

CareCertify LLC

Front-Line Caregiver Training Series

CG-08

Abuse Prevention & Mandated Reporting

Participant Guide

Front-Line Caregiver Training Series · Audience: CNAs · HHAs · PCAs · DSPs · Caregivers · 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. Caregivers are mandated reporters: the law requires you to report suspected maltreatment, and the people you serve are vulnerable adults under the law.

This guide covers what counts as maltreatment, what to watch for, how to prevent it in your own care, 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 warning signs of maltreatment
- Prevent maltreatment in your own care
- Report suspected maltreatment to MAARC correctly and immediately

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 or who, because of age or disability, can't protect themselves. The clients you serve qualify. Caregivers are mandated reporters, and the obligation is individual: if you have reason to believe maltreatment occurred, you must 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.

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 caregiver, withdrawal, or sudden mood changes. Financial

signs include missing belongings, unusual banking, or someone new controlling finances. You don't need proof — a pattern, a single alarming sign, or a disclosure is enough.

Remember: maltreatment can come from family, others, or even a caregiver. Stay alert regardless of who is involved.

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: Preventing Maltreatment in Your Own Care

The first prevention is the quality of your own care. Provide patient, respectful, person-centered care, and never use rough handling, threats, or improper restraint — even on a hard day. Keep professional and financial boundaries (see CG-03). Report unsafe staffing or conditions that could lead to neglect. Caregiver stress is real; manage it so it never spills onto a client.

Section 5: 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 client faces immediate danger, call 911 first. Give the facts: the client'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 6: 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 job and a client's safety.

Section 7: Self-Neglect and Caregiver Stress

Self-neglect — a vulnerable adult unable to meet their own basic needs over time — is reportable maltreatment. Family caregiver burnout can also lead to neglect; report concerns so support can be offered. And manage your own stress: a supported caregiver is far less likely to slip into impatience or rough care.

Section 8: After the Report

Once you report, MAARC routes it to the appropriate lead investigative agency. Keep the client safe, continue providing care, cooperate with any investigation, and document the facts objectively — what you saw and heard, without accusations or speculation.

Internal reporting isn't enough

Telling your supervisor is good practice but does not replace your personal legal duty to report to MAARC at 1-844-880-1574.

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; your clients 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.
Self-neglect	A vulnerable adult unable to meet their own basic needs — reportable.

Check Your Understanding

1. Who is a vulnerable adult, and are your clients 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, CG-09: Observation, Documentation & Reporting covers noticing changes, charting accurately, and keeping the team informed.