

Reporting Elder Abuse

The Elder and Dependent Abuse

Unit was created in 2000 to identify those individuals who prey on senior and dependent adult citizens and to seek prosecution of these perpetrators.

Apprehension and successful prosecution of these criminals is instrumental in helping to develop a more secure environment for senior and dependent adults.

- **Call 911 if you witness elder or dependent adult abuse.** If you suspect ongoing abuse call the SDPD at (858) 484-3154 or (619) 531-2000.
- **If you suspect** instances of abuse call San Diego County Aging & Independence Services at (800) 510-2020. This agency carries out investigations and provides assistance and case management where appropriate. The SDPD will be informed if abuse is involved.
- **For further information** you can call the SDPD Elder Abuse Unit at (619) 446-1070 on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. See the Senior Safety and Security page under Prevention Tips on this website for ways to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of elder abuse and other crimes.

San Diego County Response

San Diego County handles approximately 9,000 cases of elder and dependent adult abuse each year. Many other incidents go unreported, leaving vulnerable adults in distressing, potentially life-changing, even dangerous, situations.

Abuse often escalates if there is no intervention. Victims will live in silent desperation, unwilling to seek assistance because they believe their cries for help will go unanswered and they fear retaliation from their abusers. Many remain silent to protect abusive family members from the legal consequences of their crimes, or they are too embarrassed to admit that they have fallen victim to predators.

Elder Abuse Resources

<https://www.seniorliving.org/research/preventing-elder-abuse/>

At the federal level the [National Center on Elder Abuse](https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/state.html) (<https://ncea.acl.gov/resources/state.html>) serves as a resource center dedicated to the prevention of elder abuse.

Other Resources

County of San Diego Health and Human Services

1-800-510-2020

San Diego County Mental Health Services

Senior Services (619) 692-8750

State of California

Office of the Attorney General

Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud/Elder Abuse Prosecution Unit,
(800) 555-5984

SDPD DIVISIONS

For general information please contact your local police substation.

Division	Phone #
Central	(619) 744-9500
Eastern	(858) 495-7900
Mid-City	(619) 516-3000
Northeastern	(858) 538-8000
Northern	(858) 552-1700
Northwestern	(858) 523-7000
Southeastern	(619) 527-3500
Southern	(619) 424-0400
Western	(619) 692-4800

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SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Elder Abuse

This brochure contains information regarding Elder abuse.

- **Definitions of Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse**
- **Types of Elder Abuse**
- **Preventing Elder Abuse**
- **Take Me Home Program**
- **Reporting Elder Abuse**

Seniors today are more active, independent, and in better health than ever before. However, as the population of seniors grows, so does the epidemic of elder abuse and neglect.

The elder population is the fastest growing and most vulnerable to abuse. San Diego has over 305,000 elders (65 and older). Statistics show that one out of twenty elders will be a victim of elder abuse in their lifetime. **Only 19% of elder abuse incidents are reported.**

Definitions of Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse

- An elder is 65 years old or older
- A dependent adult is 18-64 years old with a physical or mental disability resulting in an inability to protect his/her own rights
- Abuse is defined as the physical abuse, neglect, intimidation, cruel punishment, financial abuse, abandonment, or other treatment resulting in pain or physical or mental suffering, or deprivation by a caretaker of goods or services which are necessary to avoid physical harm or mental suffering

Types of Elder Abuse

- **Neglect.** Inadequate clothing, missed medical appointments, dirty and unkempt appearance, malnutrition, dehydration, bedsores, home that smells of urine or feces, utilities turned off, no food in home, or lack of necessary medications, eyeglasses, hearing aid, etc.
- **Psychological abuse.** Unreasonable or excessive fears, withdrawal, loss of appetite, agitation, isolation from family and friends, unexplained bouts of crying, or confusion.
- **Physical abuse.** Bites, burns, and unexplained broken bones, welts, or bruises.
- **Financial abuse.** Changes in long-established banking routines; third-party involvement in financial transactions, especially unusual ones.
- **Sexual abuse.** Unexplained venereal diseases or genital infections, bruising or bleeding in the genital area, unexplained pain or itching in the genital area, or torn, stained, or bloody underwear.

Self-neglect is also a serious problem for older persons.

Suspicious of it should also be reported to San Diego County Aging & Independence Services. Signs include a worsening of medical conditions or a sudden change in weight or hygiene.

Preventing Elder Abuse & Neglect Requires Three Action Steps



- Listening to seniors and their caregivers
- Intervening when you suspect elder abuse
- Educating others about how to recognize and report elder abuse

Preventing Elder Abuse

1. Have your elders stay nearby and stay close to family if possible.
2. Keep in contact with elders.
3. Encourage elders to attend community events.
4. Inform them of any solicitations they should be aware of.
5. Don't allow the elderly to live with others who you know are or may be abusive.
6. Make sure they stay active.
7. Elders should be responsible and aware of their own finances.
8. Be selective with caregivers.
9. Take advantage of support groups.



How Does It Work?

If a police officer finds someone who can't communicate where he or she lives, the police officer can search the region-wide **Take Me Home** database by description and return the person to his or her loved ones.

The system also works in reverse; if a loved one goes missing or wanders away, his or picture and description is immediately available to help with the search. **Only law enforcement officers** can access the **Take Me Home** database and all San Diego Law Enforcement Agencies have access to the database.

The system provides crucial information about behavior considerations, medical conditions, special care instructions, detailed description of the person and a photo. This information minimizes Law Enforcement response time and maximizes search efforts.

Caregivers can enroll special needs family members, friends, or clients online at www.sdsheriff.net/tmh or by calling **619-946-1070**