

The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office

The Family Protection Unit of District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz's Office receives approximately 300 reports of sexual and physical abuse of children each year. While most of these reports come from DCF, a number also arise from the police and private citizens.

The district attorney's office in conjunction with the child's family, counselors, DCF and the police, will decide which of these cases may be prosecuted.

Mandated reporters are welcome to contact the Family Protection Unit at **508-584-8120** at any time to inquire about a case. However, you must report suspected abuse to DCF as the law requires.

A mandated reporter suspecting abuse must notify DCF immediately by telephone, and follow up with a written report within 48 hours. There are no exceptions!



Safety & Awareness

Mandated Reporter

The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office

166 Main Street
Brockton, MA 02301

508-584-8120

www.plymouthda.com



TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
Plymouth County District Attorney

The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office



Safety & Awareness



Mandated Reporter

*The Law is clear!
Professionals who fail to report
suspected abuse are subject to
criminal prosecution and a
\$1,000 fine*

Timothy J. Cruz
District Attorney

508-584-8120
www.plymouthda.com

A Message from the District Attorney:



We, as professionals have a duty to ensure that our children are safeguarded from all types of abuse. The commonwealth has defined the laws about “mandated reporting” in a clear and concise manner.

There are times however, when questions arise about the role of a professional and the use of this law to protect our children. Professionals who come into contact with children on a daily basis need to recognize their legal obligation to report suspected cases of abuse.

Abuse against a child is one of the most horrendous crimes in our society. In order to achieve a first line of defense, law enforcement and professionals must work together to provide safety measures to ensure the protection of all our children.

I have developed this brochure as a guide to assist you in understanding the laws of “mandated reporting”. It is my hope that it will clear up any questions you may have regarding this important law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim J. Cruz".

District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz

Who is a Mandated Reporter?

Mass. General Law Chapter 119, Section 51A, defines *mandated reporters* as one . . .

". . . who, in his professional capacity shall have reasonable cause to believe, that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition, or who is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth, shall immediately report such condition to the Department of Children and Families by oral communication and by making a written report within forty-eight hours after such oral communication."

A mandated reporter is a professional who because of his or her particular employment is likely to have regular contact with children. The legislature has outlined a number of health care professionals, including doctors, dentists and nurses as mandated reporters.

Teachers, school administrators, guidance counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, family counselors, social workers, police, fire fighters and even court personnel are required to report cases of suspected abuse.

In 2002, the language was changed to include: priests, rabbis, ordained or licensed minister of any church or religious body, an accredited Christian Science practitioner. A person performing one or more of the official duties of: a priest, rabbi, ordained or licensed minister of any church or religious body, an accredited Christian Science practitioner.

A person or layperson in any church or religious body acting in the capacity as: a leader, official, teacher, delegate or other designated function on behalf of any such church or religious body to supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis, are all now designated as mandated reporters.

To file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF)– please call:

- ◆ Brockton Area DCF- (508) 894-3700
- ◆ Plymouth Area DCF– 1-800-423-2338

If you have a question about a possible abuse case and would like to speak with a professional about it, call the statewide DCF hotline at:

1-800-792-5200



Mandated Reporter