SAMPLE POLICY

Sample policy from the CareRulebook Maryland manual. Fictional agency. Rule-verified on October 2, 2026.

This is Policy 7.3 of the 33 in the manual, exactly as it prints in a buyer's copy, but filled in with example answers for a fictional agency, Sample Home Care, LLC. Rule-verified means each quote under Rule basis was checked word for word against the official text we saved on that date. It is not legal advice.

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POLICY 7.3

Abuse, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation: reporting

Family Law §14-101 · Family Law §14-302 · Family Law §14-303(c), (e) · Family Law §§5-701, 5-704, 5-705 · COMAR 10.07.05.10F-G · COMAR 10.07.05.09B(3)(c) · COMAR 10.07.05.11C(7) · COMAR 10.07.05.16D(1)(f) · Maryland Department of Human Services (abuse reporting hotline; reporting suspected child abuse or neglect) · OHCQ transmittal, Discharge Planning Requirements and Reporting (March 24, 2026) (Recommended practice)

Purpose

To make sure everyone who works for Sample Home Care, LLC recognizes suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation, and reports it to the right place, as soon as possible, in the way Maryland law requires: suspected harm to a vulnerable adult to the local department of social services (Family Law §14-302), suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the local department of social services or the police (Family Law §§5-704 and 5-705), and conduct of a nurse or certified caregiver that may be grounds for discipline to the Board of Nursing and the Office of Health Care Quality (COMAR 10.07.05.10F). It protects every client's right to be free from mental, verbal, sexual and physical abuse, neglect, involuntary seclusion and exploitation (COMAR 10.07.05.16D(1)(f); Policy 7.1).

This policy is not one of the 23 policy items listed in COMAR 10.07.05.08B(1), so the Section B index in Policy 1.2 does not list it. Prevention of abuse and neglect is one of the training topics in COMAR 10.07.05.11C (Policy 3.5).

Maryland's rules for residential service agencies have no general rule requiring an agency to report incidents (such as falls or missed visits) to OHCQ. The reports in this policy are the ones Maryland law requires. Other incidents are handled through changes in a client's condition (Policy 4.6), complaints (Policy 7.2) and quality assurance (Policy 2.4).

Scope

This policy applies to every employee, independent contractor and contractual employee of Sample Home Care, LLC, whatever their role: the Agency Director, Jordan Lee, the registered nurse, Avery Quinn, RN, every other nurse, certified nursing assistants (CNA-I and CNA-II), certified medication technicians, uncertified aides, schedulers and office staff. In this policy they are all called "staff".

It covers suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation of any client, and of any other vulnerable adult or any child that staff come across in their work, for example a family member living in a client's home. It applies whoever the suspected person is: a member of staff, a family member, a neighbor, another provider or anyone else.

Policy

What the words mean (Family Law §14-101)

1. For adults, Maryland law uses these meanings:
    1. A **vulnerable adult** is an adult who lacks the physical or mental capacity to provide for the adult's daily needs. Many Sample Home Care, LLC clients may be vulnerable adults.
    2. **Abuse** is the sustaining of any physical injury by a vulnerable adult as a result of cruel or inhumane treatment or of a malicious act by any person.
    3. **Neglect** is the willful deprivation of a vulnerable adult of adequate food, clothing, essential medical treatment or habilitative therapy, shelter, or supervision.
    4. **Self-neglect** is the inability of a vulnerable adult to provide themselves with the services that are necessary for their physical and mental health, where the absence of those services impairs or threatens their well-being.
    5. **Exploitation** is any action which involves the misuse of a vulnerable adult's funds, property, or person.
    6. The **local department** is the local department of social services in the county where the vulnerable adult lives or where the abuse is alleged to have taken place.
2. **When in doubt, report.** Staff do not need proof, and do not investigate first. A staff member who is not sure whether a person is a vulnerable adult, or whether what they saw counts as abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation under these meanings, reports anyway. The local department decides what happens next. Mistreatment that falls outside these meanings (for example shouting at or humiliating a client, or confining a client against their will) is still a breach of the client's rights: staff report it to the Agency Director at once, and it is handled under items 18 to 21 and Policy 7.2.
3. **A client's choices are not self-neglect in themselves.** A client who is able to make their own decisions may refuse part of their care (Policy 7.1). That choice is respected and reported to the registered nurse, not to the local department. When a staff member has reason to believe that a client lacks the capacity to provide for their own needs and is

going without care necessary for their health, that may be self-neglect and is reported under this policy.

Every staff member reports suspected harm to a vulnerable adult (Family Law §14-302)

4. Maryland law requires each health practitioner, police officer or human service worker who contacts, examines, attends or treats an alleged vulnerable adult, and who has reason to believe that the adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation, to notify the local department. This applies notwithstanding any law on privileged communications.
    1. A **health practitioner** includes anyone authorized to practice healing under the Health Occupations Article. The registered nurse and every other nurse are health practitioners.
    2. A **human service worker** is any professional employee of any public or private health or social services agency or provider.
5. **Sample Home Care, LLC's reading.** The law does not say whether every caregiver and office staff member of a residential service agency is a "professional employee". Sample Home Care, LLC does not leave this to chance: it requires every member of staff to report under this policy as if they were a mandated reporter. Anyone else who has reason to believe a vulnerable adult has been harmed may also report (Family Law §14-302(c)).
6. **As soon as possible, and how.** The report must be made as soon as possible, by telephone, by direct communication or in writing to the local department, or by calling the statewide reporting hotline. The Maryland Department of Human Services takes reports of adult or child abuse or neglect at **1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383)**.
7. **What the report includes.** As far as is reasonably possible, the report includes:
    1. the name, age and home address of the vulnerable adult;
    2. the name and home address of the person responsible for the adult's care;
    3. where the adult is now;
    4. the nature of the adult's incapacity;
    5. the nature and extent of the abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation, including any evidence or information the reporter has about previous injury possibly resulting from it; and
    6. any other information that would help to find out its cause and who is responsible.

    A staff member who does not know some of this still reports right away with what they know.
8. **The staff member reports.** The staff member with reason to believe makes the report themselves. Telling the office is required too (Procedure step 3), but it never replaces or delays the report. No one at Sample Home Care, LLC may tell a staff member not to report, to wait, or to report only through the office.

9. **Emergencies.** If anyone is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical help, the staff member calls 911 first, and then reports.
10. **Cooperating with the investigation.** The local department investigates reports, and other agencies providing services or care to the adult may assist on its request. When the local department asks, the Agency Director cooperates and shares the client information that is pertinent and relevant to the investigation, as Family Law §14-303(e) allows (Policy 7.4).

Suspected abuse or neglect of a child (Family Law §§5-704 and 5-705)

11. These duties apply to every agency, because staff may come across a child in a client's home. A **child** is anyone under 18. **Abuse** of a child includes physical or mental injury that harms or puts at substantial risk the child's health or welfare, caused by a parent, a household or family member, or someone with care, custody or supervision of, or authority over, the child; sexual abuse; and labor trafficking. **Neglect** is leaving a child unattended, or another failure to give proper care and attention, by a person responsible for the child, in circumstances that harm or put at substantial risk the child's health or welfare (Family Law §5-701).
12. **Mandated reporters.** Each health practitioner, police officer, educator or human service worker acting in a professional capacity who has reason to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency, and must make:
    1. an **oral report**, by telephone or direct communication, as soon as possible, to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and
    2. a **written report** to the local department not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention or treatment that caused them to believe the child had been abused or neglected, with a copy to the local State's Attorney.
13. **Everyone else.** Any other person in Maryland who has reason to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency, orally or in writing.
14. **Sample Home Care, LLC's reading.** As for adults, Sample Home Care, LLC requires every member of staff to follow item 12: an oral report as soon as possible and a written report within 48 hours, with a copy to the local State's Attorney.
15. **Where.** The local department is the one in the county where the child lives, or, if different, where the abuse or neglect is alleged to have taken place. Reports may also be made through the hotline 1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383). The report includes, as far as reasonably possible, the child's name, age and home address; the name and home address of the parent or other person responsible for the child; where the child is now; the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect, including any evidence of earlier instances; and anything else that would help find the cause and who is responsible.

Nurses and certified caregivers: the Board of Nursing and OHCQ (COMAR 10.07.05.10F-G)

16. If Sample Home Care, LLC is aware of an action or inaction by an individual it provided or referred that may be grounds for action under Health Occupations Article §§8-316 and 8-6A-10 (the Board of Nursing's disciplinary grounds for nurses, nursing assistants and medication technicians), Sample Home Care, LLC must report the action or condition to the Board of Nursing and OHCQ immediately when it becomes known. By Sample Home Care, LLC's reading, a reasonable suspicion that a nurse, CNA or certified medication technician has abused, neglected or exploited a client is such an action. The Agency Director makes this report, in addition to any report to the local department, and records it on the Board of Nursing and OHCQ report record in Policy 3.6 (Certified and uncertified caregivers), which also sets out the Board report for other conduct.
17. A nursing administrator, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse or certified nursing assistant who makes a report to the Board of Nursing as COMAR 10.07.05.10F requires has immunity from liability as described in Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article §5-709, and other persons as described in §5-708.

Protecting the client and the reporter

18. **Client safety.** After any report, the Agency Director and the registered nurse make sure the client's services continue safely. The registered nurse reviews the client's needs and plan of care (Policies 2.5 and 4.6).
19. **When a staff member is suspected.** The Agency Director removes that person from the client's schedule while the matter is looked into, and decides, on the facts, whether they may work with other clients in the meantime. The Agency Director records the decision and the reasons. Action after the investigation follows Sample Home Care, LLC's personnel practices and, for nurses and certified caregivers, item 16.
20. **No retaliation.** No one is disciplined, treated worse or retaliated against for making a report in good faith. The Maryland Department of Human Services says reports of suspected child abuse are immune from civil liability unless they are purposefully erroneous or malicious. Within Sample Home Care, LLC, the reporter's identity is shared only with people who need to know it.
21. **Telling licensing and law enforcement agencies about complaint outcomes.** When a complaint involves suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation, the notice of its disposition goes to licensing or law enforcement agencies when the law requires it (COMAR 10.07.05.09B(3)(c); Policy 7.2).

Training

22. Every caregiver is trained in the prevention of abuse and neglect (COMAR 10.07.05.11C(7); Policy 3.5), and that training covers this policy: the meanings in items 1 and 11, the reporting steps, the hotline number, and the duty to tell the office after reporting. Each new member of staff receives a copy of this policy when they start.

Procedure

1. **Danger first.** If anyone is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical care, the staff member calls 911 and stays with the client if it is safe to do so (Policy 6.3).
2. **Report as soon as possible.**
    1. For an adult: the staff member calls the local department of social services for the county where the adult lives or where the harm happened, or the statewide hotline 1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383), and gives the information in Policy item 7.
    2. For a child: the staff member makes an oral report as soon as possible to the local department or the police, then a written report to the local department within 48 hours, with a copy to the local State's Attorney (Policy items 12 to 15). The written report uses the local department's form if it provides one, or a signed letter with the information in Policy item 15. The Agency Director helps the staff member send it on time.
3. **Tell the office.** After reporting, the staff member tells the Agency Director on (410) 555-0100 during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or (410) 555-0199 at other times. If the Agency Director is the person suspected, the staff member tells the registered nurse, Avery Quinn, RN, or the governing authority, Sample Home Care, LLC, through its members Morgan Ellis and Riley Chen, instead.
4. **Office staff who learn of a concern.** An office staff member who learns of a concern (for example from a family member on the phone) also reports under step 2. If the concern comes from a caregiver, the office confirms that the caregiver has made the report, and makes its own report if it is not sure the caregiver has.
5. **Write it down.** As soon as possible after reporting, the staff member completes the internal report form at the end of this Procedure and gives it to the Agency Director.
6. **Record.** The Agency Director enters the report in the abuse and neglect reporting record and files a dated note in the client record (Policy 7.4). When the concern involves a nurse or certified caregiver, the Agency Director reports to the Board of Nursing and OHCQ immediately (Policy item 16) and records it on the Board of Nursing and OHCQ report record (Policy 3.6).
7. **Protect.** The Agency Director and the registered nurse act under Policy items 18 and 19.
8. **Cooperate.** The Agency Director is Sample Home Care, LLC's contact for the local department and the police, and shares information under Policy item 10.
9. **Follow up.** The Agency Director records the outcome when it is known, and brings each report (without client names) to the quality assurance review (Policy 2.4).

Sample Home Care, LLC: Internal report of suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation

Completed by the staff member after making the report. This form never replaces the report to the local department, the police or the hotline.

Your name and title: _____ Date and time you became concerned: _____

Person affected (name, age, address): _____ ☐ client ☐ other adult ☐ child

What you saw, heard or were told, by whom, and when, in your own words: _____

Any injury or condition you noticed: _____

Person suspected, if known (name, relationship): _____

911 called? ☐ No ☐ Yes, at (time): _____

Report made to: ☐ local department of social services (county): _____ ☐ hotline 1-800-917-7383 ☐ police (agency): _____

Date and time of report: _____ Name of the person who took it, and any reference number: _____

Child only: written report sent to the local department on (date, within 48 hours): _____ Copy to the local State's Attorney on: _____

Office told: name, date and time: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sample Home Care, LLC: Abuse and neglect reporting record

No.	Date concern arose	Person affected	Reported by	Reported to, date and time	Reference no.	Written report (child, within 48 hours)	Board of Nursing and OHCQ report (if staff suspected)	Staff member removed from schedule?	Outcome

Responsibilities

- **All staff:** call 911 in an emergency; report suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation of an adult, and suspected abuse or neglect of a child, as soon as possible and directly; tell the office after reporting; complete the internal report; cooperate with investigations; never retaliate against anyone who reports.
- **Agency Director (Jordan Lee):** makes sure every staff member knows this policy from their first day; never prevents or delays a report; keeps the reporting record; reports nurses and certified caregivers to the Board of Nursing and OHCQ immediately; protects the client and decides on schedule changes; is the contact for the local department and the police.
- **Registered nurse (Avery Quinn, RN):** watches for signs of abuse, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation at assessments and supervisory visits (Policies 2.5 and 4.4) and reports under this policy; reviews the client's plan of care after a report; teaches this policy in caregiver training (Policy 3.5).

- **Governing authority (Sample Home Care, LLC, through its members Morgan Ellis and Riley Chen):** receives reports when the Agency Director is the person suspected, and makes sure this policy is followed.

Records

- The internal report forms and the abuse and neglect reporting record, kept at the office with the quality assurance records.
- Board of Nursing and OHCQ report records (Policy 3.6).
- A dated note of each report in the client record (Policy 7.4).
- Decisions to remove a staff member from a schedule, with reasons, in the personnel file.
- Training records showing each caregiver was trained in prevention of abuse and neglect (Policy 3.5).

Recommended practice

These are Sample Home Care, LLC's own practices. Maryland's rules do not require them:

- Give every caregiver a wallet card with 911, the hotline 1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383), the local department of social services numbers for the counties served (Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County) and the on-call number.
- Ask the local department or the hotline for a reference number for each report and record it.
- Cover this policy again at least once a year, with examples of financial exploitation, which is often the hardest to spot.
- In a March 2026 transmittal sent to residential service agencies among other providers, OHCQ asked adult medical day care and nursing home staff who become aware of individuals returning to settings of concern, such as places that may be operating as unlicensed assisted living programs, to report the details to OHCQ. Sample Home Care, LLC follows the same practice: if staff see a client living in such a setting, the Agency Director reports it to OHCQ at (410) 402-8018 or through OHCQ's online form, in addition to any report under this policy.

Rule basis

> “Abuse” means the sustaining of any physical injury by a vulnerable adult as a result of cruel or inhumane treatment or as a result of a malicious act by any person.
>
> `Family Law §14-101(b)`

> “Exploitation” means any action which involves the misuse of a vulnerable adult’s funds, property, or person.
>
> `Family Law §14-101(f)`

> “Health practitioner” includes any person who is authorized to practice healing under the Health Occupations Article
>
> `Family Law §14-101(g)`

> (h) (1) “Human service worker” means any professional employee of any public or private health or social services agency or provider.
>
> `Family Law §14-101(h)`

> (j) Except as provided in §§ 14–201, 14–402, and 14–403 of this title, “local department” means the local department that has jurisdiction in the county: (1) where the vulnerable adult lives;
>
> `Family Law §14-101(j)(1)`

> (3) where the abuse is alleged to have taken place.
>
> `Family Law §14-101(j)(3)`

> (l) (1) “Neglect” means the willful deprivation of a vulnerable adult of adequate food, clothing, essential medical treatment or habilitative therapy, shelter, or supervision.
>
> `Family Law §14-101(l)(1)`

> (p) “Self–neglect” means the inability of a vulnerable adult to provide the vulnerable adult with the services: (1) that are necessary for the vulnerable adult’s physical and mental health; and (2) the absence of which impairs or threatens the vulnerable adult’s well–being. (q) “Vulnerable adult” means an adult who lacks the physical or mental capacity to provide for the adult’s daily needs.
>
> `Family Law §14-101(p)-(q)`

> notwithstanding any law on privileged communications, each health practitioner, police officer, or human service worker who contacts, examines, attends, or treats an alleged vulnerable adult, and who has reason to believe that the alleged vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation shall: (i) notify the local department; and
>
> `Family Law §14-302(a)(1)`

> (b) An individual who is required to make a report under subsection (a) of this section shall make the report as soon as possible by telephone, by direct communication, or in writing to the local department or by calling the statewide reporting hotline. (c) Any individual other than a health practitioner, human service worker, or police officer who has reason to believe that an alleged vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation may file with the local department an oral or written report of the suspected abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation.
>
> `Family Law §14-302(b)-(c)`

> (d) Insofar as is reasonably possible, an individual who makes a report under this section shall include in the report the following information: (1) the name, age, and home address of the alleged vulnerable adult; (2) the name and home address of the person responsible for the care of the alleged vulnerable adult; (3) the whereabouts of the alleged vulnerable adult; (4) the nature of the alleged vulnerable adult's incapacity; (5) the nature and extent of the abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation of the alleged vulnerable adult, including evidence or information available to the reporter concerning previous injury possibly resulting from abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation; and (6) any other information that would help to determine: (i) the cause of the suspected abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation; and (ii) the identity of any individual responsible for the abuse, neglect, self–neglect, or exploitation.
>
> `Family Law §14-302(d)`

> any other public or private agency, including a fiduciary institution, providing services or care to the alleged vulnerable adult or whose information or expertise may be of assistance in assessing risk or planning services may assist in the investigation on the request by the local department.
>
> `Family Law §14-303(c)(2)`

> (e) Parties participating in an investigation may share pertinent client information relevant to the investigation.
>
> `Family Law §14-303(e)`

(b) (1) “Abuse” means: (i) the physical or mental injury of a child under circumstances that indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed by:

1. a parent;
2. a household member or family member;
3. a person who has permanent or temporary care or custody of the child;
4. a person who has responsibility for supervision of the child; or
5. a person who, because of the person’s position or occupation, exercises authority over the child; (ii) sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not; or (iii) labor trafficking of a child by any individual.

`Family Law §5-701(b)(1)`

(e) “Child” means any individual under the age of 18 years.

`Family Law §5-701(e)`

(1) “Educator or human service worker” means any professional employee of any correctional, public, parochial or private educational, health, juvenile service, social or social service agency, institution, or licensed facility.

`Family Law §5-701(g)(1)`

(o) Except as provided in §§ 5–705.1 and 5–714 of this subtitle, “local department” means the local department that has jurisdiction in the county: (1) where the allegedly abused or neglected child lives; or (2) if different, where the abuse or neglect is alleged to have taken place.

`Family Law §5-701(o)`

(s) “Neglect” means the leaving of a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate: (1) that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm; or (2) mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury.

`Family Law §5-701(s)`

each health practitioner, police officer, educator, or human service worker, acting in a professional capacity in this State who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect: (1) shall notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and

`Family Law §5-704(a)`

> (b) (1) An individual who notifies the appropriate authorities under subsection (a) of this section shall make: (i) an oral report, by telephone or direct communication, as soon as possible to the local department or appropriate law enforcement agency; and (ii) a written report:
>
> 1. to the local department not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect; and
> 2. with a copy to the local State's Attorney.
>
> `Family Law §5-704(b)(1)`

> a person in this State other than a health practitioner, police officer, or educator or human service worker who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect shall notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency.
>
> `Family Law §5-705(a)(1)`

> (c) A report made under subsection (a) of this section may be oral or in writing.
>
> `Family Law §5-705(c)`

> F. If an agency is aware of an action or inaction by an individual who is provided or referred by the agency that may be grounds for action under Health Occupations Article, §§8-316 and 8-6A-10, Annotated Code of Maryland, the agency shall report the action or condition to the Board of Nursing and the Office of Health Care Quality immediately when the action or condition is known by the agency. G. A nursing administrator, a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, and a certified nursing assistant shall have immunity from liability as described in Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, §5-709, Annotated Code of Maryland, for making a report to the Board of Nursing as required under §F of this regulation. Other persons are entitled to the immunity from liability as described in the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, §5-708, Annotated Code of Maryland, for making a report to the Board of Nursing as required under §F of this regulation.
>
> `COMAR 10.07.05.10F-G`

> (c) Licensing or law enforcement agencies, when required by law.
>
> `COMAR 10.07.05.09B(3)(c)`

> (7) Prevention of abuse and neglect.
>
> `COMAR 10.07.05.11C(7)`

> (f) Be free from mental, verbal, sexual, and physical abuse, neglect, involuntary seclusion, and exploitation; and
>
> COMAR 10.07.05.16D(1)(f)

> Report adult or child abuse or neglect at 1-800-91Prevent (1-800-917-7383)
>
> Maryland Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Services page (retrieved October 2, 2026)

> You should report your suspicion to the local department in the jurisdiction where you believe the abuse or neglect took or is taking place. Oral reports should be made immediately. A mandated reporter must also complete a written report within 48 hours of contact which discloses the suspected abuse or neglect.
>
> Maryland Department of Human Services, Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect (retrieved October 2, 2026)

> All reports of suspected child abuse are immune from civil liability unless they are purposefully erroneous or malicious.
>
> Maryland Department of Human Services, Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

> (AMDC) centers and nursing home staff may become aware of individuals returning to settings of concern or appearing dependent on others for care in such settings. In these instances, please report all available details to OHCQ by using this link or calling (410) 402-8018.
>
> OHCQ transmittal to providers including Residential Service Agencies, Discharge Planning Requirements and Reporting (March 24, 2026)

Adopted November 1, 2026 · Next review November 1, 2027