



CHAPTER 55 – VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE

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55.1 Administration

55.1.1 Rights of Victims and Witnesses

The University Police Department is committed to the delivery of appropriate victim/witness services and the implementation of victim/witness programs and activities.

Sections 11-1002 and 11-1003, which follow, of the Maryland Code/Criminal Procedure/Title 11, describe the guidelines to be followed by departmental personnel in the treatment and help of victim/witnesses.

§ 11-1002. Guidelines for treatment of victim of crime, victim's representative, or witness.

- (a) Responsibility of criminal justice units.- The appropriate criminal justice unit should inform a victim of a crime, a victim's representative, or a witness of the guidelines listed in subsection (B) of this section.
- (b) Guidelines - A victim of a crime, victim's representative, or witness:
  - (1) should be treated with dignity, respect, courtesy, and sensitivity;
  - (2) should receive crisis intervention help, if needed, or be told by the appropriate criminal justice unit where crisis intervention help, emergency medical treatment, creditor intercession services, or other social services and counseling may be obtained;
  - (3)





- (8) on written request to the appropriate unit, should be told any time that the child respondent is to be released or escapes.
- (c) Availability of guidelines.- The Department of Juvenile Services shall make the guidelines in subsection (b) of this section available to the units involved with carrying out the guidelines.

The Administrative Commander has the ultimate responsibility and for administering and coordinating the department's role with Victim/Witness Assistance. Immediate supervision of the program will be handled by Squad Supervisors in charge of their assigned patrol officers. Supervisors will ensure that officers provide victim/witness assistance information and services to those who report or witness crimes in accordance with the functions outlined in this directive.

#### 55.1.2 Analysis of Victim/Witness Assistance Needs

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knowledge of the services offered, and 2) maintain an ongoing channel of communication by which to offer and receive suggestions about how the agency and outside sources can more effectively work together in order to better serve victims and witnesses.

1. Liaison may be initiated by telephone, letter or in person.

## 55.2 Operations

### 55.2.1 Availability of Victim/Witness Assistance Information

- A. The University Police Department does not maintain a Victim Assistance Coordinator on staff. However, the agency's Communications Center has personnel available to answer emergency and other calls 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Dispatchers will provide callers with appropriate referrals to include, but not limited, to the following:
  1. The appropriate investigating officer if requested by the victim/witness;
  2. Counseling Services;
  3. Medical attention – Health/Wellness Center, a local emergency medical facility, etc.
  4. Financial Assistance – Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board or Wicomico County State Attorney's Office.
- B. Additionally, the "Maryland Crime Victims and Witnesses: Your Rights and Services" brochure contains referral information regarding community services offered to victims/witnesses such as counseling, compensation, legal and so forth. These brochures are maintained in the department's lobby to ensure the information contained therein is readily accessible.

Refer to 81.2.7

### 55.2.2 Assistance to Threatened Victims/Witnesses

- A. In situations where victims and/or witnesses have been threatened or express specific credible reasons for fearing intimidation or further victimization, the department will offer appropriate assistance. Each case will be evaluated individually and further victimization or intimidation of victims/witnesses will be investigated as separate incidents. In handling these situations, the following will be taken into consideration when determining what type of assistance is required:
  1. The nature and seriousness of the incident;
  2. Resources immediately available;
  3. The level of assistance in proportion to the danger feared by the victim/witness;
  4. The availability of the victim/witness:
    - a. If any member of the department becomes aware of danger to a victim/witness, the on-duty Supervisor will immediately attempt to contact and alert the victim/witness.
    - b. If the victim/witness is in another jurisdiction, the on-duty Supervisor will contact the appropriate police agency and inform them of the situation and request reasonable precautions be taken. The results of this contact will be confirmed by fax or some other form of written communication during the same tour of duty, if possible.
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### 55.2.3 Assistance during Preliminary Investigations

- A. During the preliminary investigation of a crime, officers will provide the victim/witness with information regarding available resources. This will be accomplished by distributing the "Maryland Crime Victims and Witnesses: Your Rights and Services" brochure which contains referral information regarding community services offered to victims/witnesses. Depending on the nature of the situation, the following referrals may be appropriate: counseling, medical attention, emergency shelter, victim advocacy, compensation programs, or financial assistance. Officers will ensure that victims are given the case number, the officer's name/ID # and the agency telephone number.
- B. Personnel will inform the victim/witness to immediately report to police any further threats or intimidation from the suspect or their associates.
- C. The agency will provide the victim/witness with the incident report number for their case and explain to them any applicable subsequent steps in the processing of the case.
- D. The victim/witness will be provided with the appropriate telephone number to call to report any additional information about the case, or to receive information about the status of the case. This information can be located in the

### 55.2.5 Assistance upon Suspect Arrest/Post-Arrest

Upon arrest of the offender for any crime, the arresting officer should attempt to notify the victim/witness of the arrest, the charges placed against the offender and the post-arrest processing of the offender(s) and any subsequent change in custody status.

### 55.2.6 Procedures for Notification of Next-of-Kin of Deceased, Seriously Injured or Ill Persons

- A. At times it may be necessary for UPD officers to make notifications (or upon request by another agency) that the next of kin be notified of deceased or seriously injured (whether in a motor vehicle accident, victim of a crime, suicide, etc), or seriously ill persons. The UPD personnel (PCOs, officers, etc.) fielding the request shall immediately inform the Supervisor on duty who will obtain as much information as possible regarding the nature of the notification, the affected parties, and the appropriate person for the next of kin to contact for more information. When the request for notification comes directly from a family member, the death/injury and the circumstances surrounding it will be verified by the law enforcement agency handling the incident. This information will be given to the officers making the notification.
- B. The University's Crisis Response Team (CRT) will be contacted in all situations where notification is necessary. Crisis Response Team member(s) shall be requested to respond with an officer to make the notification. A representative from the Office of Student Affairs (Vice-President, Dean of Students, or designee) will also be contacted and advised of the notification, if it concerns a student, and to determine if a representative will respond accordingly.
- C.



D. Media Inquiries

1. Routine media inquiries should be referred to the Chief of Police and the Press and Publications Office.
2. For media inquiries concerning the scene of an incident, crime of violence, etc, the Chief of Police or the University's Press and Publications Office will be contacted to make the decision to release any information concerning victims' identity.
3. The media will not be given a victim's name until the next-of-kin is notified, whether the victim is deceased or not.
4. Members of the media seeking information prior to the next-of-kin notification will not be given the victim's name or address.
5. After the next-of-kin has been notified, the media may be given the victim's name and street name, and a synopsis of how the death or serious injury occurred, unless the disclosure of this information would adversely affect an on-going investigation.
6. Refer to 54.1.1

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