

**481—50.11(135C) Complaint and self-reported incident investigation procedure.**

**50.11(1) Complaint.** The process for filing a complaint is as follows:

*a.* Any person with concerns regarding a facility may file a complaint with the Department of Inspections and Appeals, Complaint/Incident Bureau, Lucas State Office Building, Third Floor, 321 E. 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0083; by use of the complaint hotline, 1-877-686-0027; by facsimile sent to (515)281-7106; or through the website address [dia-hfd.iowa.gov/DIA\\_HFD/Home.do](http://dia-hfd.iowa.gov/DIA_HFD/Home.do).

*b.* When the nature of the complaint is outside the department's authority, the department shall forward the complaint or refer the complainant to the appropriate investigatory entity.

*c.* The complainant shall include as much of the following information as possible in the complaint: the complainant's name, address and telephone number; the complainant's relationship to the facility or resident; and the reason for the complaint.

*d.* The complainant's name shall be confidential information and shall not be released by the department.

*e.* The department shall act on anonymous complaints unless the department determines that the complaint is intended to harass the facility.

*f.* If the department, upon preliminary review, determines that the complaint is intended as harassment or is without a reasonable basis, the department may dismiss the complaint.

**50.11(2) Self-reported incident.** When the facility is required pursuant to rule 481—50.7(10A,135C) or other requirements to report an incident, the facility shall make the report to the department via:

*a.* The web-based reporting tool accessible from the following Internet site, [dia-hfd.iowa.gov/DIA\\_HFD/Home.do](http://dia-hfd.iowa.gov/DIA_HFD/Home.do), under the "Login" tab and then access "Add self report";

*b.* Mail by sending the self-report to the Department of Inspections and Appeals, Complaint/Incident Bureau, Lucas State Office Building, Third Floor, 321 E. 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0083;

*c.* The complaint/incident hotline, 1-877-686-0027; or

*d.* Facsimile sent to (515)281-7106.

**50.11(3) Time frames for investigation of complaint or self-reported incident.** The following guidelines shall be used for determining the time frame in which an on-site inspection of the facility shall be initiated:

*a. Immediate jeopardy situation.* Within 2 working days for a complaint or self-reported incident determined by the department to be an alleged immediate jeopardy situation. For purposes of this rule, "immediate jeopardy situation" means a situation in which the facility's alleged noncompliance with Iowa Code chapter 135C, or rules adopted pursuant thereto, has caused or is likely to cause, serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to a resident.

*b. High-level nonimmediate jeopardy situation.* Within 10 days for nursing facilities and within 20 working days for intermediate care facilities and residential care facilities for a complaint or self-reported incident determined by the department to be an alleged high-level nonimmediate jeopardy situation. For purposes of this rule, "high-level nonimmediate jeopardy situation" means the alleged noncompliance with Iowa Code chapter 135C, or rules adopted pursuant thereto, may have caused harm that negatively impacts the resident's mental, physical, or psychosocial status and is of such consequence to the resident's well-being that a rapid response is warranted.

*c. Other nonimmediate jeopardy situation.* Within 45 calendar days for a complaint or self-reported incident determined by the department to be an alleged nonimmediate jeopardy situation, other than a high-level nonimmediate jeopardy situation. For purposes of this rule, "other nonimmediate jeopardy situation" means a situation that is not a high-level nonimmediate jeopardy situation where the alleged noncompliance with Iowa Code chapter 135C, or rules adopted pursuant thereto, may cause harm of limited consequence and does not significantly impair the individual's mental, physical, or psychosocial status or function.

*d. No inspection of facility-reported incidents.* The department may determine not to institute an inspection of a self-reported incident using criteria including, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) There is no evident deficiency on the part of the facility, and the facility has taken appropriate measures to address the situation; or
- (2) There is a potential deficiency but:
  1. The facility has taken appropriate measures to address the situation;
  2. The facility does not have a recent history of identified deficiency similar to or related to the incident being reported;
  3. A complaint has not been filed regarding the incident being reported; and
  4. The resulting injury does not cause a significant negative impact to the resident's quality of life.

**50.11(4)** *Standard for determining whether a complaint or self-reported incident is substantiated.* The department shall apply a preponderance of the evidence standard in determining whether a complaint or self-reported incident is substantiated.

**50.11(5)** *Notification of program and complainant.* The department shall notify the facility and, if known, the complainant of the findings of the complaint investigation. The department shall also notify the complainant, if known, if the department does not investigate a complaint, and the reasons for not investigating the complaint shall be included in the notification.

**50.11(6)** *Process for complaint and self-reported incident.* The department and facility shall follow the process outlined in rule 481—50.10(135C), as applicable, when conducting or responding to a complaint or self-reported incident investigation.

[ARC 8433B, IAB 12/30/09, effective 2/3/10]