
Victim and Witness Assistance

304.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that crime victims and witnesses receive appropriate assistance, that they are provided with information from government and private resources, and that the agency meets all related legal mandates.

304.2 POLICY

The Alsip Police Department is committed to providing guidance and assistance to the victims and witnesses of crime. The members of the Alsip Police Department will show compassion and understanding for victims and witnesses and will make reasonable efforts to provide the support and information identified in this policy.

304.3 CRIME VICTIMS

Officers shall provide all victims with the applicable victim information handouts, and provide a telephone number that the victim/witness may call to report additional information about the case or to receive information about the status of the case.

Officers should never guarantee a victim's safety from future harm but may make practical safety suggestions to victims who express fear of future harm or retaliation.

Officers should never guarantee that a person qualifies as a victim for the purpose of compensation or restitution but may direct the victim to the proper written [department/office] material or available victim resources.

304.3.1 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS REGARDING VICTIMS

Officers who are not able to provide a victim with victim information handouts shall ensure that the forms are provided to the victims within 48 hours of the initial contact.

Officers shall also provide a victim with an acknowledgement form for the victim to sign and date to verify receipt of the information, as required by 725 ILCS 120/4.

Officers should, when feasible, schedule line-ups, interviews, and other required appearances at the convenience of the victim/witness, to include at the option of the [Department/Office] (unless required by law) providing transportation.

304.3.2 VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

At the time of first contact with the victim of a sexual assault, officers shall provide him/her with the appropriate victim information handouts, offer to arrange transportation to a hospital for treatment or evidence collection, and offer to arrange transportation to apply for an emergency civil no contact order or order of protection. If the sexual assault report is taken through a third-party representative, that representative shall be given the handouts and asked to deliver them to the victim (725 ILCS 203/25).

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Officers shall also provide the appropriate handout to a victim of a sexual assault who has undergone a forensic examination at a hospital but who has not yet consented to release the evidence for testing (725 ILCS 203/30).

304.4 VICTIM INFORMATION

The Administration Lieutenant shall ensure that victim information handouts are available and current. These should include as appropriate:

- (a) Shelters and other community resources for victims including domestic violence and sexual assault victims.
- (b) Community resources for victims of sexual assault.
- (c) Assurance that sexual assault victims will not incur out-of-pocket expenses for forensic medical exams and information about evidence collection, storage, and preservation in sexual assault cases (34 USC § 10449; 34 USC § 20109).
- (d) An advisement that a person who was arrested may be released and that the victim should not rely upon an arrest as a guarantee of safety.
- (e) A clear explanation of relevant court orders and how they can be obtained.
- (f) Information regarding available compensation for qualifying victims of crime.
- (g) VINE® information (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), including the telephone number and whether this free service is available to allow victims to check on an offender's custody status and to register for automatic notification when a person is released from jail.
- (h) Notice regarding U visa and T visa application processes.
- (i) Resources available for victims of identity theft.
- (j) A place for the officer's name, badge number, and any applicable case or incident number.
- (k) A written statement from the Illinois Attorney General about crime victim compensation and an explanation of victim's rights as required by 725 ILCS 120/4 and 725 ILCS 120/4.5, which includes the rights afforded victims under Article I, Section 8.1(a) of the Illinois Constitution.
- (l) Witnesses may request in writing a notice from the State Attorney about post-conviction review, associated hearings, notice of the defendant's discharge from custody, release on parole, probation, or escape.
- (m) Specific contact information for the Illinois Attorney General's Office regarding compensation and victim assistance resources.
- (n) Information regarding the Illinois Automated Victim Notification system, including the telephone number and whether this free service is available to allow victims to check on an offender's custody status and register for automatic notification when a person is released from jail.
- (o) Information regarding the Violent Crime Witness Protection Program Fund (725 ILCS 173/10).

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- (p) Information and state forms for sexual assault victims prepared by the Illinois Attorney General and notice for victims who may be the subject of an outstanding arrest warrant regarding waiver requests (725 ILCS 5/107-2; 725 ILCS 203/25).
- (q) Information for those sexual assault victims who have undergone a forensic examination at a hospital but who have not yet consented to release the evidence for testing as provided by 725 ILCS 203/30.

304.5 WITNESSES

Officers should never guarantee a witness' safety from future harm or that his/her identity will always remain confidential. Officers may make practical safety suggestions to witnesses who express fear of future harm or retaliation.

Officers should investigate allegations of witness intimidation and take enforcement action when lawful and reasonable.

304.6 WITNESS INFORMATION

The Administration Lieutenant shall ensure that witness information handouts are available and current. Handouts should include information regarding:

- (a) A telephone number that the witness may call to report additional information about the case or to receive information about the status of the case.
- (b) The Violent Crime Witness Protection Program Fund (725 ILCS 173/10).
- (c) Witness rights, which include (725 ILCS 120/5):
 1. Notification of all court dates where the witness will be required.
 2. Access to employer intercession services.
 3. Availability of a secure waiting area during trial.
 4. Availability of translation or sign language services as necessary.
 5. The right to submit a written request to receive notice of post-conviction relief sought, discharge information involving the accused, and notification of any escape, parole, or other supervised release.

Witnesses may request in writing a notice from the State Attorney about post-conviction review, associated hearings, notice of the defendant's discharge from custody, release on parole, probation, or escape.