

ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility:

According to the PCUSA **Book of Order**, G-4.0302:

“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry [teaching elders, ruling elders and deacons G-2.0102] and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, 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-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.” (“Privileged communication” is not defined in the Book of Order.)



Reportable Conditions:

Physical or sexual abuse or neglect of children and adults who are over 65
or dependent on someone else for their care because of physical, medical or mental limitations
Extreme corporal punishment resulting in injury
Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment
Child exploitation, child pornography and child prostitution
An adult’s self-neglect or inability to care for him or herself
Financial abuse of an adult
Potential suicide

When to Report Suspected Abuse:

According to California Penal Code 11166(c), a telephone report must be made immediately when the reporter observes abusive behavior or has knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child or adult has been abused. Reasonable suspicion includes hearing about the abuse from another person. A written report on the California reporting form must be sent within 36 hours after the telephone report has been made.

Who to Call:

Police Department	911 (or the police or sheriff’s department where the incident took place)
Children and Family Services	800-632-4615
Adult Protective Services	888-436-3600 (statewide)
Suicide Prevention	650-579-0350 (800-SUICIDE) (nationwide)
Presbytery of San Francisco	510-849-4393
(for advice re: domestic violence)CORA	800-300-1080

Individual Responsibility:

If the deacon or elder confers with a pastor and a decision is made that the pastor file the report, one report is sufficient. However, if the pastor disagrees, the individual with the original suspicion must report and give his or her name. Protective services are to keep the reporter’s name confidential, unless a court orders the information disclosed.

Immunity and Liability:

Any legally mandated reporter has immunity when making a report. In the event a civil suit is filed against the reporter, up to \$50,000 will be reimbursed for fees incurred in the suit (PC 11172).

However, legally mandated reporters can be criminally and civilly [liable for failure to report](#).

I understand that I am bound by the Book of Order to report reasonable concerns about the safety of a child, an adult over 64, or an adult who is dependent on another for his or her care. I have clarified any information listed above which I did not understand and am now aware of my reporting responsibilities, and am willing to comply.

Deacon or Elder’s name and date

Witness and date