



Department
of Commerce

John R. Kasich, Governor

Jacqueline T. Williams, Director

Real Estate Professionals Required to Report Suspected Elder Abuse

Real estate professionals interact with different people and families in their homes on a daily basis, which may expose them to a situation where an older adult is being abused, neglected or exploited. If so, Ohio law requires certain professionals to report the mistreatment by calling 855-OHIOAPS or reporting it to the county department of job and family services.

As part of Ohio's biennium operating budget bill, provisions of Ohio's Adult Protective Services laws were amended to require certain individuals to make a report to county departments of job and family services offices when they have "reasonable cause to believe" that an adult is being abused, neglected or exploited. The Ohio Revised Code now lists individuals licensed as real estate brokers or salespersons as mandatory reporters of suspected elder abuse. Additionally, the statute includes "any other individual who is a senior service provider," which the Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing recognizes as including real estate appraisers.

Ohio law allows no exceptions to the reporting requirement for professional relationships – for example, doctor/patient relationships or attorney/client relationships. The statutory penalties for failing to report known or suspected elder abuse, neglect or exploitation are outlined in O.R.C. § 5101.99 and apply to all individuals and professions listed in O.R.C. § 5101.63. Elder abuse reports are confidential and not a public record.

Please note, there are NO penalties for a report that is not substantiated unless the report was made with malicious intent.

The division is working with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to offer the training now required by statute to mandatory reporters as part of continuing education. The division will keep licensees apprised of course offerings as they become available.

More information can be found in ODJFS's publication, "Understanding Elder Abuse: A Guide for Financial Services Professionals" (JFS 08095) at <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/>. Printed copies can be ordered [online](#).