

**Reporting Elder Abuse:** Reporting suspected elder abuse is simple. Call the local Long-Term Care Ombudsman or local law enforcement to report abuse in a long-term care facility, such as a nursing home or a board and care home.

Abuse occurring anywhere other than a long-term care facility should be reported to the county Adult Protective Services Agency (APS).

Santa Barbara APS: (805) 681-4550

Santa Maria APS: (805) 346-8303

Lompoc APS: (805) 737-6020

**Long-Term Care Ombudsman CRISIS line**

This CRISIS line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To receive complaints from residents, call **1-800-231-4024**.

A local crisis line for long term care Ombudsman is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m (805) **785-0132**.

If you suspect abuse that seems to be life-threatening, do not hesitate to call local law enforcement. They will notify any other agency which may need to be involved.



BILL BROWN  
Sheriff-Coroner

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
HEADQUARTERS**

P.O. Box 6427  
4434 Calle Real  
Santa Barbara, CA 93160-6427  
(805) 681-4100

**SBSO STATIONS**

Buellton (805) 686-8150  
Carpinteria (805) 568-3399  
Isla Vista (805) 681-4148  
Lompoc (805) 737-7737  
New Cuyama (661) 766-2310  
Santa Maria (805) 934-6150  
Solvang/Santa Ynez (805) 686-5000  
Marketplace-Goleta (805) 571-1540

**WEB-SITE:** [www.sbsheriff.org](http://www.sbsheriff.org)

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

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**ELDER ABUSE**



Elder Abuse  
§ 368 PC

As used in this section, "elder" means any person who is 65 years of age or older. Crimes against elders and dependent adults are deserving of special consideration and protection, not unlike the special protections provided for minor children. Elders and dependent adults may be confused, on various medications, mentally or physically impaired, or incompetent, and therefore less able to protect themselves, to understand or report criminal conduct, or to testify in court proceedings on their own behalf.

## ELDER ABUSE

**The Problem:** Statistics uncover a frightening picture of elder abuse in California. One of every 20 elderly people will be a victim of neglect or physical, psychological, or financial abuse this year. By the year 2020, the number of elderly in California is expected to double to 6.6 million. Already, there are 4.8 million Californians over 60 years of age. As the elderly population multiplies, so will the incidence of elder abuse...if we do not take action. We must recognize the seriousness of the problem and take steps to prevent it.

**Types of Elder Abuse and Neglect:** Elder abuse and neglect can occur in a domestic or an institutional setting. Different types of abuse have been identified, and a senior or dependent adult can be a victim of multiple types of abuse.

- **Physical** includes sexual assault such as rape or fondling and other acts such as beating, slapping, shoving, or kicking of an elderly person.
- **Psychological** includes verbal harassment, threats, or other forms of intimidation directed towards an elder, such as the threat of placing him or her in a nursing home out of punishment.
- **Financial** includes the stealing or misuse of property or other assets belonging to an elder, such as his/her house, bank account, pension funds, or Social Security payments.
- **Neglect** is defined as the failure to provide an elder with basic necessities such as adequate food, shelter, medical treatment, or personal care.

**Indicators of Abuse:** There are many signs which indicate that abuse may be taking place. Some are indicators of possible physical abuse or neglect. Others are indicators of possible financial abuse.

**Bruises and Welts (especially those that have suspicious shapes):** Whip-like bruises may have been produced by an electric cord. A cluster of bruises often means someone has been beaten by an object.

**The presence of old and new bruises** on the same part of the body are considered suspicious.

**The age of a bruise** can often be determined by its color:

- Red or blue bruises are usually 1-5 days old,
- Green bruises are usually 5-7 days old,
- Yellow bruises are usually 7-10 days old, and
- Brown bruises are usually 10-14 days old.

**Bruises on the inner arms** may occur when the victim raises his/her arms to protect the face from blows.

**Bruises under the armpits** can indicate that the person has been dragged across the floor.

**Wide bruises across the mouth** could be caused by the client being gagged to keep him/her quiet.

**Other indicators of physical abuse** include cuts and lacerations, burns, and puncture wounds.

**Common Indicators of Neglect:** Dehydration or malnourishment and evidence of inadequate care, such as untended bed sores or poor hygiene.

**The behavior of victims or family members can also provide clues that they are involved in an abusive situation.**

**Abuse victims will often show fear, anxiety, depression, or resignation** when in the company of abusive family members or hesitate to talk openly about what is going on.

The victim and family members may give **conflicting explanations** as to how the victim was injured. For this reason, investigators will try to interview the victim and other family members separately.

Victims will sometimes **not be given the opportunity to speak** for themselves when questioned during an interview. Suspected abusers will try to speak for the victim, giving only their version of what happened.

Abusers will sometimes show **indifference or lack of caring** for the elder during the interview or may direct threats or insults towards the elder.

**Common Indicators of Possible Financial Abuse:**

**Inappropriate activity on bank accounts.** For example, withdrawals from ATMs when the elder is unable to physically get to the bank.

**The presence of signed checks** and other documents when the elder cannot write.

**The making out of a recent will** when the elder is clearly incapable of making a will.

**A recent change of title of a house** to someone who has befriended the elder when the elder is incapable of understanding such a transaction.

**The granting of a power of attorney** by the elder when he/she is unable to comprehend his/her financial situation or is mentally incapable of granting power of attorney.

**Inordinate focusing upon money** and other financial issues by those who are supposed to be providing care for the elder.

**What You Can Do:** We all have the right to be free from abuse and neglect. If an elderly person you know is being victimized, it is important for you to take action to stop it. Without intervention, abuse almost always escalates. Because victims are often reluctant to report, an elderly person's well-being may depend on you to recognize and report suspected abuse. Together, we can be a lifeline.