



Penalties for Failure to Report and False Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect: Summary of State Laws

Many cases of child abuse and neglect are not reported, even when suspected by professionals. Therefore, nearly every State and U.S. territory imposes penalties, often in the form of a fine or imprisonment, on mandatory reporters who fail to report suspected abuse or neglect as required by law.¹ In addition, to prevent malicious or intentional reporting of cases that are not founded, several States and territories impose penalties against any person who files a report known to be false.

¹ See Child Welfare Information Gateway's *Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect* at www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm.

Electronic copies of this publication may be downloaded at www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/report.cfm

To find statute information for a particular State, go to www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/search/index.cfm

To find information on all the States and territories, order a copy of the full-length PDF by calling 800.394.3366 or 703.385.7565, or download it at www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/reportall.pdf



Penalties for Failure to Report

Approximately 46 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands impose penalties on mandatory reporters who knowingly or willfully fail to make a report when they suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.² Failure to report is classified as a misdemeanor in 38 States and American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.³ In Arizona, Florida, and Minnesota, misdemeanors are upgraded to felonies for failure to report more serious situations, while in Illinois and Guam, second or subsequent violations are classified as felonies.

Eighteen States and the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands specify in the reporting laws the penalties for failure to report.⁴ Upon conviction, a mandated reporter who fails to report can face jail terms ranging from 10 days to 5 years, or fines ranging from \$100 to \$5,000. In seven States and American Samoa, in addition to any criminal penalties, the reporter may be civilly liable for any damages caused by the failure to report.⁵

Penalties for False Reporting

Approximately 30 States carry penalties in their reporting laws for any person who willfully or intentionally makes a report of child abuse or neglect that the reporter knows to be false.⁶ In 14 States and the Virgin Islands, making false reports is made illegal in other sections of State code.⁷

² The word *approximately* is used to stress the fact that the States frequently amend their laws; this information is current through June 2007. Maine, Maryland, North Carolina, and Wyoming do not currently have statutes imposing penalties for failure to report.

³ The States that do not use the misdemeanor classification for failure to report include Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

⁴ Alabama, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

⁵ Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, New York, and Rhode Island.

⁶ Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

⁷ Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Utah.

Thirty-two States and the Virgin Islands classify false reporting as a misdemeanor or similar charge.⁸ In Florida, Tennessee, and Texas, false reporting is a felony, while in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Virginia, second or subsequent offenses are upgraded to felonies. In Michigan, false reporting can be either a misdemeanor or a felony, depending on the seriousness of the alleged abuse in the report. No criminal sanctions are imposed in California, Maine, Montana, Minnesota, and Nebraska; however, immunity from civil or criminal action that is provided to reporters of abuse or neglect is not extended to those who make a false report.

Thirteen States and the Virgin Islands specify the penalties for making a false report.⁹ Upon conviction, the reporter can face jail terms ranging from 30 days to 5 years, or fines ranging from \$200 to \$5,000. Florida imposes the most severe penalties: In addition to a court sentence of 5 years and \$5,000, the department may fine the reporter up to \$10,000. In six States (California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Minnesota, and North Dakota), in addition to any criminal penalties, the reporter may be civilly liable for any damages caused by the report.

This publication is a product of the State Statutes Series prepared by Child Welfare Information Gateway. While every attempt has been made to be complete, additional information on these topics may be in other sections of a State's code as well as in agency regulations, case law, and informal practices and procedures.

⁸ Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois (disorderly conduct), Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey (disorderly persons offense), New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

⁹ Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

Alabama

Failure to Report

Ala. Code § 26-14-13

Any person who knowingly fails to make the report required by the reporting laws shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than 6 months imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.

False Reporting

Ala. Code § 13A-10-9

A person commits the crime of false reporting to law enforcement authorities if he knowingly makes a false report or causes the transmission of a false report to law enforcement authorities of a crime or relating to a crime.

False reporting to law enforcement authorities is a Class A misdemeanor.

Alaska

Failure to Report

Alaska Stat. § 47.17.068

A person who fails to comply with the laws requiring reports of child abuse or neglect or child pornography and who knew or should have known that the circumstances gave rise to the need for a report is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

American Samoa

Failure to Report

A.S. Code § 45.2002(d)

Any person who willfully violates the provisions of subsection (a) [requiring certain persons to report]:

- Commits a Class A misdemeanor
- Is liable for damages proximately caused

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Arizona

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 13-3620(O)

A person who violates this section requiring the reporting of child abuse or neglect is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, except if the failure to report involves a reportable offense, in which case the person is guilty of a Class 6 felony.

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. § 13-3620.01

A person acting with malice who knowingly and intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or neglect, or a person acting with malice who coerces another person to make a false report of child abuse or neglect, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

A person who knowingly and intentionally makes a false report that another person made a false report is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Arkansas

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 12-12-504(a)(1), (b), (d)

Any person, official, or institution negligently or willfully failing to make notification when required by the reporting laws shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

Any person, official, or institution required to make notification of suspected child maltreatment who willfully fails to do so shall be civilly liable for damages proximately caused by that failure.

Judges or prosecuting attorneys who fail to make notification when required by the reporting laws shall not be subject to any of the penalties outlined in this section.

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 12-12-504(a)(2), (a)(3)

Any person, official, or institution willfully making false notification pursuant to the reporting laws, knowing such allegations to be false, shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

Any person, official, or institution willfully making false notification pursuant to the reporting laws, knowing such allegations to be false, and who has been previously convicted of making willful false allegations shall be guilty of a Class D felony.

California

Failure to Report

Penal Code §§ 11166(c); 11166.01

Any mandated reporter who fails to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to 6 months in a county jail, by a fine of \$1,000, or both. If a mandated reporter intentionally conceals his or her failure to report an incident known by the mandated reporter to be abuse or severe neglect, the failure to report is a continuing offense until an agency specified in § 11165.9 discovers the offense.

Any supervisor or administrator who violates § 11166(1) [that prohibits impeding others from making a report], shall be punished by not more than 6 months in a county jail, by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both.

Any mandated reporter who willfully fails to report abuse or neglect, or any person who impedes or inhibits a report of abuse or neglect, where that abuse or neglect results in death or great bodily injury, shall be punished by not more than 1 year in a county jail, by a fine of not more than \$5,000, or both.

False Reporting

Penal Code § 11172(a)

Any person reporting a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect shall not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of any report unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the person knew that the report was false or was made with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the report.

Any person who makes a report of child abuse or neglect known to be false or with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the report is liable for any damages caused.

Colorado

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-304(4)

Any mandatory reporter who willfully fails to report as required by § 19-3-304(1):

- Commits a Class 3 misdemeanor and shall be punished as provided by law
- Shall be liable for damages proximately caused

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-304(3.5), (4)

No person, including a mandatory reporter, shall knowingly make a false report of abuse or neglect to a county department or local law enforcement agency.

Any person who violates this provision:

- Commits a Class 3 misdemeanor and shall be punished as provided by law
 - Shall be liable for damages proximately caused
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Connecticut

Failure to Report

Gen. Stat. § 17a-101a

Any person required to report, who fails to make such report shall be:

- Fined not more than \$500
- Required to participate in an educational and training program pursuant to § 97a-101(d)

False Reporting

Gen. Stat. § 17a-101e(c)

Any person who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be punished by one or both of the following:

- A fine of not more than \$2,000
 - Imprisonment of not more than 1 year
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Delaware

Failure to Report

Ann. Code Tit. 16, § 914

Any mandatory reporter who knowingly and willfully violates the requirement to report shall be punished by one or both of the following:

- A fine of not more than \$1000
- Imprisonment of not more than 15 days

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

District of Columbia

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 4-1321.07

Any person required to make a report under the reporting laws who willfully fails to make such a report shall be subject to one or both of the following:

- Fined not more than \$300
- Imprisoned for not more than 90 days

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Florida

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 39.205(1)-(2)

A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect, and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree. Upon conviction, the person may be:

- Imprisoned for a term not to exceed 1 year
- Fined \$1,000

Unless the court finds that the person is a victim of domestic violence or that other mitigating circumstances exist, a person who is 18 years of age or older and lives in the same house or living unit as a child who is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse, neglect of a child, or aggravated child abuse, and knowingly and willfully fails to report the child abuse commits a felony of the third degree. Upon conviction, the person may be

- Imprisoned for a term not to exceed 5 years
- Fined \$5,000

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. §§ 39.205(6); 39.206(1)

A person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, or who advises another to make a false report, is guilty of a felony of the third degree. Upon conviction, the person may be:

- Imprisoned for a term not to exceed 5 years
- Fined \$5,000

In addition to any other penalty authorized by this section or other law, the department may impose a fine, not to exceed \$10,000 for each violation, upon a person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child, or a person who counsels another to make a false report.

Georgia

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 19-7-5(h)

Any person or official required by law to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 16-10-26

A person who willfully and knowingly gives or causes a false report of a crime to be given to any law enforcement officer or agency of this State is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Guam

Failure to Report

Ann. Code Tit. 19, § 13207

Any person required to report who fails to report an instance of child abuse that he or she knows to exist or reasonably should know to exist is guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon conviction, the person may be subject to one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment for a term not to exceed 6 months
- A fine of not more than \$1,000

A second or subsequent conviction shall be a felony in the third degree.

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Hawaii

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 350-1.2

Any mandatory reporter who knowingly prevents another person from reporting, or who knowingly fails to provide information as required by the reporting laws, shall be guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

False Reporting
Rev. Stat. § 710-1015

A person commits the offense of false reporting to law enforcement authorities if the person intentionally makes a report or causes the transmission of a report to law enforcement authorities relating to a crime or other incident within their concern when he or she knows that the information contained in the report is false.

False reporting to law enforcement authorities is a misdemeanor.

Idaho

Failure to Report
Idaho Code § 16-1605(4)

Failure to report as required by the reporting laws shall be a misdemeanor.

False Reporting
Idaho Code § 16-1607

Any person who makes a report or allegation of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect knowing the report is false, or who reports or alleges the same in bad faith or with malice, shall be liable to the party or parties against whom the report was made for the amount of actual damages sustained or statutory damages of \$2,500, whichever is greater, plus attorney's fees and costs of suit.

If the court finds that the defendant acted with malice or oppression, the court may award treble actual damages or treble statutory damages, whichever is greater.

Illinois

Failure to Report
Comp. Stat. Ch. 325, §§ 5/4; 5/4.02

Any physician who willfully fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect shall be referred to the Illinois State Medical Disciplinary Board for action in accordance with the Medical Practice Act of 1987. Any dentist or dental hygienist who willfully fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect shall be referred to the Department of Professional Regulation for action in accordance with the Illinois Dental Practice Act.

Any mandatory reporter who willfully fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor for a first violation and a Class 4 felony for a second or subsequent violation.

Any person who knowingly and willfully violates any provision of this Section is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor for a first violation and a Class 4 felony for a second or subsequent violation.

If the person acted as part of a plan or scheme having as its object the prevention of discovery of an abused or neglected child by lawful authorities for the purpose of protecting or insulating any person or entity from arrest or prosecution, the person is guilty of a Class 4 felony for a first offense and a Class 3 felony for a second or subsequent offense.

False Reporting
Comp. Stat. Ch. 325, § 5/4

Any person who knowingly transmits a false report to the department commits the offense of disorderly conduct. Any person who violates this provision a second or subsequent time shall be guilty of a Class 3 felony.

Indiana

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 31-33-22-1

A person who knowingly fails to make a report required by law commits a Class B misdemeanor.

A person who, in his capacity as a staff member of a medical or other institution, school, facility, or agency, is required to make a report to the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency, or his designated agent, and who knowingly fails to make a report commits a Class B misdemeanor. This penalty is imposed in addition to the penalty imposed above.

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 31-33-22-3(a)-(b)

A person who intentionally communicates to a law enforcement agency or the department a report of child abuse or neglect knowing the report to be false commits a Class A misdemeanor. The offense is a Class D felony if the person has a previous unrelated conviction for making a report of child abuse or neglect knowing the report to be false.

A person who intentionally communicates to a law enforcement agency or the department a report of child abuse or neglect knowing the report to be false is liable to the person accused of child abuse or neglect for actual damages. The finder of fact may award punitive damages and attorney's fees in an amount determined by the finder of fact against the person.

Iowa

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 232.75(1)-(2)

Any person, official, agency, or institution required to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

Any person, official, agency, or institution, required by § 232.69 to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly fails to do so, or who knowingly interferes with the making of such a report in violation of § 232.70, is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure or interference.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 232.75(3)

A person who reports or causes to be reported to the department false information regarding an alleged act of child abuse, knowing that the information is false or that the act did not occur, commits a simple misdemeanor.

Kansas

Failure to Report

2005 Kan. HB 2352, § 18(e)

Willful and knowing failure to make a report required by this section is a Class B misdemeanor. It is not a defense that another mandatory reporter made a report.

Intentionally preventing or interfering with the making of a report required by this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

False Reporting

2005 Kan. HB 2352, § 18(e)

Any person who willfully and knowingly makes a false report pursuant to this section or makes a report that such person knows lacks factual foundation is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

Kentucky

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 620.990(1)

Any person intentionally violating the provisions of this chapter shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. § 620.050(1)

Any person who knowingly makes a false report and does so with malice shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

Louisiana

Failure to Report

Children's Code art. 609; Rev. Stat. 14:403

Violation of the duties imposed upon a mandatory reporter subjects the offender to criminal prosecution.

Any person who is required to report the abuse or neglect or sexual abuse of a child and knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be subject to one or both of the following:

- A fine of not more than \$500
- Imprisonment for not more than 6 months

False Reporting

Children's Code art. 609; Rev. Stat. 14:403

The filing of a report, known to be false, may subject the offender to criminal prosecution.

Any person who reports a child as abused or neglected or sexually abused to the department or to any law enforcement agency, knowing that such information is false, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be subject to one or both of the following:

- A fine of not more than \$500
 - Imprisonment for not more than 6 months
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Maine

Failure to Report

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4014(1)

Immunity from any criminal or civil liability for the act of reporting or participating in the investigation or proceeding is not extended in instances when a false report is made and the person knows the report is false. Nothing in this section may be construed to bar criminal or civil action regarding perjury.

Maryland

Failure to Report

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

False Reporting

Crim. Law § 9-501

A person may not make, or cause to be made, a statement, report, or complaint that the person knows to be false as a whole or in material part, to a law enforcement officer with intent to deceive and to cause an investigation or other action to be taken as a result of the statement, report, or complaint.

A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment not exceeding 6 months
- A fine not exceeding \$500

Massachusetts

Failure to Report

Gen. Laws Ch. 119, § 51A

Any mandatory reporter who fails to report shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

Any mandatory reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has died as a result of abuse or neglect and who fails to report the death as required shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

False Reporting

Gen. Laws Ch. 119, § 51A

Any person who knowingly files a report of child abuse that is frivolous shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

Michigan

Failure to Report

Comp. Laws § 722.633(1), (2)

A mandatory reporter who fails to report as required is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by the failure.

A mandatory reporter who knowingly fails to report as required is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment for not more than 93 days
- A fine of not more than \$500

False Reporting

Comp. Laws § 722.633(5)

Any person who intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or neglect knowing that the report is false is guilty of a crime as follows:

- If the child abuse or neglect would not constitute a crime but would constitute a misdemeanor if the report were true, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$100, or both.
- If the child abuse or neglect reported would constitute a felony if the report were true, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by the lesser of the following:
 - » The penalty for the child abuse or neglect falsely reported
 - » Imprisonment for not more than 4 years or a fine of not more than \$2,000, or both

Minnesota

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 6

A mandatory reporter who knows or has reason to believe that a child is neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding 3 years, and fails to report the abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor.

A mandatory reporter who knows or has reason to believe that two or more children not related to the perpetrator have been physically or sexually abused by the same perpetrator within the preceding 10 years, and fails to report is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

A parent, guardian, or caretaker who knows or reasonably should know that the child's health is in serious danger and who fails to report:

- Is guilty of a gross misdemeanor if the child suffers substantial or great bodily harm because of the lack of medical care
- Is guilty of a felony if the child dies because of the lack of medical care, and may be subject to one or both of the following:
 - » Imprisonment for not more than 2 years
 - » A fine of not more than \$4,000

The law providing that a parent, guardian, or caretaker may, in good faith, select and depend on spiritual means or prayer for treatment or care of a child, does not exempt a parent, guardian, or caretaker from the duty to report under this provision.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 5

Any person who knowingly or recklessly makes a false report under the reporting laws shall be liable in a civil suit for any actual damages suffered by the person(s) so reported and for any punitive damages set by the court or jury, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees.

Mississippi

Failure to Report

Ann. Code. § 43-21-353(7)

Anyone who willfully violates any provision of this section shall be, upon being found guilty, punished by a fine not to exceed \$5,000, by imprisonment in jail not to exceed 1 year, or both.

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 97-35-47

It shall be unlawful for any person to report a crime or any element of a crime to any law enforcement or any officer of any court, by any means, knowing that such report is false. A violation of this section shall be punishable by one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed 1 year
- A fine not to exceed \$1,000

Missouri

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 210.165(1)

Any person violating any provision of the reporting laws is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 210.165(2)-(3)

Any person who intentionally files a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

Every person who has been previously convicted of making a false report to the Division of Family Services and who is subsequently convicted of making a false report is guilty of a Class D felony and shall be punished as provided by law.

Montana

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 41-3-207

Any mandatory reporter who fails to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect or who prevents another person from reasonably doing so is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure or prevention.

Any mandatory reporter who purposely or knowingly fails to report when required or purposely or knowingly prevents another person from doing so is guilty of a misdemeanor

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 41-3-203(1)

Anyone reporting any incident of child abuse or neglect as required by law is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed unless the person was grossly negligent, acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose, or provided information knowing the information to be false.

Nebraska

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 28-717

Any person who willfully fails to make any report of child abuse or neglect required by § 28-711 shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. § 28-716

Any person participating in an investigation, making a report of child abuse or neglect, or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from a report shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, except for maliciously false statements.

Nevada

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 432B.240

Any person who knowingly and willfully violates the provisions of the reporting laws is guilty of a misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. § 207.280

Any person who deliberately reports to any police officer, sheriff, district attorney, deputy sheriff, deputy district attorney, or member of the Department of Public Safety that a felony or misdemeanor has been committed, knowing such report to be false, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

New Hampshire

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 169-C:39

Anyone who knowingly violates any provision of the reporting laws shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Rev. Stat. § 641:4

A person is guilty of a misdemeanor if he or she knowingly gives or causes to be given false information to any law enforcement officer with the purpose of inducing such officer to believe that another has committed an offense.

New Jersey

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 9:6-8.14

Any person knowingly violating the reporting laws, including the failure to report an act of child abuse having reasonable cause to believe that an act of child abuse has been committed, is a disorderly person.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 2C:28-4

A person who knowingly gives or causes to be given false information to any law enforcement officer to purposely implicate another commits a crime of the fourth degree.

A person commits a disorderly persons offense if he or she:

- Reports or causes to be reported to law enforcement authorities an offense or other incident within their concern knowing that it did not occur
 - Pretends to furnish or causes to be furnished information relating to an offense or incident when he or she knows he or she has no information relating to such offense or incident
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New Mexico

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 32A-4-3(F)

Any person who violates the provisions of this section pertaining to the duty to report is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be sentenced pursuant to law.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 30-39-1

It is unlawful for any person to intentionally make a report to a law enforcement agency or official when he or she knows the report to be false at the time of making it, alleging a violation by another person of the provisions of the Criminal Code. Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

New York

Failure to Report

Soc. Serv. Law § 420

Any mandatory reporter who willfully fails to report as required shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

Any mandatory reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report as required shall be civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure.

False Reporting

Penal Law § 240.50(4)

A person is guilty of falsely reporting an incident in the third degree when, knowing the information reported, conveyed, or circulated to be false or baseless, he reports, by word or action, to the statewide central register of child abuse and maltreatment, an alleged occurrence or condition of child abuse or maltreatment that did not in fact occur or exist.

Falsely reporting an incident in the third degree is a class A misdemeanor.

North Carolina

Failure to Report

Gen. Stat. § 7B-310

No privilege shall be grounds for any person or institution failing to report that a juvenile may have been abused, neglected, or dependent, even if the knowledge or suspicion is acquired in an official professional capacity, except when the knowledge or suspicion is gained by an attorney from that attorney's client during representation only in the abuse, neglect, or dependency case.

False Reporting

Gen. Stat. § 14-225

Any person who willfully makes or causes to be made to a law enforcement agency or officer any false, misleading, or unfounded report, for the purpose of interfering with the operation of a law enforcement agency, or to hinder or obstruct any law enforcement officer in the performance of his duty, shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

North Dakota

Failure to Report

Cent. Code § 50-25.1-13

Any person required by this chapter to report or to supply information concerning a case of known or suspected child abuse, neglect, or death resulting from abuse or neglect who willfully fails to do so is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Cent. Code § 50-25.1-13

Any person who willfully makes a false report, or provides false information that causes a report to be made, is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor unless the false report is made to a law enforcement official, in which case the person who causes the report to be made is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

A person who willfully makes a false report, or willfully provides false information that causes a report to be made, is also liable in a civil action for all damages suffered by the person reported, including exemplary damages.

Northern Mariana Islands

Failure to Report

Commonwealth Code Tit. 6, § 5315

Knowing or willful failure of any person to make a report pursuant to § 5313 shall, upon conviction, be punished by one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment for up to 1 year
- A fine of not more than \$1000

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Ohio

Failure to Report

Rev. Code § 2151.99

Any person who fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect, as required by § 2151.421, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.

Any person, required to report by § 2151.421(A)(4) [requiring reports by clergy], who fails to report when knowing that a child has been abused or neglected and knowing that the person who committed the abuse or neglect was a cleric or another person other than a volunteer, designated by a church, religious society, or faith to act as a leader, official, or delegate on behalf of the church, religious society, or faith, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree if the person who has failed to report and the person who committed the abuse or neglect belong to the same church, religious society, or faith.

The person who fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree if the child suffers or faces the threat of suffering the physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition that would be the basis of the required report when the child is under the direct care or supervision of the person who should have made the report.

False Reporting

Rev. Code § 2921.14

No person shall knowingly make or cause another person to make a false report alleging that any person has committed an act or omission that resulted in a child being abused or neglected.

Whoever violates this section is guilty of making or causing a false report of child abuse or child neglect, a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Oklahoma

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. Tit. 10, § 7103(C)

Any person who knowingly and willfully fails to promptly report any incident of child abuse or neglect, may be reported by the Department of Human Services to local law enforcement for criminal investigation and, upon conviction thereof, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. Tit. 10, § 7103(D)

Any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report under the reporting laws or a report that the person knows lacks factual foundation may be reported by the Department of Human Services to local law enforcement for criminal investigation and, upon conviction thereof, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

If a court determines that an accusation of child abuse or neglect made during a child custody proceeding is false and the person making the accusation knew it to be false at the time the accusation was made, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$5,000 and reasonable attorney fees incurred in recovering the sanctions, against the person making the accusation. This remedy is in addition to the paragraph above or to any other remedy provided by law.

Oregon

Failure to Report

Rev. Stat. § 419B.010(3)

A person who violates the reporting laws commits a Class A violation. Prosecution under this law shall be commenced at any time within 18 months after the commission of the offense.

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Pennsylvania

Failure to Report

Cons. Stat. Ch. 23, § 6319

A mandatory reporter who willfully fails to report as required commits a misdemeanor of the third degree for the first violation and a misdemeanor of the second degree for a second or subsequent violation.

False Reporting

Cons. Stat. Ch. 18, § 4906

A person who knowingly gives false information to any law enforcement officer with intent to implicate another commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

A person commits a misdemeanor of the third degree if he or she:

- Reports to law enforcement authorities an offense or other incident knowing that it did not occur
 - Pretends to furnish such authorities with information relating to an offense or incident when he or she knows he or she has no information relating to such offense or incident
-

Puerto Rico

Failure to Report

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Rhode Island

Failure to Report

Gen. Laws § 40-11-6.1

Any mandatory reporter who knowingly fails to report as required or who knowingly prevents any person acting reasonably from doing so, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$500, imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both.

In addition, any mandatory reporter who knowingly fails to perform any act required by the reporting laws or who knowingly prevents another person from performing a required act shall be civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by that failure.

False Reporting

Gen. Laws § 40-11-3.2

Any person who knowingly and willingly makes or causes to be made to the department a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

South Carolina

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 20-7-560

Any mandatory reporter or any person required to perform any other function under the reporting laws, who knowingly fails to do so, or a person who threatens or attempts to intimidate a witness, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than \$500, be imprisoned for not more than 6 months, or both.

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 20-7-567

It is unlawful to knowingly make a false report of abuse or neglect. A person who violates this statute is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than \$5,000, imprisoned not more than 90 days, or both.

South Dakota

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. §§ 26-8A-3; 26-8A-4; 26-8A-6; 26-8A-7

Any mandatory reporter who knowingly and intentionally fails to make the required report is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. This provision includes:

- Reports that must be made to the coroner when the reporter suspects that a child has died as a result of abuse or neglect
- Reports required of hospital staff
- Reports that are required of staff of public or private schools

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 22-11-9

[Effective July 1, 2006]

A person commits false reporting to authorities when he or she:

- Makes a report or intentionally causes the transmission of a report to law enforcement authorities of a crime or other incident within their official concern, knowing that it did not occur
- Makes a report or intentionally causes the transmission of a report to law enforcement authorities that furnishes information relating to an offense or other incident within their official concern, knowing that such information is false

False reporting to authorities is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Tennessee

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 37-1-412

Any person who knowingly fails to make a report required by § 37-1-403 commits a Class A misdemeanor.

A person believed to have violated this section shall be brought before the court. If the defendant pleads not guilty, the juvenile court judge shall bind the defendant over to the grand jury. If the defendant pleads guilty, the juvenile court judge shall sentence the defendant under this section with a fine not to exceed \$2,500.

False Reporting

Ann. Code Ann. § 37-1-413

Any person who either verbally or by written or printed communication knowingly and maliciously reports or causes, encourages, aids, counsels, or procures another to report a false accusation of child sexual abuse commits a Class E felony.

Texas

Failure to Report

Family Code § 261.109

A person commits an offense if the person has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect and knowingly fails to report in accordance with the reporting laws. An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

False Reporting

Family Code § 261.107

A person commits an offense if, with the intent to deceive, he or she knowingly makes a report of child abuse or neglect that is false. An offense under this subsection is:

- A State jail felony
- A felony of the third degree if the person has previously been convicted under this section

A person who is convicted of an offense under this section shall:

- Pay any reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the person who was falsely accused of abuse or neglect
 - Be liable to the State for a civil penalty of \$1,000
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Utah

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 62A-4a-411

Any person, official, or institution required to report a case of suspected child abuse, child sexual abuse, neglect, fetal alcohol syndrome, or fetal drug dependency who willfully fails to do so is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

Action for failure to report must be commenced within 4 years from the date of knowledge of the offense and the willful failure to report.

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 76-8-506

A person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor if he or she:

- Knowingly gives or causes to be given false information to any peace officer or any State or local government agency or personnel with a purpose of inducing the recipient of the information to believe that another has committed an offense
 - Knowingly gives or causes to be given to any peace officer, any State or local government agency or personnel, or to any licensed social worker, psychologist, or marriage and family therapist, information concerning the commission of an offense, knowing that the offense did not occur or knowing that he or she has no information relating to the offense or danger
 - Knowingly gives or causes to be given false information to any State or local government agency or personnel with a purpose of inducing a change in the person's licensing or certification status or the licensing or certification status of another
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Vermont

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, § 4913(e)

A person who violates the law requiring mandated reporters to report suspected child abuse or neglect shall be fined not more than \$500.

A person who violates the reporting laws with the intent to conceal abuse or neglect of a child shall be imprisoned not more than 6 months or fined not more than \$1,000, or both.

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Virgin Islands

Failure to Report

Ann. Code Tit. 5, § 2539

Any person, official, or institution required by this subchapter to report a case of alleged child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, or to perform any other act, who knowingly fails to do so, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than \$500, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

False Reporting

Ann. Code Tit. 14, §§ 2146(c); 2144(a)

A person is guilty of falsely reporting an incident in the second degree when, knowing the information reported, conveyed or circulated to false or baseless, he or she reports, by word or action, to the Department of Human Services or Department of Health, an alleged occurrence of child abuse or maltreatment that did not, in fact, occur or exist. The penalty for falsely reporting an incident in the second degree shall be:

- A fine of \$5,000
 - Imprisonment for not less than 5 years
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Virginia

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 63.2-1509(D)

[Effective January 1, 2007]

Any person required to report pursuant to this section who fails to do so within 72 hours of his or her first suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall be fined:

- Not more than \$500 for the first failure
- Not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000 for any subsequent failures

False Reporting

Ann. Code § 63.2-1513(A)

Any person 14 years of age or older who makes or causes to be made a report of child abuse or neglect that he or she knows to be false shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Any person 14 years of age or older who has been previously convicted under this subsection and who is subsequently convicted of making a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a Class 6 felony.

Washington

Failure to Report

Rev. Code §§ 26.44.080; 9A.20.021

Every person who is required to make a report pursuant to the reporting laws and who knowingly fails to make such a report, shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

Every person convicted of a gross misdemeanor shall be punished by one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 1 year
 - A fine of not more than \$5,000
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False Reporting

Rev. Code §§ 26.44.060(4); 9A.20.021

A person who intentionally and in bad faith knowingly makes a false report of alleged abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Every person convicted of a misdemeanor shall be punished by one or both of the following:

- Imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 90 days
 - A fine of not more than \$1,000
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West Virginia

Failure to Report

Ann. Code § 49-6A-8

Any mandated reporter who knowingly fails to report as required, or knowingly prevents another person acting reasonably from doing so, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be subject to one or both of the following:

- Confinement in the county jail not more than 10 days
- A fine of not more than \$100

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Wisconsin

Failure to Report

Ann. Stat. § 48.981(6)

Whoever intentionally violates the reporting laws by failure to report as required may be fined not more than \$1,000, imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both.

False Reporting

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Wyoming

Failure to Report

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

False Reporting

Ann. Stat. § 14-3-205(d)

Any person who knowingly and intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or neglect, or who encourages or coerces another person to make a false report, is guilty of a misdemeanor that is punishable by one of both of the following:

- Imprisonment for not more than 6 months
 - A fine of not more than \$750
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