

Filing a Complaint

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Do I have to be a patient to file a complaint?**

No, in addition to patients, complainants could be patient family members, employers, other nurses, co-workers or other professionals. Any person who has knowledge of conduct by a licensed nurse that may violate a nursing law or rule or related state or federal law may report the alleged violation to the State Board of Nursing where the situation occurred.
- 2. Do I have to report?**

It depends on your state and the situation. Some states have mandatory reporting requirements for certain professionals or agencies. [Contact the State Board of Nursing](#) for more information about any reporting obligations in your state.
- 3. How do I file a complaint?**

[Check your Board of Nursing](#) Web Site or call the Board for information about how to file a complaint in your state.
- 4. What part will I play, if any, after filing a complaint?**

You may be contacted by Board staff, investigator and/or attorney to be interviewed or to provide additional information.
- 6. Why would a case take so long?**

The length of time required to resolve a complaint depends on the seriousness, complexity, the level of investigation required and whether it goes through informal or formal proceedings. Each case is unique and has to be considered on its own merits.
- 7. Is there a time limit for filing a complaint?**

Most states do not have a time limit for filing complaints. However, complaints that involve situations distant in time may be given less priority.
- 8. Will my complaint remain confidential?**

The states vary as to requirements for confidentiality. Some states do not reveal the source of a complaint (although it may become obvious during hearing testimony). Other states are required to share the complaint with the subject nurse. Other states have different guidelines. If you have questions, [contact your State Board of Nursing](#).

