



## *Michigan Child Protection Law*

Since 1975, the Michigan Child Protection Law (MCL 722.621-638, the “Act,” available at [michigan.gov/fia](http://michigan.gov/fia), select *Legal & Policy/Laws*) has required members of certain professions (e.g., physicians, nurses, psychologists, counselors, social workers, teachers and school administrators) to immediately report to the Michigan Family Independence Agency (“FIA”) suspected child abuse or neglect. Effective March 1, 2003, clergy (i.e., priests, deacons, religious) are also required to immediately report to the FIA suspected child abuse or neglect. This is a summary of the material provisions of the reporting requirements under the Act:

1. “Clergy” is defined as a “priest, minister, rabbi, Christian Science practitioner, or other religious practitioner, or similar functionary of a church, temple, or recognized religious body, denomination, or organization.”
2. “Child” is a person under 18 years of age.
3. “Child abuse” is defined as harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, teacher, teacher’s aide, clergy, or any other person responsible for the child’s health or welfare through non-accidental (i) physical or mental injury; (ii) sexual abuse; (iii) sexual exploitation; or (iv) maltreatment. “Child neglect” is defined as failure<sup>4</sup> to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.
4. The reporting obligation applies even if the abuse victim is over age 18 at the time of disclosure of the abuse for the reason that there may be a current risk of abuse to other children.
5. Persons required to report under the Act who have “reasonable cause: to suspect child abuse or neglect must make an immediate oral report



# Archdiocese of Detroit

## Safe Environments

---

to the FIA. This oral report must be made to the FIA office in the county where the child resides. Included herein are the addresses, telephone and facsimile numbers for the FIA offices in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Lapeer and St. Clair counties.

6. Within 72 hours after making the initial oral report, the reporting person must also file a written report with the FIA. This report must contain the name of the child and a description of the suspected abuse or neglect. If available, the report should also contain (i) the child's age; (ii) name and address of the child's parents, guardian and/or persons with whom the child resides; and (iii) any other information available to the reporting person identifying the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect and the manner in which the abuse or neglect occurred. (The form for the required written report can be downloaded from [michigan.gov/fia](http://michigan.gov/fia), select *Doing Business With the FIA/Forms*.) The written report must be mailed to the FIA office in the county where the child resides and a copy of the written report should also be faxed and mailed to the Policy Delegate for the Archbishop, 1234 Washington Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan 48226, Facsimile (313) 237-4642; and the attorneys for the archdiocese, Bodman, Longley & Dahling, LLP, 201 West Big Beaver Road, Suite 500, Troy, Michigan 48084, Facsimile (248) 743-6002.
7. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect as required by the Act is a criminal misdemeanor "punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$500, or both," and could also subject the person who has failed to report and the Archdiocese of Detroit to significant civil liability for money damages.
8. There is a narrow exception to mandatory reporting by clergy of suspected child abuse or neglect. A clergy member is not required to report suspected child abuse or neglect only if such information has been obtained through a communication "made to a member of the clergy in his or her professional character in a confession or similarly confidential communication."



## *Family Independence Agency Offices*

For more information on compliance with the reporting requirements under the Michigan Child Protection Act, call the FIA toll free at (800) 942-4357 or one of the county offices listed below.

### ***Lapeer County***

P.O. Box 400  
1505 Suncrest Drive  
Lapeer, MI 48446  
Telephone: (810) 664-5968  
Facsimile: (810) 667-0795

### ***Macomb County***

19700 Hall Road, Suite A  
Clinton Township, MI 48038  
Telephone: (586) 412-6109  
Facsimile: (586) 412-6819

### ***Monroe County***

1051 South Telegraph Road  
Monroe, MI 48161  
Telephone: (734) 243-7400  
Facsimile: (734) 243-6582

### ***Oakland County***

Stoneridge East, Suite 200  
41000 Woodward Avenue  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304  
Telephone: (248) 975-5010  
Facsimile: (248) 975-5550

### ***St. Clair County***

220 Fort Street  
Port Huron, MI 48060  
Telephone: (810) 966-2173  
Facsimile: (810) 966-2043

### ***Wayne County***

Central Wayne Child  
& Family Services  
2929 Russell  
Detroit, MI 48207  
Telephone: (313) 396-0300  
Facsimile: (313) 396-0415