

Reporting Suspected Abuse or Misconduct

Mandatory reporting laws of Colorado impose special obligations on a wide range of professions and occupations to report child abuse or neglect or abuse neglect of vulnerable adults. There are 35 different categories of professionals who must report suspected abuse and neglect. The State recognizes that many professionals develop trusting relationships with children, youth or vulnerable adults and are likely to obtain personal information from children, youth or vulnerable adults in that context. State law wants to protect children, youth or vulnerable adults from abuse by mandating professionals to report these incidents and that reports are given immediate attention and consistent response from law enforcement/human service professionals. The law requires that any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child, youth or vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child, youth or vulnerable adult being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse, shall immediately upon receiving such information to report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department or local law enforcement agency. The Colorado law requires a report to the local police department, the local health and human service department. The law says there are no exceptions (not to supervisors, relatives or co-workers).

An abuse report should include:

- State you are a mandated reporter
- Name, address, age, ethnicity and gender of child or vulnerable adult
- Name and address of persons responsible
- Nature and extent of the injuries
- Family composition of child, vulnerable adult & perpetrator
- Source of the report, with name, address, occupation
- Any action taken by the person reporting the abuse
- Any other information such as potential witnesses

The Minister(s), Director of Family Ministry are regarded as mandated reporters if they suspect child abuse. The Minister(s) are regarded as mandated reporters if they suspect abuse of a vulnerable adult. All volunteers and the non-mandated staff of Foothills Unitarian Church are strongly encouraged to report suspected abuse, endangerment, or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Anyone making a report of abuse should also report his or her suspicions to the Minister, the DFM or the President of the Executive Board. The person who receives the report will then notify the other staff person and the President.

When a report of suspected child abuse is made, the BOT President will notify the District Executive and the agent representing the congregation's insurance company. These contacts should be made within 24 hours of the initial report. If the President is not available, the President-Elect should make these reports.

If the person who first suspects the abuse declines to make the report, the Minister or DFM will make a report to the appropriate agencies. If the Minister or DFM are unavailable, the President will contact the appropriate agencies. Anyone suspected of abuse will not be permitted to have contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults of this congregation while on Foothills Unitarian Church property pending resolution of the allegation. Staff accused of abuse shall be immediately relieved of any responsibilities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults and are forbidden to have any contact with Foothills children, youth or vulnerable adults on or off Foothills property with the exception of their own family members, pending resolution of the allegation. In the event that an accusation of abuse is made against the Minister, the President will notify the UUA Department of Ministry and the District Executive. If the President is not available, the President-Elect will make the contacts. The President or President-Elect will convene an emergency meeting of the Board to inform the Board of the allegations.

The President of the Board, in consultation with the Board, the Minister, and the DRE will determine how information about the allegation of abuse will be communicated to the congregation.

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