



Dear Fellow Delawarean,

When it comes to protecting our families, safeguarding our wallets, knowing our rights as victims of crime, or understanding how the

law can make our communities better, information is the key. Equipped with knowledge, we can make choices that greatly reduce our risk of becoming a victim of crime or fraud, and we can learn how to get help if we're mistreated.

The mission of the Delaware Department of Justice is to protect Delawareans from harm by enforcing the law and being your advocate. We're here to help you, and also to give you the information you need to help yourself and your family. Inside this brochure, you'll learn about identifying senior abuse and how to contact the Department of Justice for further assistance. Together, we can keep Delaware safe and strong.

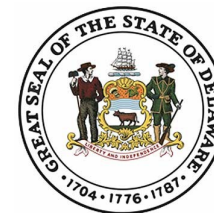
Beau Biden
Attorney General

Delaware Department of Justice
820 North French Street
Wilmington, DE 19801

Protecting Delaware's Seniors



Delaware Department of Justice



**Attorney General
Joseph R. "Beau" Biden, III**

New Castle County • (302) 577-8400
Kent County • (302) 739-7641
Sussex County • (302) 856-5353

www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov

ABUSE COMES IN MANY FORMS KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Physical / Sexual Abuse

The use of physical force, restraints or drugs, to inflict pain, injury, or impairment. Any non-consensual sexual contact of any kind including if the senior is not capable of consenting.

General signs can include bruises, cuts, fractures, burns, unexpected decline in health, incorrectly medicating, caregiver refusing to allow the senior visitors; victim is fearful, or has sudden behavior changes.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Causing mental pain or distress through verbal assaults, insults, threats, intimidation and humiliation or actions. Forcing a senior to be isolated is also abuse.

General signs can include being upset, agitated, withdrawn, non-communicative or non-responsive, or unusual behavior often seen with dementia like sucking, biting and rocking.

Neglect

Failing to provide basic life necessities to a senior for whom someone is physically and financially responsible.

General signs can include dehydration, malnutrition, poor personal hygiene, untreated health problems, unsafe living conditions such as lack of heat or no running water, or unclean living conditions that include insects, dirt, soiled bedding, or inadequate clothing.

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Financial Abuse

Illegally or improperly using a senior's funds, property or assets.

General signs can include sudden inability to pay bills, unexplained withdrawals from accounts, unusual interest by a family member in a senior's assets, change in the will, or a disparity between assets and living conditions.

How you can help:

Study the warning signs and types of abuse, and share this information with friends, relatives and neighbors.

If you or someone you know is a victim please call the:

**Delaware Department of Justice
to report abuse:**

New Castle County (302) 577-8600

Kent County (302) 739-7641

Sussex County (302) 856-5352

**Delaware Division of Aging and
Adults with Physical Disabilities**

New Castle County (302) 453-3820

Downstate (302) 422-1386

**Or call 911 to reach
local law enforcement**

REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE

For every incidence of senior abuse that is reported to the authorities, five are never reported. Reasons why senior abuse often goes unreported include:

Fear

Seniors may fear retaliation from their abusers, worry that they won't be believed, have a fear of institutionalization or separation from their family and familiar surroundings, fear of the loss of their independence, or be intimidated by the criminal justice system.

A desire to protect the abuser

Adult children caregivers are often the abusers, and because of the guilt and shame associated with reporting their children, senior victims may not come forward.

Social isolation

Seniors often live alone or with family members and have limited contact outside the home. They may not know where to turn for help.

Self-Blame/Embarrassment

Many victims do not seek help because they blame themselves for the abuse, or are embarrassed that they have been victimized.

Inability to report

Mental impairment and memory loss make it difficult for a senior to communicate. Seniors who are physically impaired may also be unable to get to the phone or leave the home to report abuse, or be unable to communicate due to a stroke.