

Mandatory Reporting Task Force

50-State Policy Scan: Standards for reporting abuse and neglect*

The Mandatory Reporting Task Force is considering whether changes to child abuse and neglect reporting standards in statute and/or regulation might improve the state’s child protection system. To aid this, the Office of Colorado’s Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) has researched how states throughout the country vary in the standards they set for when reports of child abuse and neglect are mandatory. It is important to note that the CPO is providing this information as an informational resource as task force members consider possible changes in Colorado. The curation of this information is not an endorsement of any particular policy, and the CPO neither endorses nor disapproves of the policies included below.

Summary of Trends

Reasonable cause to know/suspect/believe	AK, AS, AR, CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, IL, KY, ME, MA, MI, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NJ, NY, ND, NMI, OH, OR, PA, RI, SD, TN, TX, VI, WA, WV, WI, WY (34)
Reason to know/suspect/believe	GU, HI, ID, IN, KS, MD, MN, NH, OK, SC, UT, VA (12)
Witnessed youth “ subjected to circumstances or conditions that”	AS, AR, ID, MO, NE, UT, VI, WV, WY (9) *Note: always in combination with other phrases
Reasonably know/suspect/believe	AZ, CA, IA, VT (4)
Has cause to suspect/believe	LA, NC (2)
Other	AL, DE, NM, PR, TN (5)

Alabama: Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-3

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **knows or suspects** a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect.

Alaska: Citation: Alaska Stat. § 47.17.020

A report is required when a mandatory reporter, in the performance of their occupational duties, has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has suffered harm as a result of child abuse or neglect.

*As captured by the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)’s scan of mandatory reporting policy standards for making a report. U.S. territories are included: American Samoa (AS), Guam (GU), the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), Puerto Rico (PR) and the Virgin Islands (VI). Please note that a state or territory may be included in multiple categories. This is a review of language in statute and generally does not include regulations, administrative code, or agency documents. To see full context of statute please use provided citations. Text of statute reported as current through April 2019, any changes since then are not captured here.

American Samoa: Citation: Ann. Code § 45.2002

A report is required when the reporter has **reasonable cause to know or suspect** that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect **or has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.**

Arizona: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 13-3620

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **reasonably believes** that a child is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse or child abuse, a reportable offense (including child pornography, child sex trafficking, or incest), or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the child by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature, or the person **reasonably believes** there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant.

Arkansas: Citation: Ann. Code § 12-18-402

A mandatory reporter shall immediately notify the child abuse hotline if either of the following applies: *They have **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been subjected to child maltreatment, has died as a result of child maltreatment, or died suddenly and unexpectedly. *They **observe a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances** that would reasonably result in child maltreatment.

California: Citation: Penal Code § 11166

A mandatory reporter shall make a report whenever they, in their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter **knows or reasonably suspects** has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. The term 'reasonable suspicion' means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on their training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. 'Reasonable suspicion' does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect. Any 'reasonable suspicion' is sufficient.

Colorado: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 19-3-304

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to know or suspect** that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

Connecticut: Citation: Gen. Stat. § 17a-101a

A report is required when a mandatory reporter, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, has **reasonable cause to suspect or believe** that any child under age 18 has been

subjected to any of the following: *Has been abused or neglected *Has suffered a nonaccidental physical injury or an injury that is inconsistent with the history given of such injury *Is placed at imminent risk of serious harm

Delaware: Citation: Ann. Code Tit. 16, § 903

A report is required when any person **knows or in good faith suspects** child abuse or neglect.

DC: Citation: Ann. Code § 4-1321.02

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect** that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity has been or is in immediate danger of being a mentally or physically abused or neglected child. The Metropolitan Police Department shall immediately report or have a report made to the Child and Family Services Agency of any knowledge, information, or suspicion of a child engaging in or offering to engage in a sexual act or sexual contact, as defined in the Anti-Sexual Abuse Act of 1994 (§ 22-3001), in return for receiving anything of value.

Florida: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.201

A report is required when any person **knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect**, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care.

Georgia: Citation: Ann. Code § 19-7-5(b)

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to believe** that suspected child abuse has occurred.

Guam: Citation: Ann. Code Tit. 19, § 13201

A report is required when a mandatory reporter who comes into contact with children in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession **has reason to suspect** on the basis of their medical, professional, or other training and experience that a child is an abused or neglected child.

Hawaii: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 350-1.1

A report is required when a mandatory reporter, in their professional or official capacity, **has reason to believe** that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future.

Idaho: Citation: Idaho Code § 16-1605

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **has reason to believe** that a child younger than age 18 has been abused, abandoned, or neglected or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

Illinois: Citation: Comp. Stat. Ch. 325, § 5/4

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to believe** a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child.

Indiana: Citation: Ann. Code § 31-33-5-1

A report is required when an individual has **reason to believe** that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect.

Iowa: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 232.69

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **reasonably believes** that a child has suffered abuse.

Kansas: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 38-2223

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reason to suspect** that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental, or emotional abuse or neglect, or sexual abuse.

Kentucky: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 620.030

A report is required when any person **knows or has reasonable cause to believe** that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused. In addition, a report must be made when any person **knows or has reasonable cause to believe** that a child is a victim of human trafficking, as defined in § 529.010. The requirement to report suspected human trafficking shall apply regardless of whether the person believed to have caused the human trafficking of the child is a parent, guardian, fictive kin, person in a position of authority, person in position of special trust, or person exercising custodial control or supervision.

Louisiana: Citation: Ch. Code Art. 609

A report is required when any mandatory reporter **has cause to believe** that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect.

Maine: Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4011-A

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected or that a suspicious child death has occurred.

Maryland: Citation: Fam. Law § 5-704

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reason to believe** that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

Massachusetts: Citation: Ann. Laws Ch. 119, § 51A

A report is required when a mandatory reporter who, in their professional capacity, has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from suspected abuse or neglect.

Michigan: Citation: Comp. Laws § 722.623

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** child abuse or neglect.

Minnesota: Citation: Ann. Stat. §§ 260E.06; 260E.03

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **knows or has reason to believe** a child is being maltreated or has been maltreated within the preceding 3 years. 'Maltreatment' includes physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, egregious harm, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, mental injury, and maltreatment of a child in a facility.

Mississippi: Citation: Ann. Code § 43-21-353

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child is abused, neglected, or a victim of commercial sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

Missouri: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 210.115

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being **subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result** in abuse or neglect.

Montana: Citation: Ann. Code § 41-3-201

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect**, as a result of information they receive in their professional or official capacity, that a child is abused or neglected by anyone regardless of whether the person suspected of causing the abuse or neglect is a parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare.

Nebraska: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 28-711

A report is required when a mandatory reporter or any other person has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect or observes such child being subjected to **conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result** in child abuse or neglect.

Nevada: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 432B.220

A report is required when a mandatory reporter, in their professional or occupational capacity, **knows or has reasonable cause to believe** that a child has been abused or neglected.

New Hampshire: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 169-C:29

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reason to suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected.

New Jersey: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 9:6-8.10

A report is required when any person has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child has been subjected to child abuse.

New Mexico: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 32A-4-3

A report is required when any person **knows or has a reasonable suspicion** that the child is abused or neglected.

New York: Citation: Soc. Serv. Law § 413

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child.

North Carolina: Citation: Gen. Stat. § 7B-301

A report is required when any person **has cause to suspect** that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent or has died as the result of maltreatment.

North Dakota: Citation: Cent. Code § 50-25.1-03

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect** that a child is abused or neglected or has died as a result of abuse or neglect if the knowledge or suspicion is derived from information received by that individual in that individual's official or professional capacity.

Northern Mariana Islands: Citation: Commonwealth Code Tit. 6, § 5313

A report is required when a mandatory reporter comes into contact in a professional capacity with a child who the person **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect** is, or will become, a victim of child abuse.

Ohio: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 2151.421

A report is required when a mandatory reporter acting in an official or professional capacity **knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect** based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in a similar position to suspect, that a child younger than age 18 or a person younger than age 21 with a developmental disability or physical impairment has suffered or faces a

threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child.

Oklahoma: Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 10A, § 1-2-101

A report is required when any person has **reason to believe** that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect.

Oregon: Citation: Rev. Stat. § 419B.010

A report is required when a public or private official has **reasonable cause to believe** that any child with whom the official comes in contact has suffered abuse or that any person with whom the official comes in contact has abused a child.

Pennsylvania: Citation: Cons. Stat. Tit. 23, § 6311

A mandated reporter shall make a report of suspected child abuse if the mandated reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances: *The mandated reporter encounters the child in the course of employment, occupation, and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service. *The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization, or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child. *A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse. *An individual aged 14 or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that they have committed child abuse.

Puerto Rico: Citation: Ann. Laws Tit. 8, § 446

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **learns or comes to suspect** that a minor has been or is at risk of becoming a victim of abuse or neglect.

Rhode Island: Citation: Gen. Laws § 40-11-3

A report is required when any person has **reasonable cause to know or suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected. The reporting requirement shall include immediate notification of the department of any instance in which the parents of an infant have requested deprivation of nutrition that is necessary to sustain life and/or who have requested deprivation of medical or surgical intervention that is necessary to remedy or ameliorate a life-threatening medical condition, if the nutrition or medical or surgical intervention is generally provided to infants with similar nutritional, medical, or surgical conditions, whether disabled or not.

South Carolina: Citation: Ann. Code § 63-7-310

A report is required when a mandatory reporter in their professional capacity has received information that gives them **reason to believe** that a child has been or may be abused or neglected.

South Dakota: Citation: Ann. Laws § 26-8A-3

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected.

Tennessee: Citation: Ann. Code §§ 37-1-403; 37-1-605

A report is required when any person has knowledge of, or is called upon to render aid to, any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition if the harm is of such a nature as to **reasonably indicate** that it has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect or that, on the basis of available information, **reasonably appears to have been caused by** brutality, abuse, or neglect. A report is required when any person **knows or has reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been sexually abused.

Texas: Citation: Fam. Code § 261.101

A report is required when there is **reasonable cause to believe** that the child's physical or mental health has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect.

Utah: Citation: Ann. Code § 80-2-602

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reason to believe** that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being **subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result** in abuse or neglect.

Vermont: Citation: Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, § 4913

A report is required when a mandatory reporter **reasonably suspects** abuse or neglect of a child.

Virgin Islands: Citation: Ann. Code Tit. 5, § 2533

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has been subjected to abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect or observes the child being **subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result** in abuse or neglect.

Virginia: Citation: Ann. Code § 63.2-1509

A report is required when a mandatory reporter, in their professional or official capacity, **has reason to suspect** that a child is an abused or neglected child.

Washington: Citation: Rev. Code § 26.44.030

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to believe** that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.

West Virginia: Citation: Ann. Code § 49-2-803

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child is neglected or abused or observes the child being **subjected to conditions that are likely to result** in abuse or neglect.

Wisconsin: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 48.981

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child seen by the person in the course of their professional duties has been abused or neglected or has reason to believe that a child seen by the person in the course of their professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur.

Wyoming: Citation: Ann. Stat. § 14-3-205

A report is required when any person **knows or has reasonable cause to believe or suspect** that a child has been abused or neglected or observes any child being **subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result** in abuse or neglect.

List of exact phrases used by states and territories

Larger category: Reasonable cause to know/suspect/believe (34)

- Has “Reasonable cause to suspect”
 - Alaska, Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Virgin Islands, West Virginia, Wisconsin (11)
- “Knows or has reasonable cause to suspect”
 - DC, Florida, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Tennessee (8)
- “Reasonable cause to believe”
 - Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon, Texas, Washington (8)
- “Reasonable cause to know or suspect”
 - American Samoa, Colorado, Rhode Island (3)
- “Knows or has reasonable cause to believe”
 - Kentucky, Nevada (2)
- “Reasonable cause to suspect or believe”
 - Connecticut
- “Knows or has reasonable cause to believe or suspect”
 - Wyoming

Larger category: Reason to know/suspect/believe (12)

- Has “Reason to believe”
 - Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah (7)
- “Reason to suspect”
 - Guam, Kansas, New Hampshire, Virginia (4)
- “knows or has reason to believe”
 - Minnesota

Larger category: Witnessed child being “subjected to circumstances or conditions that... (9)

- American Samoa, Arkansas, Idaho, Missouri, Nebraska, Utah, Virgin Islands, West Virginia, Wyoming (9)
 - Note: these are always in combination with another phrase listed here

Larger category: Reasonably know/suspect/believe (4)

- “Reasonably believes”
 - Arizona, Iowa (2)
- “Knows or reasonably suspects”
 - California
- “Reasonably suspects”
 - Vermont

Larger category: Has cause to suspect/believe (2)

- Has “cause to believe”
 - Louisiana

- Has “cause to suspect”
 - North Carolina

Larger category: Other (5)

- “knows or suspects”
 - Alabama
- “knows or in good faith suspects”
 - Delaware
- “knows or has a reasonable suspicion”
 - New Mexico
- “learns or comes to suspect”
 - Puerto Rico
- “has knowledge of...child who is suffering...if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate”
 - Tennessee