

Understanding and Identifying Fraud, Abuse, and Neglect

Fraud

When you self-direct, it is important to only pay your workers for the time that they are working for you. It is against the law to pay workers for any time they did not really work. This is considered **fraud**, since you are paying someone for work they did not do. You can protect yourself by checking each timesheet before it is submitted for payment. If you have a representative, they should check each timesheet before it is submitted to the FMS for payment.



Using Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) can help protect you, your representative, and your worker. Starting January 1, 2021, using EVV will be required.

Abuse and Neglect

No one should ever make you feel unsafe. If someone hurts you or scares you, this is not your fault. You should always tell your case manager if your worker is doing something that makes you feel unsafe, scared, or worried.

The following list includes signs of abuse. If your worker is doing any behavior described below, you should tell your case manager right away.

- Hurting you, being violent, or threatening violence
- Stealing your money or property
- Pressuring you to approve incorrect timesheets or Electronic Visit Verification records

- Signing things in your name that you did not authorize, or making ATM withdrawals or writing checks in your name you did not authorize
- Any behavior that makes you feel afraid, worried, humiliated, or intimidated

Neglect can include:

- Not providing services that are in your plan
- Leaving you alone for extended periods of time
- Threatening to not provide services if you do not give them what they want
- Refusing to acknowledge or follow your spoken instructions

What to Do

It is important to be open with your case manager when you talk with them. It is their job to make sure you are safe and help protect you. Always tell them if you think something might be wrong or someone is making you uncomfortable. Your case manager can also give you important phone numbers in case you need help, like a confidential hotline to call to report fraud and abuse to your state.

Green Mountain Self-Advocates

Sometimes, abuse can be hard to identify, and can look differently for different people. Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA), a Vermont organization run by individuals with disabilities, created a guide on how to recognize abuse. The guide gives information and examples of what abuse is and how to talk about difficult situations if you are concerned. GMSA can be reached by phone at [\(802\) 229-2600](tel:8022292600).

You can access the guide here:

<https://www.endabusepwd.org/publications/gmsa-peer-to-peer-guide/>.