

Policy Title: Reporting and Investigating Alleged Abuse or Neglect

Effective Date: November 21, 2024 ; revised November 27, 2024

Purpose: To ensure a safe environment for all clients, caregivers, and staff, Affordable Assist Private Care is committed to the immediate reporting, thorough investigation, and appropriate resolution of any allegations of abuse, neglect, or critical incidents.

Policy:

1. Chain of Command:

- All allegations must be reported immediately to Lead Caregiver, Renee Coulter.
- If Renee is unavailable, contact the office manager, Marcie Thomas.
- If further escalation is needed, contact Tonya Reagan.
- Renee will initiate the reporting process and coordinate next steps.
- The compliance lead will oversee the investigation and reporting process.

2. Reporting Protocol:

- Immediate Action:
 - Any employee or caregiver witnessing or suspecting abuse, neglect, or critical incidents must report the incident verbally and in writing to their supervisor within 24 hours.
- External Reporting:
 - All suspected or alleged abuse, neglect, or other critical incidents must be reported to the Tennessee Department of Human Services (Adult Protective Services at 1-888-277-8366) within 24 hours, as required by Tennessee law.
- Required Information in Reports:
 - Names of all individuals involved.
 - Date, time, and location of the alleged incident.
 - A detailed account of what occurred, including any direct quotes or observations.

3. Investigation Process:

- The compliance lead will initiate an internal investigation within 48 hours of receiving a report.
- The investigation process will include:
 - Interviews with all parties involved.
 - Gathering evidence such as witness statements, medical records, or other relevant documentation.

- The investigation will be completed within 7 business days, unless circumstances require additional time.

4. Zero Tolerance Policy:

- Abuse, neglect, or any form of wrongdoing is strictly prohibited.
- All suspected or alleged incidents, regardless of credibility, will be reported to local authorities and licensing bodies as required by law.

5. Corrective Actions:

- Employees found in violation of this policy will face disciplinary actions, up to and including termination.
- Legal consequences may also apply, depending on the severity of the incident.

6. Client Safety Measures:

- Immediate steps will be taken to protect clients during the investigation, such as reassigning caregivers or providing additional support.

7. Training and Awareness:

- All employees will receive training on recognizing, reporting, and preventing abuse and neglect during onboarding and annually thereafter.
- Employees will sign an acknowledgment of this policy, indicating they understand its provisions.

8. Documentation and Confidentiality:

- All reports and investigations will be documented and maintained in a secure file for a minimum of 10 years, as required by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services regulations.
- Client and staff confidentiality will be respected throughout the process.