Iowa
Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting

Who do I contact to report an incident in Iowa?
Reports should be made orally by calling 800-362-2178.
Iowa Code § 232.69.

If you have reason to believe that immediate protection for the child is advisable, you shall make an oral report to an appropriate law enforcement agency right away.

How much time do I have to report an incident?
Reports shall be made within 24 hours.
Iowa Code § 232.69 (1).

How is "child abuse" defined in Iowa?

(1) Any nonaccidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of it, suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child.

(2) Any mental injury to a child's intellectual or psychological capacity as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within the child's normal range of performance and behavior as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child, if the impairment is diagnosed and confirmed by a licensed physician or qualified mental health professional as defined in section 622.10.

(3) The commission of a sexual offense with or to a child pursuant to chapter 709[1], section 726.2[2], or section 728.12, subsection [3]1, as a result of the acts or omissions of the person responsible for the care of the child or of a person who is fourteen years of age or older and resides in a home with the child. Notwithstanding section 702.5[4], the commission of a sexual offense under this subparagraph includes any sexual offense referred to in this subparagraph with or to a person under the age of eighteen years.

(4) (a) The failure on the part of a person responsible for the care of a child to provide for the adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical or mental health treatment, supervision, or other care necessary for the child's health and welfare when financially able to do so or when offered financial or other reasonable means to do so and the failure occurred within five years of a report.

(b) For the purposes of subparagraph division (a), failure to provide for the adequate supervision of a child means the person failed to provide proper supervision of a child that a reasonable and prudent person would exercise under similar facts and circumstances and the failure resulted in direct harm or created a risk of harm to the child.

(c) A parent or guardian legitimately practicing religious beliefs who does not provide specified medical treatment for a child for that reason alone shall not be considered abusing the child,

[1] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//709.pdf
[2] Incest - https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/726.2.pdf
[3] Sexual exploitation of a minor - https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/728.12.pdf
[4] Here a child is defined as under 14 years old - https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/702.5.pdf

however this provision shall not preclude a court from ordering that medical service be provided to the child where the child's health requires it.

(5) The acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of a child which allow, permit, or encourage the child to engage in acts prohibited pursuant to section 725.1[5]. Notwithstanding section 702.5[6], acts or omissions under this subparagraph include an act or omission referred to in this subparagraph with or to a person under the age of eighteen years.

(6) An illegal drug is present in a child's body as a direct and foreseeable consequence of the acts or omissions of the person responsible for the care of the child.

(7) The person responsible for the care of a child, in the presence of a child, as defined in section 232.96A, subsection 16, paragraph "e"[7], unlawfully uses, possesses, manufactures, cultivates, or distributes a dangerous substance, as defined in section 232.96A, subsection 16, paragraph "f", or knowingly allows such use, possession, manufacture, cultivation, or distribution by another person in the presence of a child; possesses a product with the intent to use the product as a precursor or an intermediary to a dangerous substance in the presence of a child; or unlawfully uses, possesses, manufactures, cultivates, or distributes a dangerous substance specified in section 232.96A, subsection 16, paragraph "f", subparagraph (1), (2), or (3)[8], in a child's home, on the premises, or in a motor vehicle located on the premises and the incident occurred within five years of a report to the department.

(8) The commission of bestiality in the presence of a minor under section 717C.1[9] by a person who resides in a home with a child, as a result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child.

(9) (a) A person who is responsible for the care of a child knowingly allowing another person custody of, control over, or unsupervised access to a child under the age of fourteen or a child with a physical or mental disability, after knowing the other person is required to register or is on the sex offender registry under chapter 692A[10]. (b) This subparagraph does not apply in any of the following circumstances: (i) A child living with a parent or guardian who is a sex offender required to register or on the sex offender registry under chapter 692A. (ii) A child living with a parent or guardian who is married to and living with a sex offender required to register or on the

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[5] Prostitution - https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/725.1.pdf
[6] Here a child is defined as under 14 years old - https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/702.5.pdf
[7] "For the purposes of this subsection, "in the presence of a child" means in the physical presence of a child or occurring under other circumstances in which a reasonably prudent person would know that the use, possession, manufacture, cultivation, or distribution of a dangerous substance may be seen, smelled, ingested, or heard by a child."
[8] For the purposes of this subsection, "dangerous substance" means any of the following: (1) Amphetamine, its salts, isomers, or salts of its isomers. (2) Methamphetamine, its salts, isomers, or salts of its isomers. (3) A chemical or combination of chemicals that poses a reasonable risk of causing an explosion, fire, or other danger to the life or health of persons who are in the vicinity while the chemical or combination of chemicals is used or is intended to be used in any of the following: (a) The process of manufacturing an illegal or controlled substance. (b) As a precursor in the manufacturing of an illegal or controlled substance. (c) As an intermediary in the manufacturing of an illegal or controlled substance. (4) Cocaine, its salts, isomers, salts of its isomers, or derivatives. (5) Heroin, its salts, isomers, salts of its isomers, or derivatives. (6) Opium and opiate, and any salt, compound, derivative, or preparation of opium or opiate.
[9] Bestiality - https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/717C.1.pdf
[10] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//692A.pdf

sex offender registry under chapter 692A[11]. (iii) A child who is a sex offender required to register or on the sex offender registry under chapter 692A[12] who is living with the child's parent, guardian, or foster parent and is also living with the child to whom access was allowed. (c) For purposes of this subparagraph, "control over" means any of the following: (i) A person who has accepted, undertaken, or assumed supervision of a child from the parent or guardian of the child. (ii) A person who has undertaken or assumed temporary supervision of a child without explicit consent from the parent or guardian of the child.

(10) The person responsible for the care of the child has knowingly allowed the child access to obscene material as defined in section 728.1[13] or has knowingly disseminated or exhibited such material to the child.

(11) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a child for the purpose of commercial sexual activity as defined in section 710A.1[14].

Iowa Code § 232.68

How is a mandatory reporter defined in Iowa?
(1) A social worker. (2) An employee or operator of a public or private health care facility as defined in section 135C.1[15]. (3) A certified psychologist. (4) A licensed school employee, certified para-educator, holder of a coaching authorization issued under section 256.165[16], school employee who is eighteen years of age or older, or an instructor employed by a community college. (5) An employee or operator of a licensed child care center, registered child development home, head start program, family development and self-sufficiency grant program under section 216A.107[17], or healthy opportunities for parents to experience success – healthy families Iowa program under section 135.106[18]. (6) An employee or operator of a substance use disorder program or facility licensed under chapter 125[19]. (7) An employee of a department institution listed in section 218.1[20]. (8) An employee or operator of a juvenile detention or juvenile shelter care facility approved under section 232.142[21]. (9) An employee or operator of a foster care facility licensed or approved under chapter 237[22]. (10) An employee or operator of a mental health center. (11) A peace officer. (12) A counselor or mental health professional.
(13) An employee or operator of a provider of services to children funded under a federally approved medical assistance home and community-based services waiver. (14) An employee, operator, owner, or other person who performs duties for a children's residential facility certified

[11] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//692A.pdf
[12] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//692A.pdf
[13] "Knowingly" means being aware of the character of the matter.
[14] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/710A.1.pdf
[15] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/135C.1.pdf
[16] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/256.165.pdf
[17] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/216A.107.pdf
[18] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/135.106.pdf
[19] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//125.pdf
[20] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/218.1.pdf
[21] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/232.142.pdf
[22] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//237C.pdf

under chapter 237C[23]. (15) A massage therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 152C[24]. **Iowa Code § 232.69 (1)(b).**
Iowa law also states any other person who believes that a child has been abused may make a report as a permissive reporter. **Iowa Code § 232.69 (2).**

Are Clergy mandatory reporters in Iowa?
No. Clergy are not included in the list of mandatory reporters. However, Iowa allows any person who believes a child has been abused to be a permissive reporter. **Iowa Code § 232.69 (2).**

Is there a clergy-penitent privilege in Iowa?
Yes, a member of the clergy shall not be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication properly entrusted to the person in the person's professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable the person to discharge the functions of the person's office according to the usual course of practice or discipline.
Iowa Code § 622.10(1)

The privilege does not preclude Clergy from permissive reporting of abuse if the cleric becomes aware of the abuse outside of a penitential communication.

Where can I find Iowa law on child abuse?
https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/iowaCode/sections?codeChapter=232&year=2024

[23] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//237C.pdf
[24] https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//152C.pdf