SAMPLE POLICY

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

This is Policy 5.1 of the 42 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 5.1

Mandatory reporting: abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and rule noncompliance

WAC 246-335-425(8)(a)-(b) · WAC 246-335-310(21) · WAC 246-335-420(1)(c) · WAC 246-335-435(18)-(19) · RCW 74.34.020(1), (2), (7), (15), (21) · RCW 74.34.035(1)-(10) · RCW 74.34.050(1) · RCW 74.34.053 · RCW 74.34.180(1) · RCW 26.44.030(1)(h) · RCW 70.127.170(24) · DSHS, Report Concerns Involving Vulnerable Adults · DSHS, Report Abuse and Neglect · DOH, Home Care Agencies: Contact Information

Purpose

To make sure everyone at Sample Home Care, LLC knows they are a mandatory reporter, recognizes abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation and neglect, and reports it straight away to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and law enforcement themselves (WAC 246-335-425(8)(b)); that nothing the agency does gets in the way of a report; and that failures to follow the in-home services rules are reported to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) within 14 calendar days (WAC 246-335-425(8)(a)).

Scope

Everyone associated with Sample Home Care, LLC: the administrator, Jordan Lee, the supervisor of direct care services, Casey Morgan, their alternates, caregivers, office staff, volunteers, students and contractors. Each of them is a mandatory reporter under DOH's rules (WAC 246-335-310(21)).

It covers every client: anyone receiving services from a licensed home care agency is a vulnerable adult under the abuse of vulnerable adults law (RCW 74.34.020(21)). It also covers suspected abuse or neglect of a child (items 13 and 14), whoever the person suspected is: a worker, a family member, a visitor or anyone else.

Policy

What to report

1. **The four kinds of harm.** In plain words, from the definitions in RCW 74.34.020:
    1. **Abandonment:** someone with a duty of care leaves the client without the means or ability to get food, clothing, shelter or health care.
    2. **Abuse:** deliberate, willful or reckless action or inaction that injures, unreasonably confines, intimidates or punishes the client. It includes sexual abuse (any nonconsensual sexual conduct, including unwanted touching, sexual harassment and sexually explicit photos or recordings), physical abuse (for example hitting, slapping, pinching, shoving), mental abuse (for example threatening, humiliating, isolating, ridiculing or yelling), personal exploitation (forcing or unduly influencing the client to act against their usual behavior, or to work for someone else's benefit) and improper use of restraint. When a client cannot express harm, pain or distress, abuse is presumed to cause it.
    3. **Financial exploitation:** anyone illegally or improperly using, controlling or withholding the client's money, property, income or other resources for someone else's benefit, for example using deception or pressure, misusing a power of attorney, or taking money from a client who cannot consent.
    4. **Neglect:** a person or organization with a duty of care repeatedly failing to provide the goods and services that keep the client healthy and safe, or a single act or omission showing serious disregard for the client's safety.
2. **No proof needed.** A worker reports when they have reasonable cause to believe harm has happened: what they see, hear or are told. They do not investigate first, confront anyone or wait to be sure. DSHS says no proof is needed to report.

Who reports, where and when

3. **Every report goes to DSHS and to law enforcement, immediately (WAC 246-335-425(8)(b)).** A worker who has reasonable cause to believe that a client has been abandoned, abused, financially exploited or neglected reports immediately to both:
    1. **DSHS Adult Protective Services (APS):** 1-877-734-6277 (TTY 1-833-866-5595), or DSHS's online report form, at any time, day or night; and
    2. **the proper law enforcement agency:** 911 when anyone is in danger or a crime is happening; otherwise the police department or sheriff's office for the place where the client lives, on its non-emergency line.
4. **Assault (RCW 74.34.035(2)-(3)).** When there is reason to suspect sexual assault, the worker immediately reports to law enforcement and to DSHS. When there is reason to suspect physical assault, or reasonable cause to believe an act has caused the client fear of imminent harm, the worker immediately reports to DSHS and to law enforcement. The abuse law has a narrow exception from the law enforcement report for some minor injuries between two vulnerable adults (RCW 74.34.035(4)); Sample Home Care, LLC does not use it, because DOH's rule asks for every report to go to law enforcement as well (the agency's reading).

5. **A death that may be caused by abuse, neglect or abandonment (RCW 74.34.035(5)).** When there is reason to suspect a client's death was caused by abuse, neglect or abandonment by another person, the worker reports the death to the medical examiner or coroner for the county, and to DSHS and local law enforcement, in the most expeditious manner possible. A signed death certificate does not remove this duty. What workers do at the time of a death is in Policy 2.6.
6. **Danger first.** If anyone is in immediate danger, hurt or seriously unwell, the worker calls 911 first, and makes the reports in items 3 to 5 as soon as everyone is safe.
7. **What a report includes (RCW 74.34.035(8)).** As much as the worker knows of:
    1. their own name and address;
    2. the client's name and address, and the name of the agency providing care (Sample Home Care, LLC);
    3. the name and address of the client's legal guardian or other decision maker;
    4. what happened, and how serious it is;
    5. any earlier abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, neglect or self-neglect;
    6. who is suspected, if known; and
    7. anything else that may help show what happened, or the cause of a client's death.

Nothing gets in the way of a report

8. **Workers report themselves (RCW 74.34.035(7)).** The duty to report belongs to each person who has reasonable cause. No one at Sample Home Care, LLC may tell a worker not to report, to wait, to ask permission, or to report only through the office, and no agency step screens, checks or delays a report. A worker who reports by phone or online to the state has met their duty, as DSHS says. If two workers know the same thing, they may make one call together and give both names.
9. **Telling the agency too.** After making their reports, or at the same time, the worker tells the supervisor of direct care services ((253) 555-0100, or (253) 555-0199 when the office is closed), so the agency can keep the client safe and record the report. If the person suspected is the supervisor, they tell the administrator; if it is the administrator, they tell the alternate administrator or the governing body, Morgan Ellis, Managing Member. Telling the agency never replaces the report to DSHS and law enforcement.
10. **Protection for people who report.** Unless there is a court proceeding or the reporter agrees, the reporter's identity is confidential (RCW 74.34.035(9)). A person who reports in good faith is immune from liability for the report (RCW 74.34.050). Sample Home Care, LLC does not retaliate in any way against a worker, client or family member who reports or complains in good faith; a worker who suffers workplace retaliation for reporting has the remedies in chapter 49.60 RCW (RCW 74.34.180). Any worker who retaliates against someone who reported is dealt with under the agency's disciplinary process.
11. **Not reporting.** The law makes knowingly failing to make a required report a gross misdemeanor (RCW 74.34.053), and failing to report abuse or neglect of a client is a

ground for DOH action against the agency's license (RCW 70.127.170(24)). Making a false report intentionally, maliciously or in bad faith is a misdemeanor (RCW 74.34.053(2)).

L2. **Helping investigators (RCW 74.34.035(10)).** When DSHS or law enforcement investigates, the administrator gives them access, on request, to the agency's records about the client that are relevant to the investigation.

Children

L3. **Suspected abuse or neglect of a child (WAC 246-335-425(8)(b); RCW 26.44.030).** DOH's rule also requires mandatory reporters to report suspected abuse or neglect of a person in violation of RCW 26.44.030, the child abuse reporting law. A worker who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect reports it, themselves, to DSHS's child reporting line, 1-866-END HARM (1-866-363-4276), and to the proper law enforcement agency (911 in an emergency). The law sets the time: at the first opportunity, and in no case more than 48 hours after the worker has reasonable cause to believe it. The report includes the identity of the person suspected, if known. This applies to any child the worker meets through their work, for example a child living in or visiting a client's home. Items 7 to 10 apply to these reports too.

L4. **Clients under 18.** Sample Home Care, LLC's services are designed for adults. If it does serve a client under 18, workers report under item 13 for that client as well, immediately rather than within 48 hours, because a client of a licensed home care agency may count as a vulnerable adult (RCW 74.34.020(21)(e); the agency's reading).

What the agency does after a report

L5. **Keeping the client safe.** The supervisor makes sure the client's services continue safely and reviews the plan of care (Policy 3.2), without doing anything that would interfere with DSHS's or law enforcement's work, such as questioning the client about the allegation or alerting the person suspected.

L6. **A worker who is suspected.** If the person suspected is a worker of Sample Home Care, LLC, the administrator takes them off client visits from the time the agency learns of it until DSHS, law enforcement and the agency's own review allow a decision, and arranges other workers for their clients (Policy 2.7). The administrator then decides, in writing, whether the worker may return, needs retraining or closer supervision, or will not return, and makes a new character, competence and suitability decision if needed (Policy 4.4). This is the agency's own rule; the reporting laws do not set it.

L7. **Record and learn.** The supervisor records the report on the report record below and files a copy in the client record (Policy 3.4). Each report, without client names, goes to the quality improvement program (Policy 7.1).

L8. **Telling others.** When the supervisor tells the client's family or legal representative about a concern, they take care not to alert anyone who may be suspected, and follow any advice from the people who took the report. Telling others is always in addition to, never instead of, the reports in this policy.

Discharging a client the agency is worried about (WAC 246-335-420(1)(c))

19. When Sample Home Care, LLC discharges a client and is concerned about the client's ongoing care and safety, the administrator may send a self-report to the appropriate state agencies, for example DSHS Adult Protective Services, giving the reasons for the discharge and the steps taken to reduce the safety concerns (Policy 2.2). This self-report is the administrator's choice. It never replaces a report under item 3 when there is reasonable cause to believe a client has been abandoned, abused, financially exploited or neglected.

Reporting rule noncompliance to DOH (WAC 246-335-425(8)(a))

20. **What and when.** Mandatory reporters must report to DOH any failure to comply with chapter 246-335 WAC or chapter 70.127 RCW, on DOH's forms, within 14 calendar days after the reporting person knows of noncompliance that must be reported. This includes failures by Sample Home Care, LLC itself, for example a caregiver who gave care unsupervised after day 120 without fingerprint results (Policy 4.3), a two-year background recheck that was missed, or a worker who did a task the home care rules do not allow (Policy 2.3).
21. **How.** A worker who knows of noncompliance tells the administrator, who completes DOH's form, sends it to DOH within the 14 calendar days counted from the day the worker first knew, names the worker as a person who raised it, and shows the worker the report that was sent. Any worker may also report to DOH directly, and must do so themselves if they have not been shown a report sent within that time. The agency's reading is that a report made this way meets each named person's duty; the rule does not say. No one is discouraged from reporting to DOH directly.
22. **DOH's form.** DOH's rule says reports are made on department forms. As of October 2026, no DOH form for these reports could be found on DOH's website. The administrator asks DOH's in-home services program for its current form (360-236-2957) and keeps a blank copy with this policy. If the form cannot be obtained in time, the report is sent to DOH in writing within the 14 calendar days, with a note that DOH's form was requested.
23. **Correcting the problem.** The administrator also corrects the problem, and the quality improvement program checks that the correction worked (Policy 7.1).

Clients know the numbers too

24. The client bill of rights tells each client and their family DOH's complaint contact and DSHS's End Harm number, 1-866-363-4276 (WAC 246-335-435(18)-(19); Policy 3.1).

Procedure

1. **At orientation.** Every worker is taught this policy in person before working with clients, and given the reporting card below (Policy 4.5).
2. **When a worker has reasonable cause.** The worker:
    1. calls 911 if anyone is in danger (Policy item 6);

   2. reports immediately to DSHS APS (1-877-734-6277 or online) and to law enforcement, or for a child to 1-866-363-4276 and law enforcement within the time in item 13, giving what item 7 lists, and asks for a reference number;
   3. for a suspicious death, also calls the county medical examiner or coroner (item 5); and
   4. tells the supervisor, or the person item 9 names.
3. **Recording.** The supervisor completes the report record with the worker the same day, including who reported, when, to whom and any reference numbers.
4. **Follow-up.** The supervisor and administrator act under Policy items 15 to 17.
5. **Noncompliance.** For a rule failure, the administrator completes the noncompliance part of the record and sends DOH's form within 14 calendar days (items 20 to 22).

Sample Home Care, LLC: reporting card (for every worker)

If you suspect	Report immediately to	And
Anyone is in danger now	911	Then the reports below
Abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation or neglect of a client	DSHS Adult Protective Services: 1-877-734-6277 (TTY 1-833-866-5595) or online, any time	Law enforcement: police or sheriff where the client lives, non-emergency line: _____
Sexual or physical assault, or an act causing fear of imminent harm	Law enforcement and DSHS APS	Tell the supervisor
A death that may be caused by abuse, neglect or abandonment	Medical examiner or coroner (county: _____, phone: _____), DSHS APS and law enforcement	Tell the supervisor
Abuse or neglect of a child	1-866-END HARM (1-866-363-4276) and law enforcement, at the first opportunity and within 48 hours	Tell the supervisor
The agency is not following DOH's rules	Tell the administrator; report to DOH within 14 calendar days (360-236-2957)	

You do not need proof or permission. Tell the supervisor at (253) 555-0100 (office closed: (253) 555-0199) after you report, or at the same time.

Sample Home Care, LLC: report record

Client: _____ Date and time the concern arose: _____ Worker(s) with reasonable cause: _____

What was seen, heard or told (facts only): _____

Report	Made by	Date and time	Person who took it	Reference number
911 (if called)				
DSHS APS, or 1-866-END HARM for a child				
Law enforcement (agency name)				
Medical examiner or coroner (deaths only)				

Supervisor told on: _____ Client safety steps taken: _____

Worker suspected? Yes / No. Taken off client visits on: _____ Decision and date (Policy item 16): _____

Sent to quality improvement on: _____

Rule noncompliance (WAC 246-335-425(8)(a))

What failed to comply, and which rule: _____

Date the first person knew: _____ 14th calendar day: _____

DOH form sent on: _____ by: _____ Workers named and shown the report on: _____

Correction made: _____

Responsibilities

- **Every worker:** reports directly and immediately (or, for a child, at the first opportunity and within 48 hours), then tells the supervisor.
- **Supervisor of direct care services (Casey Morgan):** keeps the client safe, records reports, and supports workers who report.
- **Administrator (Jordan Lee):** makes sure no one interferes with a report, takes suspected workers off client visits, files noncompliance reports with DOH, gives investigators access to records, and decides on any self-report at discharge.
- **Governing body (Morgan Ellis, Managing Member):** receives reports about the administrator.

Records

- Report records, with a copy in the client record (Policy 3.4).
- Copies of noncompliance reports sent to DOH, with the date sent.
- Training records showing each worker was taught this policy (Policy 4.8).

Recommended practice

- Go over this policy with every worker once a year, using real (anonymous) examples, and have them sign that they have done so.
- Fill in the local law enforcement and coroner numbers on each worker's reporting card for the counties they work in. DSHS publishes a directory of county coroners and medical examiners.
- Workers who are worried that a client is neglecting themselves tell the supervisor, who may report it to Adult Protective Services, which also takes reports of self-neglect.
- Keep a printed copy of this policy and the reporting card in every new client's home folder for workers.

Rule basis

> Mandatory reporters shall report failure to comply with the requirements of chapters 246-335 WAC and 70.127 RCW to the department. The report must be submitted on department forms. Reports must be submitted within fourteen calendar days after the reporting person has knowledge of noncompliance that must be reported;
>
> `WAC 246-335-425(8)(a)`

> Mandatory reporters shall report suspected abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect of a person in violation of RCW 74.34.020 or 26.44.030 to the department of social and health services and the proper law enforcement agency. Reports must be submitted immediately when the reporting person has reasonable cause to believe that abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect of a vulnerable adult has occurred.
>
> `WAC 246-335-425(8)(b)`

> "Mandatory reporter" means an administrator, ... home care aide, ... supervisor of direct care services, ... volunteer, or other individuals associated with an in-home services agency.
>
> `WAC 246-335-310(21)`

> "Vulnerable adult" includes a person: ... Receiving services from ... home care agencies licensed or required to be licensed under chapter 70.127 RCW
>
> `RCW 74.34.020(21)(e)`

> "Abandonment" means action or inaction by a person or entity with a duty of care for a vulnerable adult that leaves the vulnerable person without the means or ability to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter, or health care.
>
> `RCW 74.34.020(1)`

> "Abuse" means the intentional, willful, or reckless action or inaction that inflicts injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or punishment on a vulnerable adult. In instances of abuse of a vulnerable adult who is unable to express or demonstrate physical harm, pain, or mental anguish, the abuse is presumed to cause physical harm, pain, or mental anguish. Abuse includes sexual abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse, and personal exploitation of a vulnerable adult, and improper use of restraint against a vulnerable adult
>
> `RCW 74.34.020(2)`

> "Financial exploitation" means the illegal or improper use, control over, or withholding of the property, income, resources, or trust funds of the vulnerable adult by any person or entity for any person's or entity's profit or advantage other than for the vulnerable adult's profit or advantage.
>
> `RCW 74.34.020(7)`

> "Neglect" means (a) a pattern of conduct or inaction by a person or entity with a duty of care that fails to provide the goods and services that maintain physical or mental health of a vulnerable adult, or that fails to avoid or prevent physical or mental harm or pain to a vulnerable adult; or (b) an act or omission by a person or entity with a duty of care that demonstrates a serious disregard of consequences of such a magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to the vulnerable adult's health, welfare, or safety
>
> `RCW 74.34.020(15)`

> When there is reason to suspect that sexual assault has occurred, mandated reporters shall immediately report to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the department. (3) When there is reason to suspect that physical assault has occurred or there is reasonable cause to believe that an act has caused fear of imminent harm: (a) Mandated reporters shall immediately report to the department; and (b) Mandated reporters shall immediately report to the appropriate law enforcement agency, except as provided in subsection (4) of this section.
>
> `RCW 74.34.035(2)-(3)`

> When there is reason to suspect that the death of a vulnerable adult was caused by abuse, neglect, or abandonment by another person, mandated reporters shall, pursuant to RCW 68.50.020, report the death to the medical examiner or coroner having jurisdiction, as well as the department and local law enforcement, in the most expeditious manner possible. A mandated reporter is not relieved from the reporting requirement provisions of this subsection by the existence of a previously signed death certificate.
>
> `RCW 74.34.035(5)`

> No facility, as defined by this chapter, agency licensed or required to be licensed under chapter 70.127 RCW, or facility or agency under contract with the department to provide care for vulnerable adults may develop policies or procedures that interfere with the reporting requirements of this chapter.
>
> RCW 74.34.035(7)

> Each report, oral or written, must contain as much as possible of the following information: (a) The name and address of the person making the report; (b) The name and address of the vulnerable adult and the name of the facility or agency providing care for the vulnerable adult; (c) The name and address of the legal guardian or alternate decision maker; (d) The nature and extent of the abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, or self-neglect; (e) Any history of previous abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, or self-neglect; (f) The identity of the alleged perpetrator, if known; and (g) Other information that may be helpful in establishing the extent of abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, or the cause of death of the deceased vulnerable adult.
>
> RCW 74.34.035(8)

> Unless there is a judicial proceeding or the person consents, the identity of the person making the report under this section is confidential.
>
> RCW 74.34.035(9)

> In conducting an investigation of abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, self-neglect, or neglect, the department or law enforcement, upon request, must have access to all relevant records related to the vulnerable adult that are in the possession of mandated reporters and their employees, unless otherwise prohibited by law.
>
> RCW 74.34.035(10)

> A person participating in good faith in making a report under this chapter or testifying about alleged abuse, neglect, abandonment, financial exploitation, or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult in a judicial or administrative proceeding under this chapter is immune from liability resulting from the report or testimony.
>
> RCW 74.34.050(1)

> A person who is required to make a report under this chapter and who knowingly fails to make the report is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.
>
> RCW 74.34.053(1)

> A person who intentionally, maliciously, or in bad faith makes a false report of alleged abandonment, abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect of a vulnerable adult is guilty of a misdemeanor.
>
> `RCW 74.34.053(2)`

> An employee or contractor who is a whistleblower and who as a result of being a whistleblower has been subjected to workplace reprisal or retaliatory action, has the remedies provided under chapter 49.60 RCW.
>
> `RCW 74.34.180(1)`

> Failed to report abuse or neglect of a ... client in violation of chapter 74.34 RCW.
>
> `RCW 70.127.170(24)`

> The report must be made at the first opportunity, but in no case longer than 48 hours after there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has suffered abuse or neglect. The report must include the identity of the accused if known.
>
> `RCW 26.44.030(1)(h)`

> A home care agency discharging a client that is concerned about their ongoing care and safety may submit a self-report to appropriate state agencies which identifies the reasons for discharge and the steps taken to mitigate safety concerns;
>
> `WAC 246-335-420(1)(c)`

> Be informed of the department's complaint hotline number to report complaints about the licensed agency or credentialed health care professionals; and (19) Be informed of the DSHS end harm hotline number to report suspected abuse of children or vulnerable adults.
>
> `WAC 246-335-435(18)-(19)`

> You can do this through our online form or call us at 1-877-734-6277 ... You can make a report at any time, day or night.
>
> `DSHS, Report Concerns Involving Vulnerable Adults`

> (TTY) 1-833-866-5595
>
> `DSHS, Report Abuse and Neglect (Adult Protective Services)`

> Make a report about a child. ... Call 1-866-END HARM (1-866-363-4276
>
> `DSHS, Report Abuse and Neglect`

> You do not need proof to report suspected abuse, and you do not need to give your name.
>
> `DSHS, Report Concerns Involving Vulnerable Adults`

> If you made a report to the state by phone or online, you have fulfilled your mandatory reporting obligations.
>
> `DSHS, Report Abuse and Neglect, Mandatory Reporters`

> To determine the local coroner or medical examiner for a specific county see the member directory spreadsheet
>
> `DSHS, Report Abuse and Neglect`

> Phone 360-236-2957
>
> `DOH, Home Care Agencies: Contact Information`

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