

CareCertify LLC

Adult Day Services Training Series

ADS-02

Vulnerable Adult Protection & Reporting

Participant Guide

Adult Day Services Training Series · Audience: Direct-Contact Staff · Volunteers · Subcontractors · Aides · CE Hours: 1.0

You Are a Mandated Reporter

The Vulnerable Adults Act (Minn. Stat. 626.557) protects adults who depend on others for care and are at heightened risk of harm. Adult day services staff are mandated reporters, and every participant meets the definition of a vulnerable adult. Reporting of maltreatment is a required part of your annual training for a reason — it's central to keeping participants safe.

This guide covers what counts as maltreatment, what to watch for, and exactly how to report. The standard is low on purpose — 'reason to believe' — because the cost of staying silent is a vulnerable person left in harm.

Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Define 'vulnerable adult' and identify who is a mandated reporter
- Distinguish abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation
- Recognize common warning signs
- Report suspected maltreatment to MAARC correctly and immediately
- Explain reporter protections and license-holder duties

Section 1: Who Is Protected and Who Must Report

Under Minn. Stat. 626.5572, a vulnerable adult includes any adult who receives services from a licensed provider such as an adult day services center, or who, due to age or disability, can't protect themselves. Every participant qualifies. Adult day services staff — and volunteers and subcontractors with participant contact — are mandated reporters. The duty is personal: if you have reason to believe maltreatment occurred, you report, even if you assume someone else will.

Section 2: The Categories of Maltreatment

Maltreatment falls into three categories. Abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, and verbal abuse and improper restraint. Neglect is failing to provide needed food, hygiene, supervision, care, or medication. Financial exploitation is the wrongful use of a vulnerable adult's money or property. Self-neglect — a vulnerable adult unable to meet their own needs — is also addressed under the Act. When unsure which applies, report anyway.

Section 3: Recognizing the Warning Signs

Maltreatment isn't always obvious. Physical signs include unexplained bruises, burns, weight loss, dehydration, or poor hygiene. Behavioral signs include fear of a particular person, withdrawal, or sudden mood changes. Financial signs include missing belongings or a controlling new contact. Because you often see participants regularly, you're well positioned to notice changes between days. You don't need proof — a pattern, a single alarming sign, or a disclosure is enough.

The standard is 'reason to believe'

You are not the investigator. If you have reason to believe maltreatment occurred, report. Certainty is not required and not your job.

Section 4: How and When to Report

Reports go to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) at 1-844-880-1574, 24 hours a day. Report immediately; if a participant faces immediate danger, call 911 first. Give the facts: the participant's name and condition, what you observed or were told, when and where, who was involved, and whether there's ongoing danger. Notify your supervisor and document objectively. Reporting to your supervisor alone does not satisfy your legal duty to report to MAARC.

Section 5: Reporter Protections and Retaliation

The Act protects good-faith reporters from civil and criminal liability and prohibits retaliation against a reporter or the vulnerable adult. A mandated reporter who knows of maltreatment and fails to report can face personal consequences. These protections exist so you never have to choose between your role and a participant's safety — when in doubt, report.

Section 6: The License Holder's Responsibilities

Under Chapter 245A and the Vulnerable Adults Act, the license holder (the center) has its own responsibilities: maintaining policies to prevent and report maltreatment, training staff, and responding appropriately. These duties are separate from — and do not replace — your personal duty to report. Know your center's internal reporting procedures and follow them in addition to reporting to MAARC.

Section 7: Preventing Maltreatment in Your Care

The first prevention is the quality of your own care. Provide patient, respectful, attentive care, and never use rough handling, threats, or improper restraint — even on a hard day. Maintain safe supervision (covered in ADS-03), report hazards, and manage your own stress so it never spills onto a participant. Prevention and reporting together keep participants safe.

Section 8: After the Report

Once you report, MAARC routes it to the appropriate lead investigative agency. Keep the participant safe, continue providing care, cooperate with any investigation, and document the facts objectively without speculation. These situations are emotionally hard, so use your supervisor and support. Your report starts a protective process; staying steady and supportive helps the participant through it.

When in doubt, report

If you have reason to believe a participant is being harmed, report immediately to MAARC at 1-844-880-1574. You're protected, and the participant is depending on you.

Key Terms

Term	What it means
Vulnerable Adults Act	Minn. Stat. 626.557, requiring reporting of maltreatment.
Vulnerable adult	An adult who receives services or can't protect themselves; participants qualify.
Mandated reporter	A person legally required to report suspected maltreatment.
MAARC	Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (1-844-880-1574).
Financial exploitation	Wrongful use of a vulnerable adult's money or property.
License holder	The center, which has its own maltreatment-prevention duties.

Check Your Understanding

1. Who is a vulnerable adult, and are all participants included?
2. Name the three categories of maltreatment with an example of each.
3. What is the reporting standard — do you need proof?
4. What is the MAARC number, and how fast must you report?
5. Does reporting to your supervisor satisfy your legal duty?

What's Next

Looking ahead

Next, ADS-03: Supervision & Safety of Participants covers keeping participants safe throughout the day.