



Vulnerable Adult Abuse First Responder Quick Reference Card

What is a “vulnerable adult”?

An adult who is eighteen (18) years of age or older and, because of mental or physical dysfunction or advanced age is unable to manage their own resources, care for or protect themselves from neglect, hazardous, or abusive situations without assistance from others. (TCA 39-15-501)

What is an “elderly adult”?

An individual over the age of 70 regardless of physical or mental condition. (TCA 39-15-501)

Physical Abuse Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruises• Fractures• Open Wounds• Restraints	Neglect Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentional• Hazardous• Malnourished• Adult Abandoned• Meds & Treatment
Emotional Abuse Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intimidation• Humiliation• Isolated	Sexual Abuse Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Injuries• Clothing• Coercion/Force
Financial Exploitation Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theft• Recent Changes• Bank Account Access• Document Changes	Self-Neglect Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolated• Recent Hospitalization• Poor Hygiene

Criminal Statutes:

TCA 39-15-507 Neglect of an Elderly or Vulnerable Adult

It is a crime to knowingly neglect an elderly or vulnerable adult, so as to adversely affect the person’s health or welfare. Neglect of an *elderly* adult is a Class E Felony. Neglect of a *vulnerable* adult is a Class D Felony.

TCA 39-15-510 Abuse of an Elderly or Vulnerable Adult

It is a crime to knowingly abuse an elderly or vulnerable adult. Abuse of an *elderly* adult is a Class E Felony. Abuse of a *vulnerable* adult is a Class D Felony.

TCA 39-15-512 Sexual Exploitation of an Elderly or Vulnerable Adult

It is a crime to knowingly sexually exploit an elderly or vulnerable adult. Any violation under this statute is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Agencies that provide assistance to vulnerable/elderly adult abuse victims:

Dept. of Human Services, Adult Protective Services (DHS/APS)

1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366)

APS investigates reports of abuse and neglect by a caregiver, financial exploitation of government funds by a caregiver, self-neglect and sexual assault. APS also helps adults 18 years of age or older who, because of a mental or physical impairment or advanced age, are unable to care for themselves.

Department of Health (TDH)

1-877-287-0010

Centralized Facility Complaint Intake Unit

TDH investigates all health care facilities and health care professionals that are licensed in Tennessee. Investigations can require up to 100 days to complete. TDH also maintains the Adult Abuse Registry.

Dept. of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (DIDD)

1-888-633-1313

DIDD Reportable Event Management Investigations Unit conducts administrative investigations into allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, unexplained or unexpected deaths, and serious injuries for persons receiving assistance through TennCare’s waiver programs supporting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)

East TN: 1-866-777-1250

Middle TN: 1-866-797-9470

West TN: 1-866-344-0858

TDMHSAS Investigates reports for those with substance abuse and/or mental health diagnosis or potential diagnosis, and residing in, or being served by a TDMHSAS licensed facility. Investigations are strived to be completed within 60 days of the first report.

TBI Medicaid Fraud Control Division

1-800-433-5454

The Medicaid Fraud Control Division investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults who are patients in a TennCare-funded facility or Board and Care Facility.

Per **TCA 39-15-509**, any person having reasonable suspicion that an elderly or vulnerable adult is suffering or has suffered abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, or financial exploitation shall report such neglect or financial exploitation to Adult Protective Services. Any person who fails to make reasonable efforts to make a report commits a **Class A misdemeanor**.

Complete definitions for the criminal statutes listed can be found under TCA 39-15-501