of children” are mandatory reporters by law. Our polity extends that requirement to include all elders and deacons.

The exception (by polity and the law) involves “privileged communication” made in your official capacity as an officer of the church. However, if an officer “reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse” the privilege does not apply.

When are officers required to report?:

An officer is required to report when the officer (minister, elder, or deacon) has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or adult who lacks mental capacity has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect. Reasonable cause to suspect means a standard of reasonable suspicion, rather than conclusive proof.

An officer is required to report when the officer observes a child, or adult who lacks mental capacity, being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

Abuse is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child’s care, custody, and control.

Neglect is failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care as necessary for the child’s well-being.

To whom do officers report in Missouri?:

Call the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children’s Division Hotline at 1-800-392-3738. It is staffed 24 hours a day seven days a week. The operator will require the name of the child, the name of the parent(s), the name of the alleged abuser, and where the child can be located. You will also be asked if the child is in a life threatening situation now, how you know about the abuse/neglect, if you witnessed the abuse/neglect, and if there were other witnesses and how to contact them.

In addition, our *Constitution* requires reporting to ecclesiastical legal authorities. Ministers should contact the Stated Clerk of the presbytery, Terry Epling at 314-772-2395 or at home at 314-984-8965. Elders and Deacons should contact their pastor or moderator, who may in turn notify the Stated Clerk. If the suspected abuser is the pastor or moderator, elders and deacons should contact the Stated Clerk of presbytery.

What if I'm not sure it's abuse or neglect?:

You can call the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division office in your area. The number will be in the telephone book and is available from directory assistance. You can discuss your concerns anonymously and get advice about whether you should call the hotline. They can also advise you about how to help a family in crisis, which may prevent future abuse.

Other phone numbers you should have:

Parental Stress Helpline	1-800-367-2543
Missouri School Violence Hotline	1-800-748-7047
Food Stamp Hunger-Line	1-800-392-1261 (8-5, M-F)
Aging Information and Referral	1-800-235-5503
Elderly Abuse/Neglect Hotline	1-800-392-0210
State Ombudsman Program	1-800309-3282

The Constitutional Provisions:

G-6.0204 was amended by adding an "a" to the existing text and adding a new section "b" as follows:

"b. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-6.0204a; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse."

G-6.0304 was amended by adding an "a." to the existing text and adding a new section "b." as follows:

"b. An elder shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge, gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse."

G-6.0402 was amended by adding an "a." to the existing text and adding a new section "b." as follows:

"b. A deacon shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge, gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse."

MANDATORY REPORTING

Information Sheet for Illinois:

Who is required to report?:

In Illinois ministers with “reasonable cause to believe that a child known to him or her in a professional capacity may be an abused child” are mandatory reporters by law. Our polity extends that requirement to include all elders and deacons.

In Illinois “privileged communication” made in your official capacity as an officer of the church is not grounds for failure to report. Mandatory reporters may have to testify regarding any reported incident. However, state law protects the identity of mandated reporters and provides immunity from legal liability as a result of report made in good faith.

When are officers required to report?:

An officer is required to report when the officer (minister, elder, or deacon) has reasonable cause to believe that a child, or adult who lacks mental capacity, has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect. Reasonable cause to believe means a standard of reasonable suspicion, rather than conclusive proof.

An officer is required to report when the officer observes a child, or adult who lacks mental capacity, being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

Physical Abuse occurs when a parent or a person responsible for a child’s welfare: inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury, by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss of impairment of any bodily function; creates a substantial risk of physical injury; deliberately and/or systematically inflicts cruel or unusual treatment which results in physical or mental suffering (acts of torture); inflicts excessive corporal punishment; commits the offense of female genital mutilation; or causes to be sold, transferred, distributed, or given to such child a controlled substance, except when prescribed by a physician.

Neglect occurs with a person responsible for a child deprives or fails to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or needed medical treatment.