



HEALTH AND SAFETY ALERT



Office of Developmental Programs

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Adequate and Appropriate Supervision is Essential to Safety

What are some examples of potential incidents of neglect?

- An individual being left alone in a vehicle while staff run in "just for a minute" for something in a store;
- An individual being left alone while taking a shower when close supervision is necessary, or;
- An individual being left alone in their home while staff grab the mail.

Is there adequate staffing?

If individuals are left alone in the above examples or similar situations, they could possibly be victims of **neglect**. **Neglect** could take many forms; both intentional and unintentional. Regardless of the reason, **neglect** is dangerous and has zero tolerance with the Office of Developmental Programs. Assurance should be made so that staff understand explicitly (and that supervisory/program staff define explicitly) what "one-to-one" or other forms of enhanced supervision means with regard to the person they are supporting.

Has your agency adopted a "zero tolerance" policy?

Staff should be educated and dedicated to *Everyday Lives*. Assurance of safety is one of the *Everyday Lives* principles. Persons receiving services in Pennsylvania are afforded the right to be free from **neglect**. Examples of oversight include developing systems of required "check-ins" by staff working overnight and also make unannounced visits a regular part of your management plan.

Does your agency have a staffing coverage policy?

Flexibility is important when assuring adequate coverage is available. There should be a plan in place for unanticipated absences; including "fill-in" when necessary by management staff. This is important to assure that the required services for the individuals are met. Responsibility must be shared to assure that we have in place what is needed to keep each individual safe and healthy.

Ways to Avoid Leaving Someone Unsupervised:

- Instead of using the drive-thru at the bank or fast food restaurant, empower individuals to complete their own banking or give opportunities to patronize eat-in the restaurants. Thus giving them choice and control two of the *Everyday Lives* principles.
- Enhance skill by going to the grocery store, help individuals engage and learn, instead of leaving individuals at home or in a vehicle.

Reference the *Everyday Lives* principles to provide individuals with supports that will achieve independence and positive personal outcomes