

ELDER ABUSE

In Oregon, elders and disabled people have the right to file suit and recover treble (3x) damages and attorney's fees for both physical and financial abuse, including neglect, abandonment, psychological abuse, or the taking or misappropriation of an elder or incapacitated persons money or property.

You should immediately report abuse to the police or a social worker.

Furthermore, elders, guardians, and trust protectors may consult with an attorney in our office at no charge in abuse situations. If necessary, we may be able to represent you on a contingent fee basis, only accepting attorneys fees upon recovery from the abuser.

Assistance with the recognition and reporting of Elder Abuse is available from the [State of Oregon](#).

SIGNS OF FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Unpaid bills, eviction notices, utility shutoff warnings.
- Unexplained bank withdrawals, transfers or automatic teller activity.
- Bank statements or checks no longer come to the elder's home.
- New "best friends."
- Elder doesn't understand legal documents, such as power of attorney, real-estate transfer or will.
- Inflated costs for caregiving.
- A caregiver's excessive interest in the elder's finances.
- Missing belongings or property.
- Suspicious signatures on checks or documents.
- No documentation for financial arrangements, such as repair work.
- Pre-signed checks or withdrawal slips.
- Elder becomes secretive or isolated.
- Elder becomes timid, health deteriorates, or has untreated medical conditions.

SIGNS OF A SCAM

- It sounds too good to be true.
- You must pay to play.
- You must send money to get a prize.

- Caller wants private information, such as a Social Security number.
- Caller insists on cash or money order, not a check.
- Caller is trying to excite you about a great opportunity.
- Caller claims to be a tax official, banker or someone with authority to ask for personal information.
- A stranger behaves like your buddy.
- A warning to act immediately or miss an offer.
- Mail or e-mail with too-good-to-be-true offers.
- Frequent calls from unfamiliar charities.
- A request to wire money.

SIGNS OF ABUSE IN LONG-TERM CARE

- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, sprains or fractures in various stages of healing.
- Dehydrated, malnourished.
- Bedsores.
- Unexplained infections.
- Stained underwear.
- Sudden behavior changes.
- Staff refusing visitors to see resident or delaying visits.
- Over-medicating.
- Strong odors.
- Loss of possessions.
- Sudden change in banking activities of financial documents.
- Fear, depression, withdrawal.
- Disorientation.
- Unjustified isolation or restraint.
- Demeaning comments by staff.

HOW TO SUPPORT A RESIDENT

- Explore care alternatives.
- Visit often.
- Build relationships with staff.
- Monitor care. Be an advocate.
- Provide emotional support.

TO HELP OTHERS:

- Stay in touch with aging family and close friends and check if they're taking medications, have adequate nutrition and decent housing, or are showing signs of poor mental or physical health.

Ask about caregivers.

- Don't treat suspected abuse and neglect as a private matter.
- Volunteer at a senior center or support other services such as Meals on Wheels.
- If you're a family caregiver, get educated about cognitive illnesses such as dementia, and seek out respite. Understand what someone with Alzheimer's is and isn't capable of doing.

Thanks to the Wisconsin State Journal and their series "The 'Silent Shame' of Elder Abuse"

<http://www.madison.com/wsj/spe/elder/>