

Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

Contacting the Council

The Boy Scouts requires immediate notification of the Scout executive whenever information about possible child abuse in the Boy Scout program is uncovered. The current policy for after-hours notifications is to wait until the next business day and call the Scout council service center in Seminole, FL at 727-391-3800 and ask for the Scout executive.

The Scout executive will ensure that all state reporting requirements have been met and will also take measures to protect the youth in the Scouting movement.

If an immediate report is to be made due to extreme urgency, a contact to the Department of Children and Families should be made at 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). The council should also be contacted by leaving a message on the council service center voice mail system. The "Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Form" should be completed and submitted to the council.

Reporting Child Abuse in Florida

Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes mandates that "any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall report immediately such knowledge or suspicion to the central abuse hotline of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The Department of Children and Families operates a toll-free 24-hour, seven-day-a-week hotline (800-962-2873 or 96ABUSE - Telephone Device for the Deaf: 1-800-453-5145) to receive reports of child abuse and neglect.

DCF accepts all allegations of child abuse and neglect by telephone and in person from all sources, including identified sources, news media, anonymous sources, sources that have incomplete information, and referrals from the child or parent themselves.

Upon receiving a report of child abuse or neglect, a DCF caseworker shall investigate the allegations and take such action as is necessary to ensure the safety of the child.

Immunity from Civil or Criminal Liability

Any person who, pursuant to the law, reports abuse and neglect or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action.

Penalty for Failure to Report

A person who is required by law to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided by law.