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## Adult Abuse

### 313.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the investigation and reporting of suspected abuse of certain adults who may be more vulnerable than others. This policy also addresses mandatory notification for Palos Verdes Estates Police Department members as required by law.

#### 313.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Adult abuse** - Any offense or attempted offense involving violence or neglect of an adult victim when committed by a person responsible for the adult's care, or any other act that would mandate reporting or notification to a social service agency or law enforcement (Penal Code § 368).

### 313.2 POLICY

The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will investigate all reported incidents of alleged adult abuse and ensure proper reporting and notification as required by law.

### 313.3 INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTING

All reported or suspected cases of adult abuse require investigation and a report, even if the allegations appear unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Investigations and reports related to suspected cases of adult abuse should address, as applicable:

- (a) The overall basis for the contact. This should be done by the investigating officer in all circumstances where a suspected adult abuse victim is contacted.
- (b) Any relevant statements the victim may have made and to whom he/she made the statements.
- (c) If a person is taken into protective custody, the reasons, the name and title of the person making the decision, and why other alternatives were not appropriate.
- (d) Documentation of any visible injuries or any injuries identified by the victim. This should include photographs of such injuries, if practicable.
- (e) Whether the victim was transported for medical treatment or a medical examination.
- (f) Whether the victim identified a household member as the alleged perpetrator, and a list of the names of any other potential victims or witnesses who may reside in the residence.
- (g) Identification of any prior related reports or allegations of abuse, including other jurisdictions, as reasonably known.
- (h) Previous addresses of the victim and suspect.
- (i) Other potential witnesses who have not yet been interviewed, such as relatives or others close to the victim's environment.

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- (j) Results of investigations shall be provided to those agencies (Adult Protective Services (APS), long-term ombudsman) that referred or reported the adult abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15640(f)).
- (k) Whether a death involved the End of Life Option Act:
  1. Whether or not assistance was provided to the person beyond that allowed by law (Health and Safety Code § 443.14)
  2. Whether an individual knowingly altered or forged a request for an aid-in-dying drug to end a person's life without his/her authorization, or concealed or destroyed a withdrawal or rescission of a request for an aid-in-dying drug (Health and Safety Code § 443.17)
  3. Whether coercion or undue influence was exerted on the person to request or ingest an aid-in-dying drug or to destroy a withdrawal or rescission of a request for such medication (Health and Safety Code § 443.17)
  4. Whether an aid-in-dying drug was administered to a person without his/her knowledge or consent (Health and Safety Code § 443.17).

Any unexplained death of an adult who was in the care of a guardian or caretaker should be considered as potential adult abuse and investigated similarly.

### **313.4 QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS**

Qualified investigators should be available to investigate cases of adult abuse. These investigators should:

- (a) Conduct interviews in appropriate interview facilities.
- (b) Be familiar with forensic interview techniques specific to adult abuse investigations.
- (c) Present all cases of alleged adult abuse to the prosecutor for review.
- (d) Coordinate with other enforcement agencies, social service agencies and facility administrators as needed.
- (e) Provide referrals to therapy services, victim advocates, guardians and support for the victim and family as appropriate.
- (f) Participate in or coordinate with multidisciplinary investigative teams as applicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.55).

### **313.5 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION**

Members of the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department shall notify the local office of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) APS agency when they reasonably suspect, have observed, or have knowledge of an incident that reasonably appears to be abuse of an elder (age 65 or older) or dependent adult, or are told by an elder or dependent adult that he/she has experienced abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).

Notification shall be made by telephone as soon as practicable and a written report shall be provided within two working days as provided in Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)(c)).

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A dependent adult is an individual, regardless of whether the individual lives independently, between 18 and 64 years of age who has physical or mental limitations that restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities or to protect his/her rights, including but not limited to persons who have physical or developmental disabilities or whose physical or mental abilities have diminished because of age. This also includes those admitted as inpatients to a 24-hour health facility, as defined in state law (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.23).

For purposes of notification, abuse is physical abuse, abandonment, abduction, isolation, financial abuse, or neglect. Physical abuse includes any assault or sex crime (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.63). Financial abuse includes taking personal or real property by undue influence or intent to defraud (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.30).

Notification shall also be made to the following agencies as soon as practicable or as provided below (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630):

- (a) If the abuse is physical abuse and occurred in a long-term care facility (not a state mental health hospital or a state developmental center) notification shall be made as follows (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)(1)):
  - 1. If there is serious bodily injury, notification shall be made by telephone and, within two hours, a written report shall be made to the local ombudsman and the corresponding licensing agency.
  - 2. If there is physical abuse and no serious bodily injury, notification shall be made by telephone and, within 24 hours, a written report shall be made to the local ombudsman and the corresponding licensing agency.
  - 3. If the abuse is allegedly caused by a resident with dementia and there is no serious bodily injury, notification shall be made by telephone and a written report to the local ombudsman within 24 hours.
  - 4. When a report of abuse is received by the Department, local ombudsman shall be called to coordinate efforts to provide the most immediate and appropriate response (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
- (b) If the abuse is in a long-term care facility (not a state mental health or a state developmental center) and is other than physical abuse, a telephone report and a written report shall be made to the local ombudsman as soon as practicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
- (c) The California Department of Public Health (DPH) shall be notified of all known or suspected abuse in a long-term care facility.
- (d) The SDSS shall be notified of all known or suspected abuse occurring in a residential care facility for the elderly or in an adult day program.
- (e) If the abuse occurred in an adult day health care center, DPH and the California Department of Aging shall be notified.
- (f) The Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse shall be notified of all abuse that constitutes criminal activity in a long-term care facility.

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- (g) The District Attorney's office shall be notified of all cases of physical abuse and financial abuse in a long-term care facility.
- (h) If the abuse occurred at a state mental hospital or a state developmental center, notification shall be made to the designated investigators of the California Department of State Hospitals or the California Department of Developmental Services as soon as practicable but no later than two hours after law enforcement becomes aware of the abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
  - 1. When a report of abuse is received by the Department, Investigation efforts shall be coordinated with the designated investigators of the California Department of State Hospitals or the California Department of Developmental Services (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
- (i) If during an investigation it is determined that the adult abuse is being committed by a licensed health practitioner as identified in Welfare and Institutions Code 15640(b), the appropriate licensing agency shall be immediately notified (Welfare and Institutions Code 15640(b)).
- (j) When the Department receives a report of abuse, neglect or abandonment of an elder or dependent adult alleged to have occurred in a long-term care facility, the licensing agency shall be notified by telephone as soon as practicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15640(e)).

The Detective Bureau supervisor is responsible for ensuring that proper notifications have occurred to the District Attorney's Office and any other regulatory agency that may be applicable based upon where the abuse took place (e.g., care facility, hospital) per Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b).

Notification is not required for a person who was merely present when a person self-administered a prescribed aid-in-dying drug or a person prepared an aid-in-dying drug so long as the person did not assist the individual in ingesting the aid-in-dying drug (Health and Safety Code § 443.14; Health and Safety Code § 443.18).

#### 313.5.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification should include the following information, if known (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(e)):

- (a) The name of the person making the report.
- (b) The name and age of the elder or dependent adult.
- (c) The present location of the elder or dependent adult.
- (d) The names and addresses of family members or any other adult responsible for the care of the elder or dependent adult.
- (e) The nature and extent of the condition of the elder or dependent adult.
- (f) The date of incident.
- (g) Any other information, including information that led the person to suspect elder or dependent adult abuse.

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### **313.6 PROTECTIVE CUSTODY**

Before taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody when facts indicate the adult may not be able to care for him/herself, the officer should make reasonable attempts to contact APS. Generally, removal of an adult abuse victim from his/her family, guardian or other responsible adult should be left to the welfare authorities when they are present or have become involved in an investigation.

Generally, members of this department should remove an adult abuse victim from his/her family or guardian without a court order only when no other effective alternative is reasonably available and immediate action reasonably appears necessary to protect the victim. Prior to taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody, the officer should take reasonable steps to deliver the adult to another qualified legal guardian, unless it reasonably appears that the release would endanger the victim or result in abduction. If this is not a reasonable option, the officer shall ensure that the adult is delivered to APS.

Whenever practicable, the officer should inform a supervisor of the circumstances prior to taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody. If prior notification is not practicable, officers should contact a supervisor promptly after taking the adult into protective custody.

When adult abuse victims are under state control, have a state-appointed guardian or there are other legal holdings for guardianship, it may be necessary or reasonable to seek a court order on behalf of the adult victim to either remove the adult from a dangerous environment (protective custody) or restrain a person from contact with the adult.

#### **313.6.1 EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDERS**

In any situation which an officer reasonably believes that an elder or dependent adult is in immediate and present danger of abuse based on an allegation of a recent incident of abuse or threat of abuse (other than financial abuse alone), the officer may seek an emergency protective order against the person alleged to have committed or threatened such abuse (Family Code § 6250(d)).

### **313.7 DRUG-ENDANGERED VICTIMS**

A coordinated response by law enforcement and social services agencies is appropriate to meet the immediate and longer-term medical and safety needs of an adult abuse victim who has been exposed to the manufacturing, trafficking or use of narcotics.

#### **313.7.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Detective Bureau supervisor should:

- (a) Work with professionals from the appropriate agencies, including APS, other law enforcement agencies, medical service providers and local prosecutors, to develop community specific procedures for responding to situations where there are adult abuse victims endangered by exposure to methamphetamine labs or the manufacture and trafficking of other drugs.

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- (b) Activate any available interagency response when an officer notifies the Detective Bureau supervisor that he/she has responded to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where an adult abuse victim is present or where evidence indicates that an adult abuse victim lives.
- (c) Develop a report format or checklist for use when officers respond to drug labs or other narcotics crime scenes. The checklist will help officers document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions that may affect the adult.

### **313.7.2 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Officers responding to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where an adult abuse victim is present or where there is evidence that an adult abuse victim lives should:

- (a) Document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions of the adult, using photography as appropriate and the checklist or form developed for this purpose.
- (b) Notify the Detective Bureau supervisor so an interagency response can begin.

### **313.8 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

When an adult abuse investigation requires a medical examination, the investigating officer should obtain consent for such examination from the victim, guardian, agency or entity having legal custody of the adult. The officer should also arrange for the adult's transportation to the appropriate medical facility.

In cases where the alleged offender is a family member, guardian, agency or entity having legal custody and is refusing to give consent for the medical examination, officers should notify a supervisor before proceeding. If exigent circumstances do not exist or if state law does not provide for officers to take the adult for a medical examination, the supervisor should consider other government agencies or services that may obtain a court order for such an examination.

### **313.9 INTERVIEWS**

#### **313.9.1 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS**

Absent extenuating circumstances or impracticality, officers should audio record the preliminary interview with a suspected adult abuse victim. Officers should avoid multiple interviews with the victim and should attempt to gather only the information necessary to begin an investigation. When practicable, investigating officers should defer interviews until a person who is specially trained in such interviews is available.

#### **313.9.2 DETAINING VICTIMS FOR INTERVIEWS**

An officer should not detain an adult involuntarily who is suspected of being a victim of abuse solely for the purpose of an interview or physical exam without his/her consent or the consent of a guardian unless one of the following applies:

- (a) Exigent circumstances exist, such as:
  1. A reasonable belief that medical issues of the adult need to be addressed immediately.

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2. A reasonable belief that the adult is or will be in danger of harm if the interview or physical exam is not immediately completed.
  3. The alleged offender is a family member or guardian and there is reason to believe the adult may be in continued danger.
- (b) A court order or warrant has been issued.

### **313.10 STATE MANDATES AND OTHER RELEVANT LAWS**

California requires or permits the following:

#### **313.10.1 RECORDS CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Records Center is responsible for:

- (a) Providing a copy of the adult abuse report to the APS, ombudsman or other agency as applicable within two working days or as required by law (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630; Welfare and Institutions Code § 15640(c)).
- (b) Retaining the original adult abuse report with the initial case file.

### **313.11 TRAINING**

The Department should provide training on best practices in adult abuse investigations to members tasked with investigating these cases. The training should include:

- (a) Participating in multidisciplinary investigations, as appropriate.
- (b) Conducting interviews.
- (c) Availability of therapy services for adults and families.
- (d) Availability of specialized forensic medical exams.
- (e) Cultural competence (including interpretive services) related to adult abuse investigations.
- (f) Availability of victim advocates or other support.