**See this online at** <https://beckerlaw.com/blog/understanding-kentucky-elder-abuse-laws-and-how-to-report-suspected-abuse/>

**Understanding Kentucky Elder Abuse Laws And How To Report Suspected Abuse**

The Becker Law Office regularly assists Kentucky families whose elderly loved ones have been injured by [neglect and abuse at nursing homes](https://www.beckerlaw.com/nursing-home-abuse-lawyer/), retirement homes and other long-term care facilities. Unfortunately, the problem of elder abuse in Kentucky and across the country extends far beyond nursing homes and into our communities and private residences.

The [National Council on Aging says](https://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/elder-justice/elder-abuse-facts/) 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 and older have experienced some form of elder abuse. Some estimates say as many as 5 million elders are abused each year. Experts on elder abuse say the crime occurs far more often than it is reported — as often as [24 times for every case reported](https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dpp/apb/Pages/elder-abuse.aspx) — and expect the problem to grow worse as our population ages.

At Becker Law Office, we can help you and your family if you suspect an elderly person in Kentucky is being abused. We can help you obtain help for the injured senior citizen, and we may be able to help you obtain compensation to assist with medical bills and other losses, and as remuneration for pain and suffering.

Below we outline what should be done if you suspect someone in Kentucky is being subjected to elder abuse. Knowing what to do and acting promptly could save a life. The Commonwealth of Kentucky has programs for investigating abuse allegations and assisting vulnerable seniors; however, if you suspect an elderly person is in immediate danger of being harmed you should call local law enforcement authorities right away.

**What is Kentucky Elder Abuse Law?**

Kentucky law addresses the protection of elderly and vulnerable adults in [Chapter 209](https://law.justia.com/codes/kentucky/2014/chapter-209/section-209.020/) of the state’s revised statutes.

The KY statutes address the welfare of people who are 18 years old or older who, because of mental or physical dysfunction, are unable to manage their own resources, carry out activities of daily living, or protect themselves from ***neglect, exploitation, or a hazardous or abusive situation*** without assistance from others.

* ***Neglect*** means a situation in which an adult is unable to perform or obtain for himself or herself the goods or services that are necessary to maintain his or her health or welfare (known as self-neglect), or the adult is being purposely deprived of such goods or services by a caretaker.
* ***Exploitation*** means obtaining or using another adult’s resources, including but not limited to funds, assets or property, by deception, intimidation or similar means, with the intent to deprive the person of those resources.
* ***Abuse*** means the infliction of injury, sexual abuse, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or punishment that results in physical pain or injury, including mental injury.

Please see our page about the [warning signs of nursing home abuse](https://www.beckerlaw.com/nursing-home-abuse-lawyer/warning-signs-nursing-home-abuse/) for information about physical, mental and sexual abuse, financial exploitation and neglect, which can be applied to observations about the treatment of an elderly person in the community.

Kentucky law also establishes the availability of services for adults who are unable to take care of themselves, provides anyone in the state the authority to make a confidential criminal complaint if they know of the abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult in the state, and prescribes [criminal penalties for elder abuse](https://law.justia.com/codes/kentucky/2014/chapter-209/section-209.990/).

**Reporting Elder Abuse in Kentucky**

Under Kentucky law you are ***required to report*** any suspicions you have about the potential abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of an adult who has a physical or mental disability and is unable to protect themselves, such as an elderly person.

Reports of elder abuse are typically made to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services through a **24-hour toll-free hotline at 1-877-597-2331.** Calls can be made anonymously. Nonemergency reports may also be made through the [Kentucky Child / Adult Protective Services Reporting System online](https://prdweb.chfs.ky.gov/ReportAbuse/home.aspx), which is essentially email that is only monitored during business hours on weekdays.

**How Does Kentucky Enforce Elder Abuse Laws?**

The KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services is to investigate allegations of elder abuse and, depending on the circumstances, may be required to notify the appropriate law enforcement agency. Reporting elder abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, arrest, and prosecution of the abuser, although the primary purpose of Kentucky’s mandatory reporting laws is to get protective services to the person being abused.

Each report of elder abuse is reviewed to determine whether it needs to be investigated and/or whether the object of the complaint requires protective services. All adults are offered protective services and may accept or refuse services.

Adult Protective Services also provides voluntary, general assistance services aimed at helping the adult function at their highest level of self-sufficiency and autonomy and remain in the community. General adult services may be requested on behalf of a vulnerable adult or by the adult who needs assistance.

**Emergency Assistance for Seniors in Louisville, KY**

The Louisville, KY, Police Department has established the [Senior Crime Victims' Program](https://louisvilleky.gov/government/police/crimes-against-seniors-information) to assist elderly crime victims (age 60+) who reside in the Metro Louisville/Jefferson County area in cases involving elder abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, financial exploitation and identity theft or fraud. There are two programs:

The **Emergency Crisis Response Team** provides immediate, short-term emergency shelter and home care services to Metro Louisville seniors who are experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation as a result of crime (not self-neglect). However, clients must be referred through [Adult Protective Services](https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dpp/apb/Pages/default.aspx) (502-595-4803 in Louisville) or another community-based referral source.

The **In-home Emergency Protective Order Service** assists in the issuance of Emergency Protective Orders (EPOs) for medically fragile/homebound elderly victims of abuse.

**Let Our Team Help if You Suspect Elder Abuse**

Local authorities and the Commonwealth of Kentucky understand the problem of elder abuse and have established programs to raise awareness, assist the injured and punish perpetrators of crime. However, they do not have programs to make seniors who have been exploited or abused financially whole. Further, state programs are large, bureaucratic and busy, and even information about them online is not easy to find.

Our elder abuse attorneys can help you obtain assistance through state or local authorities and/or community-based services. We can also review what has happened to you or your loved one and determine whether there is a basis of a personal injury claim to recover compensation for economic losses and pain and suffering.

Our dedicated Kentucky elder abuse attorneys have more than 30 years of experience helping families of senior citizens who have been injured or neglected. If you suspect or know that an elderly loved one has been abused or neglected, contact us now for a free, confidential and no-obligation legal consultation. Our legal team will work quickly to stop the abuse and make things right for you and yours.