

Reporting and Protection Against Retaliation

§ 115.251 Resident reporting.

(a) The agency shall provide multiple internal ways for residents to privately report sexual abuse and sexual harassment, retaliation by other residents or staff for reporting sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and staff neglect or violation of responsibilities that may have contributed to such incidents.

(b) The agency shall also inform residents of at least one way to report abuse or harassment to a public or private entity or office that is not part of the agency and that is able to receive and immediately forward resident reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to agency officials, allowing the resident to remain anonymous upon request.

(c) Staff shall accept reports made verbally, in writing, anonymously, and from third parties and shall promptly document any verbal reports.

(d) The agency shall provide a method for staff to privately report sexual abuse and sexual harassment of residents.

§ 115.254 Third-party reporting.

The agency shall establish a method to receive third-party reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and shall distribute publicly information on how to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment on behalf of a resident.

§ 115.261 Staff and agency reporting duties.

(a) The agency shall require all staff to report immediately and according to agency policy any knowledge, suspicion, or information regarding an incident of sexual abuse or sexual harassment that occurred in a facility, whether or not it is part of the agency; retaliation against residents or staff who reported such an incident; and any staff neglect or violation of responsibilities that may have contributed to an incident or retaliation.

(b) Apart from reporting to designated supervisors or officials, staff shall not reveal any information related to a sexual abuse report to anyone other than to the extent necessary, as specified in agency policy, to make treatment, investigation, and other security and management decisions.

(c) Unless otherwise precluded by Federal, State, or local law, medical and mental health practitioners shall be required to report sexual abuse pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section and to inform residents of the practitioner's duty to report, and the limitations of confidentiality, at the initiation of services.

(d) If the alleged victim is under the age of 18 or considered a vulnerable adult under a State or local vulnerable persons statute, the agency shall report the allegation to the designated State or local services agency under applicable mandatory reporting laws.

(e) The facility shall report all allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, including third-party and anonymous reports, to the facility's designated investigators.

§ 115.263 Reporting to other confinement facilities.

- (a) Upon receiving an allegation that a resident was sexually abused while confined at another facility, the head of the facility that received the allegation shall notify the head of the facility or appropriate office of the agency where the alleged abuse occurred.
- (b) Such notification shall be provided as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours after receiving the allegation.
- (c) The agency shall document that it has provided such notification.
- (d) The facility head or agency office that receives such notification shall ensure that the allegation is investigated in accordance with these standards.

§ 115.267 Agency protection against retaliation.

- (a) The agency shall establish a policy to protect all residents and staff who report sexual abuse or sexual harassment or cooperate with sexual abuse or sexual harassment investigations from retaliation by other residents or staff and shall designate which staff members or departments are charged with monitoring retaliation.
- (b) The agency shall employ multiple protection measures, such as housing changes or transfers for resident victims or abusers, removal of alleged staff or resident abusers from contact with victims, and emotional support services for residents or staff who fear retaliation for reporting sexual abuse or sexual harassment or for cooperating with investigations.
- (c) For at least 90 days following a report of sexual abuse, the agency shall monitor the conduct and treatment of residents or staff who reported the sexual abuse and of residents who were reported to have suffered sexual abuse to see if there are changes that may suggest possible retaliation by residents or staff, and shall act promptly to remedy any such retaliation. Items the agency should monitor include any resident disciplinary reports, housing, or program changes, or negative performance reviews or reassignments of staff. The agency shall continue such monitoring beyond 90 days if the initial monitoring indicates a continuing need.
- (d) In the case of residents, such monitoring shall also include periodic status checks.
- (e) If any other individual who cooperates with an investigation expresses a fear of retaliation, the agency shall take appropriate measures to protect that individual against retaliation.
- (f) An agency's obligation to monitor shall terminate if the agency determines that the allegation is unfounded.