

Calvary Lutheran Church  
of Golden Valley

*Safe Haven for  
Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults*

# **Safety & Abuse Policy**

## **2009**



*Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley*

**Safe Haven for  
Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults – 2009**

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# **Covenant to Be a Safe Haven for Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults**

We, the members of  
**Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley**

*living out our faith at*

7520 Golden Valley Road  
Golden Valley, MN 55427

in the Minneapolis Area Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

affirm our commitment to be a  
Safe Haven for  
Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

Knowing that living in this covenant is a lifelong process  
of learning and caring, and knowing that we work with others  
in our immediate community, the wider church and the world  
to develop programs and places  
where all people can flourish,  
we ask God to help us.



# Calvary's Commitment

*"But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.' " – Luke 18:16*

As we "lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ" we will care for all people within Calvary. It is the policy of Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, to provide a safe environment for the children, youth and workers in our church. Ministry to our children, youth and vulnerable adults is deeply valued and to that end, procedures will be followed to protect them from harm in our church.

Because the legal and social environment of our society is turbulent and changing rapidly, it shall be our policy to monitor this external environment in light of our mission to "lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ." As a Christian body, we shall be proactive in reviewing our policies and procedures to make changes when necessary to provide a safe environment for the children, youth, vulnerable adults, volunteers and staff of our church.

## ***Why is a safety and abuse policy necessary?***

- 1. To Protect Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults*** – The creation of a secure, safe environment for our youth is of utmost importance (*Matthew 18:1-10*). The application, interview, training and reference check processes are all screening procedures to assure the safety of our children.
- 2. To Protect Volunteers and Staff*** – It is necessary to protect church staff and volunteer workers from potential meritless allegations of abuse.
- 3. To Raise Awareness Level*** – The goal is not to raise suspicion, but to become educated about the process and systems regarding protection of people at Calvary Lutheran Church.
- 4. Calvary's Position in the Community*** – Because we are a leader in the greater Golden Valley community we need to be the best advocates for children, minors and vulnerable adults we can be.
- 5. Legal Protection of Calvary Lutheran Church*** – There are several liability factors that dictate how we process our volunteers and paperwork.

## ***Parental Responsibility***

All parents should be encouraged to assume individual responsibility for their children and not assume the church sponsored activity or presence on the church premises is a guarantee of the child's safety. Children should not be left unattended in the church building.

# Marks of a Safe Haven

What does a Safe Haven for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults look like? What does it give to a child or vulnerable adult? What does it feel like to the congregation? What does it say to the community? In Holy Baptism, we make commitment to "renounce all the forces of evil..." (*LBW, page 123*). What are the "forces of evil" that threaten the safety of children and vulnerable adults in your setting? How can our congregation boldly state its belief in a God who creates, redeems, and sanctifies? The following are characteristics of a Safe Haven for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

<i>Children &amp; vulnerable adults are safe from</i>	<i>Marks of a Safe Haven</i>
• Physical abuse	Zero toleration of physical violence
• Sexual abuse	Zero toleration of sexual abuse
• Emotional abuse	Zero toleration of emotional abuse
• Stifling stereotypes	Zero toleration of racism, sexism, ageism
• Hunger	Immediate assistance in times of crisis
• Homelessness	Understands the causes of poverty
• Rejection	Allocates resources to create Safe Havens
• People are free from Financial Exploitation	Zero tolerance of financial exploitation

<i>Children &amp; vulnerable adults are safe to</i>	<i>Marks of a Safe Haven</i>
• Grow in faith	Worship is child/vulnerable adult-friendly
• Love God	Worship is child/vulnerable adult-friendly
• Love their neighbors	Strong relationships between generations
• Give	Commitment to teach and learn from children & vulnerable adults
• Feel empathy	Time is taken to talk with and listen to children & vulnerable adults
• Serve	Challenged to grow in faith and service
• Discover	High standards for quality care and education
• Create	Joy and fun, rather than boredom
• Hope	Encouragement and enthusiasm
• Be aware of their community	Strong connections both locally and globally
• Be aware of the world	Seeing life through the eyes of a child or vulnerable adult

# Types of Child Abuse

While child abuse has gotten more attention in the last few decades (it wasn't until 1961 that the medical profession formally recognized child abuse), it is still a growing problem in our society. Child abuse can be described in four different categories: Physical, Mental, Sexual, and Neglect.

## *Physical Abuse*

- Inflicting injury upon a child by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function.
- Placing a child in a situation where they will likely be injured.
- Characterized by injury from punching, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise physically harming a child.

## *Mental Abuse*

- Emotional, or psychological injury that causes, or could cause, behavioral, emotional, or mental disorders.
- Verbal comments, actions or statements that would cause a child to believe their person, emotions, physical form, family, race, background, religious background, or social status is somehow bad, inferior, unacceptable or shameful.
- Emotional abuse is almost always present with other types of abuse.

## *Sexual Abuse*

- Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child in any setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child.
- Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.
- Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially or developmentally ready.
- Child sexual abuse may include actual or threatened touching or non-touching behavior.
- Types of child sexual abuse include the following: fondling; oral, genital or anal penetration; intercourse; forcible rape; pornographic pictures; obscene phone calls; exhibitionism; allowing children to view sexual activity, etc.

## *Neglect*

- This can be physical, such as delay of nourishment or health care; educational, such as permitting a child to be truant from school; or emotional, such as extreme spousal abuse in front of the child; or failing to provide psychological care as needed; or financial, such as not providing adequately for the child.

While it is possible that only one type of child abuse could be noticed in a situation, it is more likely that more than one category of abuse will be present. As with any problem, an awareness of the indicators for that problem can be a big first step in the right direction. Page 17 will identify some of the physical and behavioral indicators associated with the four different types of abuse.

# Vulnerable Adult Abuse

## Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult in the state of Minnesota is a person who is 18 years of age or older and who fits the criteria of either categorical vulnerable adult or functional vulnerable adult.

**Categorical** ~ either a resident of a licensed facility, a recipient of services from a licensed facility or provider, or a recipient of licensed home health care services or MA funded personal care attendant services.

**Functional** ~ a person with physical or mental infirmity, or emotional dysfunction which impairs their ability to meet basic needs **and** their ability to protect themselves from maltreatment.

- *unable to meet own basic needs:* food, shelter clothing
- *unable to perform activities of daily living:* bathing, grooming, dressing, shopping, cooking, eating, cleaning, paying bills, administering medications, etc.
- *unable to protect self from maltreatment:* identify maltreatment, escape from maltreatment, ask for/call for assistance, develop and implement a protective plan
- has diminished mental capacity

## What to Report: Identify!

- Vulnerable adult
- Caregiver
- Nature and extent of suspected maltreatment
- Time, date, location of incident
- Any evidence of previous maltreatment

*For more information see [www.leg-state.mn.us/leg/service.htm](http://www.leg-state.mn.us/leg/service.htm)*

## Types of abuse

### **Assault**

- Conduct producing pain or injury, such as: hitting, slapping, kicking, pinching, use of force to compel cooperation, involuntary confinement, deprivation
- Use of malicious language (oral, written, or gesture) toward a vulnerable adult: disparaging, humiliating, harassing or threatening
- Criminal sexual conduct
- Use of drugs to injure or to facilitate a crime
- Promotion of prostitution

### **Neglect**

- Failure to provide care or services such as: food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care
- May be caused by self or caregiver

### **Financial Exploitation**

- By legal fiduciary:
  - unauthorized expenditure or failure to use financial resources to provide basic needs of vulnerable adult
- By others:
  - willfully uses, withholds, or disposes of the vulnerable adult's funds or property
  - obtains control or interest in vulnerable adult's funds or property through undue influence, harassment, duress, deception or fraud
  - compels vulnerable adult to perform for the profit of another

# Calvary's Procedures in Preventing Abuse

Legal requirements call for the church to take specific action in worker/volunteer selection and supervision, and in the reporting of allegations of abuse. Calvary Lutheran Church has chosen to implement and follow the following procedures with volunteer workers.

## **1. Volunteer Screening Process**

- a. Application Form (see sample in Form A)
- b. Authorization for Criminal Background Records Check (see sample in Form B)

## **2. Supervision Guidelines**

## **3. Reporting Obligations**

Individuals Who **Will Not** Be Allowed To Work With Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults

1. Individuals convicted of child abuse or molestation.
2. Convicted felons.
3. Individuals with illness or character problems that could affect or impair working with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

## ***Calvary's Policy Regarding People with Disabilities***

We want all people to be included in the ministries and activities at Calvary. Because most events are run by volunteers and not trained medical/health care staff, our Safe Haven Policy does not allow staff or volunteers to take care of special health/physical needs of others, e.g., self-care, toileting, monitoring medications, feeding, etc. In order for each person to get the most out of events (especially overnight and day long retreats), those requiring assistance with physical cares will need to invite a friend, family member or attendant to assist them.

# Calvary's Leadership Expectations

The leaders of the programmatic areas of Children, Youth and Family Ministries are in a public and visible position within the church and are looked at as role models for the participants of our programs. Calvary Lutheran Church expects that these leaders, whether children or adults, live their lives in accordance with Biblical principles. The staff of Calvary reserves the right to make judgments about whether individuals should or should not be granted leadership roles based on those principles. These include, but are not limited to, background, recommendations, reputation within the community, lifestyle and participation in the life of Calvary Lutheran Church.



# Volunteer Screening Process

All references to “children” and “youth” in the following procedures refer to children under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults.

The following screening process will be followed for any person wishing to serve as a volunteer at Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley.

Any person who seeks to be employed or volunteer at Calvary Lutheran Church who may have or seeks to have access to children and vulnerable adults to whom Calvary Lutheran Church provides care, education, training, instruction or recreation, shall truthfully complete, date and sign a

- “Confidential Application for Volunteers and Staff with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults,” as found in Form A
- “Authorization for Background Check,” as found in Form B.

The failure to complete, date and sign these documents or any other document necessary to process the authorization will be considered as a withdrawal of the application for the position under consideration.

As a result of the reference check or for any other reason, Calvary Lutheran Church may request a background records check to determine whether the applicant is the subject of any reported conviction for background check crimes, under the provisions of the Child Protection Background Check Act.

If in the opinion of the Senior Pastor the applicant presents a serious potential threat to the safety of children or vulnerable adults at Calvary, the applicant shall be denied the opportunity to work at Calvary Lutheran Church.

## ***About your privacy***

A record of contact with references identified by the applicant shall be maintained and secured in the applicant's personnel file, and shall contain information about each contact.

In the event Calvary Lutheran Church determines to request a background records check, the applicant shall be informed that:

- a. Calvary Lutheran Church will request a background records check of the applicant to determine if the applicant has been arrested or convicted of any child abuse crimes, murder, manslaughter, assault, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual behavior, prostitution-related crimes or any other felonies.
- b. The applicant has a right to be informed by Calvary of the response of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to the background records check and to obtain from Calvary a copy of the background records check report.
- c. The applicant has a right to obtain from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension any record that forms the basis for the report.
- d. The applicant has a right to be informed by Calvary Lutheran Church if the applicant has been denied an opportunity to work with children because of the response from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
- e. The applicant has the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the background check report or record by appealing to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
- f. The applicant has the right not to be required to pay the cost of the background records check.
- g. Only authorized representatives, approved by the Senior Pastor may review the information contained in the response of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

# Safe Haven Guidelines for Calvary Staff & Volunteers

1. Adults responsible for any church activity involving individual contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults are required to receive training.
2. Employees and volunteer workers should be instructed that sexual contact with minors or other abuse can lead to a felony conviction and imprisonment in a state penitentiary. Being alone with a child is strongly discouraged.
3. The Children, Youth & Family Ministry staff and/or other supervisory leaders will make random visits to classrooms and other places children use.
4. If possible, supervision of children should be provided before and after the event until all children are in the custody of parents or legal guardians or have left the premises. Children third grade and under should be released from the program to the parents or appointed guardians. Children in grades fourth through sixth should also be released from the program to their parents or appointed guardians unless the parent or guardian has authorized in writing that the child may leave the event without the parent or guardian being present.
5. Church nursery and Tot and SuperTot classroom procedures must clearly identify the child and the child's parent or guardian. Children should only be released to a properly identified and pre-authorized adult via the Tag system.
6. Persons who are known to have committed acts of sexual misconduct with children or are known to have been accused of acts of sexual misconduct or other abuse with children are strictly prohibited from serving in ministry to children and youth unless the allegation is found to be without merit. Such persons may be encouraged to serve in other ministries where they have no contact with minors.
7. Church workers should be trained to identify inappropriate behavior with children or youth. Workers will be encouraged to advise each other when questionable behavior is displayed. Questionable behaviors should be reported to the proper supervising staff person.
8. All volunteers shall complete the Calvary Application (Form A) and Authorization for Background Check (Form B).
9. All events sponsored by Calvary which are to occur off of the church premises must be approved in advance by the appropriate Children, Youth & Family Ministry staff person.
10. In all situations where events are planned to occur off of the church premises, each child shall have his or her parent or guardian sign a Parental Permission Authorization and Release Form. This form will be required every year.
11. The Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry shall determine the number of adult leaders who will participate in Calvary sponsored youth events. As a rule of thumb the following adult to youth ratio will be followed:

Toddlers – 1 to 5

Preschool – 1 to 6

Elementary age children – 1 to 7

Middle school age youth – 1 to 8

Sr. High age youth – 1 to 10

In order to promote the safety of children, it will be the responsibility of designated leaders to supervise all youth participating in the event consistent with the policies stated herein.

# To Report Abuse

Our governing principle is that we know that it is in God's heart and will to care for and protect children and adults. Our considerations/goals are

- Care and protection for victim(s) and their families
- Clear and compassionate public stance
- Protection for members, public, Calvary
- Respect for accused

## ***Who Should Report Abuse?***

- Volunteers (supervisors/staff can help you make report)
- Staff
- Mandatory reporters (are professionals, or professionals delegates, law enforcement, teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers).

## ***How to Report?***

If you know or suspect that a child, youth or vulnerable adult is in **immediate** danger, call 911.

- ***Reports for Children and Youth:*** Child Protection ~ 612-348-3552
- ***Reports for Vulnerable Adults:*** Common Entry Point of County ~ 612-348-8526

Make report immediately or within 24-hours. When in doubt, make a report.

## ***Protection for Reporters***

- No civil or criminal liability for good faith reports.
- Identity of reporter not divulged (except with consent or by court order).
- Penalties for retaliation against reporter.
- Civil protection for good faith investigative activities.



*Safe Haven for Children, Youth & Vulnerable Adults*

**Confidential Application and Authorization for Background Check for  
Volunteers and Staff with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**

Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley | 7520 Golden Valley Road | Golden Valley, MN 55427

*Leaders of Calvary’s programs serve as role models for those who take part in these programs. Calvary Lutheran Church expects that these leaders, whether children or adults, live according to Biblical principles. The staff of our various ministries are guided by these principles as they decide who should be asked to lead our programs and activities. They consider, among other things; background, recommendations, reputation, lifestyle, and participation in the life of Calvary. Decisions about leadership will be made prayerfully, and conveyed to the people involved in a way intended to “lead them into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.” In order to help provide a safe and secure environment for everyone, we ask all volunteers and persons using Calvary facilities for independent activities to complete this form.*

**Personal Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time at this address? \_\_\_\_\_ If under a year, list former address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Type of ministry/activity you’re applying for: \_\_\_\_\_ Date you’re able to begin \_\_\_\_\_

**Church History and Prior Church Involvement and Personal References**

Name of Church of which you are a member: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and addresses of other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List **all** previous **church** work involving children, youth or vulnerable adults. *Use separate page, if necessary.*

Church name \_\_\_\_\_

Church address \_\_\_\_\_

Work performed \_\_\_\_\_

Date involved \_\_\_\_\_

List **all** previous **non-church** work involving children, youth or vulnerable adults. *Use separate page, if necessary.*

Organization’s name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Work performed \_\_\_\_\_

Dates involved \_\_\_\_\_

CONTINUED ON BACK SIDE



## Form A – continued (page 2 of 4)

List any training, education, gifts or other factors that have prepared you for the ministry you are applying for

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### *Personal References relating to work/volunteering with children or vulnerable adults (not former employers or relatives)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

### *Applicant's Statement*

1. I have read Calvary's "Safe Haven for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults" document.
2. I agree to act in the spirit of Calvary's "Safe Haven" document, to do no harm, and specifically to:
  - a. Conduct myself in a way that is visible to all and above reproach;
  - b. Never intentionally be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult;
  - c. Provide only safe and appropriate touch.

The information contained in this screening application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give any information that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with children, youth or vulnerable adults. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of the application by Calvary Lutheran Church, I release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages for release of the requested information.

If my application is accepted, I agree to abide by all policies of Calvary Lutheran Church, both written and verbal, and to act with Christian concern in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the contents of it. I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Form A – continued (page 3 of 4)

Applicant to complete information below, read Statement of Authorization, sign and date at the bottom

*Please print*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Maiden, Alias or Former Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY) \_\_\_\_\_ Sex ( M or F) Social Security #

Driver License # \_\_\_\_\_ State of Issue

Have you ever lived in a state or country other than Minnesota? Yes No

If yes, list all states and countries of residence on the back.

Have you ever been convicted of fraud related to a background check crime? Yes No

Have you ever been arrested for, convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime involving sexual behavior, child abuse or abuse of a vulnerable adult? Yes No

If yes, describe the crime \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Conviction \_\_\_\_\_

Location (city, county & state or country) \_\_\_\_\_

*(Attach a separate sheet if more than one conviction)*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize Calvary Lutheran Church and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, credit history, adult criminal or police records, and motor vehicle records including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining information which may be material to my qualifications for service now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my service with Calvary Lutheran Church.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Form A – continued (page 4 of 4)

Starting with the most recent, list all states and countries in which you have resided since the age of 18.  
Use a separate sheet if necessary.

*Please print*

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

## Minnesota State Law Governing the Responsibility to Report Suspected Child Abuse

Minnesota statutes govern the reporting of alleged abuse. The following statutes among others are important.

### ***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 1.***

“The legislature hereby declares that the public policy of the state is to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. In furtherance of this public policy, it is the intent of the legislature under this section to strengthen the family and make the home, school, and community safe for children by promoting responsible child care in all settings; and to provide when necessary, a safe temporary or permanent home environment for physically or sexually abused or neglected children.

In addition, It is the policy of the state to require the reporting of neglect, physical or sexual abuse of children in the home, school, and community settings; to provide for the voluntary reporting of abuse or neglect of children; to require the assessment and investigation of the reports; and to provide protective and counseling services in appropriate cases.”

### ***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 3(a)(1).***

“(a) A person who know or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, as defined in subdivision 2, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, shall immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report, police department, or the county sheriff if the person is:

(1) a professional or professional’s delegate who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education or law enforcement”.

### ***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 4(a)(1).***

“(a) The following persons are immune from any civil or criminal liability that otherwise might result from their actions, if they are acting in good faith:

“(1) any person making a voluntary or mandated report under subdivision 3 or under section 626.5561 or assisting in an assessment under this section or under section 626.5561.”

### ***Minn. Stat. § 626.556 subd. 4(a)(1).***

“Any person who knowingly or recklessly makes a false report under the provisions of this section shall be liable in a civil suit for any actual damages suffered by the person or persons so reported and for any punitive damages set by the court or jury, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees.”

