

# Montana Code Annotated 2009

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**52-3-801. Short title.** This part may be cited as the "Montana Elder and Persons With Developmental Disabilities Abuse Prevention Act".

**52-3-802. Legislative findings and purpose.** The legislature finds that a need exists to provide for cooperation among law enforcement officials and agencies, courts, and state and county agencies providing human services in preventing the abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation of Montana's elderly persons and persons with developmental disabilities through the identification, reporting, and prosecution of acts of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

**52-3-803. Definitions.** As used in this part, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Abuse" means:

(a) the infliction of physical or mental injury; or  
(b) the deprivation of food, shelter, clothing, or services necessary to maintain the physical or mental health of an older person or a person with a developmental disability without lawful authority. A declaration made pursuant to [50-9-103](#) constitutes lawful authority.

(2) "Department" means the department of public health and human services provided for in [2-15-2201](#).

(3) "Exploitation" means:

(a) the unreasonable use of an older person or a person with a developmental disability or of a power of attorney, conservatorship, or guardianship with regard to an older person or a person with a developmental disability in order to obtain control of or to divert to the advantage of another the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of or interest in the person's money, assets, or property by means of deception, duress, menace, fraud, undue influence, or intimidation with the intent or result of permanently depriving the older person or person with a developmental disability of the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of or interest in the person's money, assets, or property;

(b) an act taken by a person who has the trust and confidence of an older person or a person with a developmental disability to obtain control of or to divert to the advantage of another the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of or interest in the person's money, assets, or property by means of deception, duress, menace, fraud, undue influence, or intimidation with the intent or result of permanently depriving the older person or person with a developmental disability of the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of or interest in the person's money, assets, or property;

(c) the unreasonable use of an older person or a person with a developmental disability or of a power of attorney, conservatorship, or guardianship with regard to an older person or a person

with a developmental disability done in the course of an offer or sale of insurance or securities in order to obtain control of or to divert to the advantage of another the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of the person's money, assets, or property by means of deception, duress, menace, fraud, undue influence, or intimidation with the intent or result of permanently depriving the older person or person with a developmental disability of the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of the person's money, assets, or property.

(4) "Incapacitated person" has the meaning given in [72-5-101](#).

(5) "Long-term care facility" means a facility defined in [50-5-101](#).

(6) "Mental injury" means an identifiable and substantial impairment of a person's intellectual or psychological functioning or well-being.

(7) "Neglect" means the failure of a person who has assumed legal responsibility or a contractual obligation for caring for an older person or a person with a developmental disability or who has voluntarily assumed responsibility for the person's care, including an employee of a public or private residential institution, facility, home, or agency, to provide food, shelter, clothing, or services necessary to maintain the physical or mental health of the older person or the person with a developmental disability.

(8) "Older person" means a person who is at least 60 years of age. For purposes of prosecution under [52-3-825](#)(2) or (3), the person 60 years of age or older must be unable to provide personal protection from abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or because of frailties or dependencies brought about by advanced age.

(9) "Person with a developmental disability" means a person 18 years of age or older who has a developmental disability, as defined in [53-20-102](#).

(10) "Physical injury" means death, permanent or temporary disfigurement, or impairment of any bodily organ or function.

(11) "Sexual abuse" means the commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, deviate sexual conduct, or incest, as described in Title 45, chapter 5, part 5.

**52-3-804. Duties of department.** (1) The department shall investigate reports of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation received pursuant to [52-3-811](#)(1)(a).

(2) The department shall prepare an annual report of the information obtained pursuant to the reporting requirement of this part.

(3) The department shall, when appropriate, provide protective services under Title 52, chapter 3, part 2, for an older person or a person with a developmental disability alleged to have been abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited.

(4) If a person alleged to be abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited pursuant to this part or the person's caretaker refuses to allow a representative of the department entrance to the premises for the purpose of investigating a report made pursuant to [52-3-811](#)(1)(a), the district court in the county where the person is found may order a law enforcement officer or a department social worker to enter the premises to conduct an investigation upon finding that there is probable cause to believe that the person is abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited.

(5) If a representative of the department has reasonable grounds to believe that an older person or a

person with a developmental disability alleged to be abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited is suffering from abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation that presents a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury, the department may:

(a) provide voluntary protective services as provided in subsection (3); or

(b) if the department representative has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is incapacitated, provide emergency protective services as follows:

(i) arrange or facilitate an appropriate emergency protective service placement;

(ii) transport or arrange for the transport of the person to the appropriate placement;

(iii) not later than 2 judicial days following placement of the person, either:

(A) provide voluntary protective services as provided under subsection (3); or

(B) petition the district court to act as temporary guardian or appoint a temporary guardian as provided in [72-5-317](#).

**52-3-805. Adult protective service teams.** (1) The county attorney or the department of public health and human services shall convene one or more temporary or permanent interdisciplinary adult protective service teams. These teams shall assist in assessing the needs of, formulating and monitoring a treatment plan for, and coordinating services to older persons and persons with developmental disabilities who are victims of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The supervisor of adult protective services of the department of public health and human services or the department's designee shall serve as the team's coordinator. Members must include a social worker, a member of a local law enforcement agency, a representative of the medical profession, and a county attorney or the county attorney's designee, who is an attorney. Members may include other appropriate persons designated by the county attorney or the department.

(2) When the team considers a matter involving an adult with developmental disabilities in the care of a person providing developmental disabilities services, the team must also include a provider of developmental disability services other than the provider involved in the matter under review. The team shall make a report to the county attorney that contains a recommendation concerning any criminal prosecution to be brought pursuant to this part.

**52-3-811. Reports.** (1) When the professionals and other persons listed in subsection (3) know or have reasonable cause to suspect that an older person or a person with a developmental disability known to them in their professional or official capacities has been subjected to abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation, they shall:

(a) if the person is not a resident of a long-term care facility, report the matter to:

(i) the department or its local affiliate; or

(ii) the county attorney of the county in which the person resides or in which the acts that are the subject of the report occurred;

(b) if the person is a resident of a long-term care facility, report the matter to the long-term care ombudsman appointed under the provisions of 42 U.S.C. 3027(a)(12) and to the department. The

department shall investigate the matter pursuant to its authority in [50-5-204](#) and, if it finds any allegations of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation contained in the report to be substantially true, forward a copy of the report to the county attorney as provided in subsection (1)(a)(ii).

(2) If the report required in subsection (1) involves an act or omission of the department that may be construed as abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation, a copy of the report may not be sent to the department but must be sent instead to the county attorney of the county in which the older person or the person with a developmental disability resides or in which the acts that are the subject of the report occurred.

(3) Professionals and other persons required to report are:

(a) a physician, resident, intern, professional or practical nurse, physician assistant, or member of a hospital staff engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons;

(b) an osteopath, dentist, denturist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, medical examiner, coroner, or any other health or mental health professional;

(c) an ambulance attendant;

(d) a social worker or other employee of the state, a county, or a municipality assisting an older person or a person with a developmental disability in the application for or receipt of public assistance payments or services;

(e) a person who maintains or is employed by a roominghouse, retirement home or complex, nursing home, group home, adult foster care home, adult day-care center, or assisted living facility or an agency or individual that provides home health services or personal care in the home;

(f) an attorney, unless the attorney acquired knowledge of the facts required to be reported from a client and the attorney-client privilege applies;

(g) a peace officer or other law enforcement official;

(h) a person providing services to an older person or a person with a developmental disability pursuant to a contract with a state or federal agency; and

(i) an employee of the department while in the conduct of the employee's duties.

(4) Any other persons or entities may, but are not required to, submit a report in accordance with subsection (1).

**52-3-812. Content of report.** (1) The report required by [52-3-811](#) may be made in writing or orally, by telephone or in person. A person who receives an oral report shall prepare it in writing as soon as possible.

(2) The report referred to under this section must contain:

(a) the names and addresses of the older person or the person with a developmental disability and the person, if any, responsible for that person's care;

(b) the name and address, if available, of the person who is alleged to have abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited the older person or the person with a developmental disability;

(c) to the extent known, the person's age and the nature and extent of the abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation sustained by the older person or the person with a developmental disability and any

evidence of prior instances of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of other older persons or persons with developmental disabilities committed by the person alleged to have committed abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation; and

(d) the name and address of the person making the report.

**52-3-813. Confidentiality.** (1) The case records of the department, its local affiliate, the county attorney, and the court concerning actions taken under this part and all reports made pursuant to [52-3-811](#) must be kept confidential except as provided by this section. For the purposes of this section, the term "case records" includes records of an investigation of a report of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

(2) The records and reports required to be kept confidential by subsection (1) may be disclosed, upon request, to the following persons or entities in this or any other state:

(a) a physician who is caring for an older person or a person with a developmental disability who the physician reasonably believes was abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited;

(b) a legal guardian or conservator of the older person or the person with a developmental disability if the identity of the person who made the report is protected and the legal guardian or conservator is not the person suspected of the abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation;

(c) the person named in the report as allegedly being abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited if that person is not legally incompetent;

(d) any person engaged in bona fide research if the person alleged in the report to have committed the abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation is later convicted of an offense constituting abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation and if the identity of the older person or the person with a developmental disability who is the subject of the report is not disclosed to the researcher;

(e) an adult protective service team. Members of the team are required to keep information about the subject individuals confidential.

(f) an authorized representative of a provider of services to a person alleged to be an abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited older person or person with a developmental disability if:

(i) the department and the provider are parties to a contested case proceeding under Title 2, chapter 4, part 6, resulting from action by the department adverse to the license of the provider and if information contained in the records or reports of the department is relevant to the case;

(ii) disclosure to the provider is determined by the department to be necessary to protect an interest of a person alleged to be an abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited older person or person with a developmental disability; or

(iii) the person is carrying out background screening or employment-related or volunteer-related screening of current or prospective employees or volunteers who have or may have unsupervised contact with an older person or a person with a developmental disability through employment or volunteer activities if the disclosure is limited to information that indicates a risk to an older person or a person with a developmental disability posed by the employee or volunteer, as determined by the department. A request for information under this subsection must be made in writing.

(g) an employee of the department if disclosure of the record or report is necessary for

administration of a program designed to benefit a person alleged to be an abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited older person or person with a developmental disability;

(h) an authorized representative of a guardianship program approved by the department if the department determines that disclosure to the program or to a person designated by the program is necessary for the proper provision of guardianship services to a person alleged to be an abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited older person or person with a developmental disability;

(i) protection and advocacy systems authorized under the provisions of 29 U.S.C. 794e, 42 U.S.C. 10805, and 42 U.S.C. 15043;

(j) the news media if disclosure is limited to confirmation of factual information regarding how the case was handled and does not violate the privacy rights of the older person, person with a developmental disability, or alleged perpetrator of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation, as determined by the department;

(k) a coroner or medical examiner who is determining the cause of death of an older person or a person with a developmental disability;

(l) a person about whom a report has been made and that person's attorney with respect to relevant records pertaining to that person only without disclosing the identity of the person who made the report or any other person whose safety might be endangered through disclosure;

(m) an agency, including a probation or parole agency, that is legally responsible for the supervision of an alleged perpetrator of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an older person or a person with a developmental disability; and

(n) a department, agency, or organization, including a federal agency, military reservation, or tribal organization, that is legally authorized to receive, inspect, or investigate reports of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an older person or a person with a developmental disability and that meets the disclosure criteria contained in this section.

(3) The records and reports required to be kept confidential by subsection (1) must be disclosed, upon request, to the following persons or entities in this or any other state:

(a) a county attorney or other law enforcement official who requires the information in connection with an investigation of a violation of this part;

(b) a court that has determined, in camera, that public disclosure of the report, data, information, or record is necessary for the determination of an issue before it;

(c) a grand jury upon its determination that the report, data, information, or record is necessary in the conduct of its official business.

(4) If the person who is reported to have abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited an older person or a person with a developmental disability is the holder of a license, permit, or certificate issued by the department of labor and industry under the provisions of Title 37 or issued by any other entity of state government, the report may be submitted to the entity that issued the license, permit, or certificate.

**52-3-814. Immunity from civil and criminal liability.** (1) A person who makes a report required or authorized to be made under [52-3-811](#) is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be

incurred or imposed as a result of the report unless the report is false in any material respect and the person acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

(2) A person who provides information or who uses information obtained pursuant to [52-3-813](#)(2) to refuse to hire or to discharge an employee, volunteer, or other person who through their employment or volunteer activities may have unsupervised contact with an older person or a person with a developmental disability is immune from civil liability unless the person providing or using the information acts in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

**52-3-815. Evidence of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation to be gathered and submitted.** (1)

A person or agency receiving a report of suspected abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation under [52-3-811](#) shall prepare a written description of the conditions regarded as evidence of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation and may, with the consent of an allegedly abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited older person or person with a developmental disability or without consent of the person if it appears that the person is an incapacitated person, take or cause to be taken photographs of an area of trauma visible on the body of the allegedly abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited person and regarded as evidence of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

(2) A physician required to report under [52-3-811](#) may, with the consent of an allegedly abused, sexually abused, neglected, or exploited older person or person with a developmental disability or without consent of the person if it appears that the person is an incapacitated person, require x-rays or other appropriate medical tests or procedures that would, in the professional opinion of the physician, assist in establishing evidence related to the allegation of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

(3) Evidence authorized to be gathered under this section must be submitted with the report required under [52-3-811](#) to the authorities designated in [52-3-811](#) as soon as possible after submission of the report.

**52-3-825. Penalties.** (1) A person who purposely or knowingly fails to make a report required by [52-3-811](#) or discloses or fails to disclose the contents of a case record or report in violation of [52-3-813](#) is guilty of an offense and upon conviction is punishable as provided in [46-18-212](#).

(2) (a) A person who purposely or knowingly abuses, sexually abuses, or neglects an older person or a person with a developmental disability is guilty of a felony and shall be imprisoned for a term not to exceed 10 years and be fined an amount not to exceed \$10,000, or both.

(b) (i) A person who negligently abuses an older person or a person with a developmental disability is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon a first conviction shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 1 year, or both.

(ii) Upon a second or subsequent conviction of the conduct described in subsection (2)(b)(i), the person is guilty of a felony and shall be imprisoned for a term not to exceed 10 years and be fined an amount not to exceed \$10,000, or both.

(c) A person with a developmental disability may not be charged under subsection (2)(a) or (2)(b).

(3) (a) A person convicted of purposely or knowingly exploiting an older person or a person with a

developmental disability in a case involving money, assets, or property in an amount of \$1,000 or less in value shall be fined an amount not more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 1 year, or both. A person convicted of purposely or knowingly exploiting an older person or a person with a developmental disability in a case involving money, assets, or property in an amount of more than \$1,000 in value shall be fined an amount not more than \$50,000 or be imprisoned in a state prison for a term not to exceed 10 years, or both.

(b) For purposes of prosecution under subsection (3)(a) in a case involving the same transaction or in a case prosecuted pursuant to a common scheme, the amounts may be aggregated in determining the value involved.