

9555.7300 COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION BY LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES.

Subpart 1. **Duty to accept and investigate complaints.** The local social services agency shall accept and investigate all complaints alleging that a vulnerable adult has been abused or neglected in that agency's county. The local social services agency shall notify each relevant licensing agency and the local police departments or county sheriffs and shall cooperate in coordinating its investigation with the investigations of the licensing agencies, police departments, and sheriffs. The local social services agency shall immediately send a report of its findings to all other agencies notified concerning the complaint in question.

Subp. 2. **Time limits to initiate investigations.** The local social services agency shall begin to investigate all complaints within the following time limits:

A. The local social services agency shall conduct an immediate on-site investigation for complaints alleging or from which it can be inferred that a vulnerable adult is in need of immediate care or protection because the adult is life-threatened or likely to experience physical injury due to abuse or abandonment.

B. The local social services agency shall begin its investigation within 24 hours for complaints alleging, or when there is substantial evidence, that a vulnerable adult is not in need of immediate care or protection but is allegedly abused.

C. The local social services agency shall begin its investigation within 72 hours for complaints alleging, or when there is substantial evidence, that a vulnerable adult is not in need of immediate care or protection but is allegedly neglected.

Subp. 3. **Investigations related to a facility.** When an investigation involves an alleged incident or situation related to a facility, the local social services agency shall make an on-site visit to the facility to assess the validity of the complaint. This investigation shall include the following activities when necessary to make an accurate assessment, but activities specified in items A, C, and E need not occur on the site of the facility:

- A. discussion with the reporter;
- B. discussion with the facility administrator or responsible designee;
- C. discussion with the physician or other professionals, or any corroborating contacts as necessary;
- D. contact with the alleged victim;
- E. discussion with the alleged perpetrator;
- F. examination of the physical conditions or the psychological climate of the facility; and
- G. inspection of the alleged victim's record.

The local social services agency shall also determine whether the reported abuse or neglect places other vulnerable adults in jeopardy of being abused or neglected.

The local social services agency shall immediately send a report of its findings to all other agencies notified concerning the complaint in question.

Subp. 4. **Investigations not related to a facility.** When an investigation involves an alleged incident or situation which is not related to a facility, the local social services agency shall assess the validity of the complaint. This investigation shall include the following activities where necessary to make an accurate assessment:

- A. discussion with the alleged victim;
- B. discussion with the reporter or any corroborating contacts, as necessary;
- C. discussion with the alleged perpetrator;
- D. discussion with the physician or other professionals; and
- E. examination of the physical conditions or the psychological climate of the residence.

The local social services agency shall also determine whether the reported abuse or neglect places other vulnerable adults in jeopardy of being abused or neglected.

Subp. 5. **Investigations by agencies which are not in the county of financial responsibility.** When a complaint involves a vulnerable adult who is receiving services from a facility located in a county other than the adult's county of financial responsibility, the local social services agency of the host county shall:

- A. investigate the complaint in accordance with subpart 3 and determine whether the complaint is substantiated, inconclusive, or false;
- B. notify each relevant licensing agency, the police or sheriff, and the county of financial responsibility;
- C. consult with the county of financial responsibility, unless the host county must take immediate emergency measures and representatives of the county of financial responsibility are not available;
- D. take whatever measures are necessary to correct the situation or to remove the adult from the facility and notify the county of financial responsibility of the actions taken to correct the situation or of the removal of the adult from the facility; and
- E. complete and transmit all required written forms and findings to appropriate agencies.

The local social services agency of the county of financial responsibility shall then resume responsibility for ensuring ongoing planning and services for the vulnerable adult.

Subp. 6. **Use of outside experts.** When it is investigating alleged abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, the local social services agency shall consult persons with appropriate expertise if the local agency believes that it lacks the expertise necessary for making judgments pertaining to the allegations. This consultation may include matters of physical health, mental health, specialized treatment such as behavior modification, geriatrics, or other matters.

Subp. 7. **Investigations after initial complaint assessment.** If upon the initial assessment required by subparts 1 to 6 there appears to be substance to a complaint, the local social services agency shall attempt to determine the following:

- A. the risk posed if the vulnerable adult remains in the present circumstances;
- B. the current physical and emotional condition of the vulnerable adult, including the history or pattern of abuse or neglect or related prior injuries;
- C. the name, address, age, sex, and relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the vulnerable adult; and
- D. in a complaint of neglect, the relationship of the caretaker to the vulnerable adult, including the agreed-upon roles and responsibilities of the caretaker and the vulnerable adult.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 256E.05; 626.557*

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