



Leesburg Police Department
Joseph A. Iozzi
Chief of Police



VICTIM'S RIGHTS INFORMATION
Your Rights as a Victim or Witness

We realize that for many persons being a victim or witness to a crime is their first experience with the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems. As a victim or witness, you have certain rights within the system. This brochure is being provided to assist with questions you may have regarding those rights. For further information regarding these rights, please contact the State Attorney's Office (SAO) and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency (LEA) handling your case.

This brochure provides an overview of the criminal justice process and your rights within this process. The person providing you this brochure may only handle a portion of the process. Portions of this brochure provide contact information for agencies that can assist you.

Officer and ID: _____ Case Number: _____

WHO IS A VICTIM?

"A victim is a person who suffers direct or threatened physical, psychological, or financial harm as a result of the commission or attempted commission of a crime or delinquent act or against whom the crime or delinquent act is committed. The term victim includes the victim's lawful representative, the parent or guardian of a minor, or the next of kin of a homicide victim, except upon a showing that the interest of such individual would be in actual or potential conflict with the interests of the victim. The term "victim" does not include the accused." *Article I, Section 16(b)(11), Florida Constitution*

AS A CRIME VICTIM, THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES YOU THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS

Article 1, Section 16(b), Florida Constitution

- **The right** to due process and to be treated with fairness and respect for your dignity.
- **The right** to be free from intimidation, harassment, and abuse.
- **The right**, within the judicial process, to be reasonably protected from the accused and any person acting on behalf of the accused. However, this is not intended to create a special relationship between the crime victim and any law enforcement agency or office absent a special relationship or duty as defined by Florida law.
- **The right** to have your safety and welfare as well as your family's considered when setting bail, including setting pretrial release conditions that could affect you or your family's safety and welfare.
- **The right** to prevent the disclosure of information or records that could be used to locate or harass you or your family, or which could disclose your confidential or privileged information.
- **The right** to the prompt return of your property when no longer needed as evidence in the case.
- **The right** to full and timely restitution in every case and from each convicted offender for all losses you suffered, both directly and indirectly, because of the criminal conduct.
- **The right** to proceedings free from unreasonable delay, and to a prompt and final conclusion of the case and any related post judgment proceedings. (In appropriate cases, the prosecutor may file a good faith demand for a speedy trial. In non-capital cases, all state-level appeals and post-conviction proceedings must be complete within two years and five years for capital cases, unless the court enters an order with specific findings concerning why the court was unable to do so and the circumstances causing the delay.)
- **The right** to be informed of your state constitutional rights, and to be informed that you can seek the advice of an attorney with respect to your rights.

AS A CRIME VICTIM, YOU ARE AFFORDED THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS UPON REQUEST

- **The right** to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of, and to be present at, all public proceedings involving the criminal conduct, including, but not limited to, trial, plea, sentencing, or adjudication, even if you will be a witness at the proceeding, notwithstanding any rule to the contrary. (**Lake County State Attorney's Office, 550 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida, 32778, (352)742-4236**). You shall also be provided reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any release or escape of the defendant or delinquent, and any proceeding during which a right of yours is implicated.
- **The right** to be heard in any public proceeding involving pretrial or other release from any form of legal constraint, plea, sentencing, adjudication, or parole, and any proceeding during which a right of yours is implicated.
- **The right** to confer with the prosecuting attorney concerning any plea agreements, participation in pretrial diversion

programs, release, restitution, sentencing, or any other disposition of the case.

- **The right** to provide information regarding the impact of the offender's conduct on you and your family to the individual responsible for conducting any presentence investigation or compiling any presentence investigation report, and to have any such information considered in any sentencing recommendations submitted to the court.
- **The right** to receive a copy of any presentence report, and any other report or record relevant to the exercise of a victim's right, except for such portions made confidential or exempt by law.
- **The right** to be informed of the conviction, sentence, adjudication, place and time of incarceration, or other disposition of the convicted offender, any scheduled release date of the offender, and the release of or the escape of the offender from custody.
- **The right** to be informed of all postconviction processes and procedures, to participate in such processes and procedures, to provide information to the release authority to be considered before any release decision is made, and to be notified of any release decision regarding the offender. The parole or early release authority shall extend the right to be heard to any person harmed by the offender.
- **The right** to be informed of clemency and expungement procedures, to provide information to the governor, the court, any clemency board, and other authority in these procedures, and to have that information considered before a clemency or expungement decision is made; and to be notified of such decision in advance of any release of the offender.

ALL RIGHTS AFFORDED BY THE CONSTITUTION ARE ENFORCEABLE

Article 1, section 16(c), Florida Constitution

The victim, the retained attorney of the victim, a lawful representative of the victim, or the office of the state attorney upon request of the victim, may assert and seek enforcement of these rights and any other right afforded to a victim by law in any trial or appellate court, or before any other authority with jurisdiction over the case, as a matter of right. The court or other authority with jurisdiction shall act promptly on such a request, affording a remedy by due course of law for the violation of any right. The reasons for any decision regarding the disposition of your right shall be clearly stated on the record.

ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

The stages of the criminal justice system are as follows:

PRETRIAL

After committing a crime:

- An offender may be arrested by a law enforcement officer.
- A court can issue an arrest warrant.
- A State Attorney's Office may file an Information; or
- A grand jury may recommend charges by returning an Indictment or Presentment.

FIRST APPEARANCE - (*Following the Arrest*) If the defendant cannot post bond within hours of the arrest or has been arrested on a no bond offense, or committed a crime which requires a first appearance, the court holds a "first appearance" hearing. The Judge decides whether the defendant can be released and if so, what conditions are necessary to protect you and the witnesses and the public.

INTAKE – If probable cause is found, the State Attorney's Office may choose to file charges and summons the suspect into court. You may be required to meet with your State Attorney's office. Law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys or any other government official cannot ask or require a victim of a sexual offense to submit to a polygraph examination or truth telling device as a condition of the investigation.

FILING OF FORMAL CHARGES - The State Attorney's Office may file formal charges after reviewing law enforcement arrest reports, and within 21 days in certain circumstances. The State Attorney's office has discretion whether to prosecute a person for a crime. The State Attorney's Office must inform any victims of its decision.

ARRAIGNMENT - The accused is formally charged and enters a plea of guilty, not guilty, or no contest. The State Attorney's Office will notify you of the arraignment date. You have the right to be present at the arraignment. In some cases, there will not be a formal arraignment hearing in court.

RELEASE HEARING (SETTING BOND) - If the defendant was unable to post a bond after the initial arrest, or if bond was not set, the defendant is entitled to a bond hearing. The State Attorney's Office will notify you of the scheduled hearing and you will have an opportunity to speak regarding the defendant's release and conditions or have the State Attorney make known your wishes.

PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE - There may be numerous pre-trial conferences (including case status conferences) that allow

the court to ensure the case is progressing in a timely manner. You, as a victim, will receive notice of the hearing dates. You are not required to attend these hearings, unless subpoenaed, but you have a right to be present and a victim advocate or your attorney can accompany you or attend these proceedings on your behalf, if you choose.

DISCOVERY (PREPARATION FOR TRIAL)

Subpoenas You may receive a subpoena for trial, a deposition and/or other hearings. A subpoena summons a person to appear at the time date and location specified.

Depositions The defendant's attorney can issue a subpoena for you to appear for a deposition. You have right to request a victim advocate from the government or non-profit sector to attend the deposition with you. You have the right, as a victim who is not incarcerated, to not be required to attend discovery depositions in any correctional facility.

PLEA NEGOTIATIONS - Many cases are settled through a plea negotiation where the defendant pleads guilty or no contest without a trial. The State Attorney's Office must consult with the victim of a before finalizing the plea agreement with the defendant.

PRE-TRIAL INTERVENTION/DIVERSION PROGRAM - According to their discretion and office policy, the State Attorney's Office may agree to utilize pretrial intervention and diversion programs.

Pre-Trial Intervention Program Defendants with no more than one nonviolent misdemeanor, who is charged with any misdemeanor or any third-degree felony is eligible for release to the pretrial intervention program on approval of the administrator of the program and the consent of the victim, the State Attorney, and the judge. Successful completion of the program results in a dismissal of the charges.

Diversion Program Diversion is similar to probation where the defendant accepts responsibility for the offense and is released under supervision for six months to a year. During the program, the probation office supervises the defendant. You have a right to provide the State Attorney with your opinion on the defendant's participation in the pretrial division program.

TRIAL

Generally, the prosecutor presents evidence to either the judge or a jury about the case. The defendant may be found guilty or not guilty. The process ends if the defendant is found not guilty. You, as a victim, may be called to testify.

The State Attorney's Office will assist you during this process. You cannot be excluded from any hearing, trial or proceeding relating to the offense. Your rights involving the trial stage are listed in this brochure.

SENTENCING

PRESENTENCE INVESTIGATION (PSI) - You have the right to provide information regarding the impact of the offender's conduct on you and your family to the individual responsible for conducting and/or compiling the presentence investigation. You have a right to review the non-confidential portions of the presentence investigation prior to the sentencing hearing.

SENTENCING HEARING - If the defendant is found or pleads guilty, the judge reviews sentencing guidelines, plea agreements, and other factors and determines what type of sentence the defendant should receive. You have a right to provide an oral and/or written victim impact statement (VIS) to the State Attorney's Office at any time before the court imposes the sentence.

NOTE: If the victim and the offender attend the same school, the victim's parents have the right to attend the sentencing or disposition of the offender and request that the offender be required to attend a different school. (sec. 960.001(1)(s), Florida Statutes)

JUVENILE JUSTICE PROCESS

INTAKE - The process of determining where a child under the age of 18 will be placed until the case is resolved. There are three forms of detention status: home, non-secure or secure.

DIVERSION PROGRAMS – This is an alternative to trial where the juvenile is placed in a community- based program such as juvenile arbitration, juvenile alternative services program (JASP) , or a treatment plan (Walker plan) . If a juvenile successfully completes the diversion program, then the charges are generally dismissed.

FORMAL CHARGES - The filing of a petition in court by the State Attorney's Office. The charge may be filed in either juvenile court or adult court, depending upon the crime and age of the offender.

ARRAIGNMENT - The accused is formally charged and enters a plea of guilty, not guilty, or no contest.

ADJUDICATORY HEARING - The trial of the juvenile, conducted in front of a judge. The judge will decide whether the juvenile committed the charged offense(s).

DISPOSITIONAL HEARING (SENTENCING) - When a juvenile is found to have committed a delinquent act, the court will hold a dispositional hearing to determine which sanctions to impose on the juvenile. The sanctions could range from community-based sanctions like probation and community services up to residential commitment.

JUVENILES TRIED AS ADULTS - Juveniles who commit very serious crimes may be tried as adults. Juveniles who are prosecuted as adults may be sentenced to adult or juvenile sanctions.

This is not an exhaustive overview of the criminal justice system but is meant as an overview for how the process works. Each court and case could have unique components. You may contact your State Attorney or law enforcement agency for more information regarding the stages of the criminal justice and juvenile justice processes.

ADDITIONAL VICTIMS RIGHTS UNDER FLORIDA STATUTES

- You have the right to employ private counsel.
- In some cases, you (or relatives where the victim is deceased) may be eligible for financial compensation from the State of Florida. Information regarding eligibility may be obtained from the State Attorney's Office, local Witness Coordination Office (where available), law enforcement agency or from the Bureau of Crimes Compensation, Office of the Attorney General - 1-800-226-6667, website: www.myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf. The right to receive information on available crisis intervention services and local community services to include counseling, shelter, legal assistance, or other types of help, depending on the particular circumstances. Telephone numbers of these services are provided at the end of this brochure. (sec. 960.001(1)(a)1, Florida Statutes)
- The right to receive information regarding the stages of the criminal justice or juvenile justice processes and the way information about such stages may be obtained. (sec. 960.001(1)(a)4, Florida Statutes)
- A victim who is incarcerated has the right, upon request, to be informed and submit written statements at all stages of the criminal and juvenile proceedings. (sec. 960.001(1)(a)6, Florida Statutes)
- The right to receive information on the steps available to law enforcement and the State Attorney's Office to protect you from intimidation and/or harassment. It is a third-degree felony to knowingly use intimidation or physical force; threaten another person or attempt to do so; engage in misleading conduct toward another person; or offer pecuniary benefit or gain to another person. If you are being threatened or intimidated, please contact the Leesburg Police Department or any law enforcement officer. (sec. 960.001(1)(c), Florida Statutes)
- The right of the victim of domestic violence to be informed of the address confidentiality program administered through the Attorney General's Office. You may contact the Attorney General's Office at 1-800-226-6667. The State Attorney's Office may assist with this paperwork if necessary. (sec. 960.001(1)(c), Florida Statutes)
- The right of each victim, or witness, who has been scheduled to attend a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding to be notified as soon as possible by the agency or person scheduling his/her appearance of any change in scheduling which will affect the victim's or witness's appearance. (sec. 960.001(1)(d), Florida Statutes)
- The right to receive advance notification of judicial and post judicial proceedings relating to the case, including all proceedings or hearings relating to:
 - The arrest of the accused.
 - The release of the accused pending judicial proceedings, and any modification of release condition to include release to community control or work release.
 - Proceedings in the prosecution or petition for delinquency of the accused, including the filing of the accusatory instrument; the arraignment; disposition of the accusatory instrument; trial or adjudicatory hearing, sentencing or disposition hearing; appellate review; subsequent modification of sentence; collateral attack of a judgment; and when a term of imprisonment, detention, or involuntary commitment is imposed, the release of the defendant or juvenile offender from such imprisonment, detention or juvenile offender from such imprisonment; detention or commitment by expiration of sentence or parole and any meeting held to consider such release. (sec. 960.001(1)(e), Florida Statutes)
- In addition to the provisions of sec. 921.143, Florida Statutes, the rights of the victim of a felony involving physical or emotional injury or trauma, or in a case in which the victim is a minor child or in a case involving a homicide, the guardian or family of the victim shall be consulted by the State Attorney in order to obtain the views of the victim or family about the disposition of any criminal or juvenile case brought about as a result of such crime, including their views about:
 - The release of the accused pending judicial proceedings.
 - Plea Agreements.
 - Participation in pretrial diversion programs.
 - Sentencing of the accused.
- The right to request that the State Attorney or law enforcement agency help you explain to employers and creditors that you may face additional burdens by taking time off from work to assist law enforcement and you may undergo serious financial strain either because of the crime or by cooperating with authorities. (sec. 960.001(1)(i), Florida Statutes)

- Law Enforcement agencies and the State Attorney shall inform you of your right to request and receive restitution and of your rights of enforcement in the event an offender does not pay. The State Attorney shall seek your assistance in the documentation of your losses for the purpose of requesting and receiving restitution. If an order of restitution is converted to a civil lien or civil judgment against the defendant, the Clerk of Court's office shall make available at their office, as well as on their website, information provided by the Secretary of State, the court, or The Florida Bar on enforcing the civil lien or judgment. The State Attorney shall inform you if and when restitution is ordered. (*sec. 960.001(1)(j), Florida Statutes*)
- The right to receive reasonable consideration and assistance from employees of the State Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, or Police Department. When requested, you will be assisted in locating accessible transportation and parking and shall be directed to separate pretrial waiting areas when such facilities are available. When requested, you shall receive assistance in attempting to locate translators when practicable. (*sec. 960.001(1)(n), Florida Statutes*)
- The right of the victim of a sexual offense to have the courtroom cleared, with certain exceptions during his or her testimony, regardless of the victim's age or mental capacity. (*sec. 960.001(q), Florida Statutes*)
- The right to request, in certain circumstances that the offender be required to attend a different school than the victim or siblings of the victim. If the victim of an offense committed by a juvenile is a minor, the victim or any sibling of the victim attends or is eligible to attend the same school as that of the offender, the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections shall notify the victim's parent or legal guardian of the right to attend the sentencing or disposition of the offender and request that the offender be required to attend a different school. (*sec. 960.001(1)(s), Florida Statutes*)
- The right of the victim who is not incarcerated to not be required to attend discovery depositions in any correctional facility. (*sec. 960.001(6), Florida Statutes*)
- The statutory obligation of the victim, parent/guardian of a minor victim, or next of kin of a homicide victim, that any information gained pursuant to Chapter 960, Florida Statutes, regarding any case handled in juvenile court, must not be revealed to any outside party, except as reasonably necessary in pursuit of legal remedies. (*sec. 960.001(8), Florida Statutes*)
- The right to know in certain cases and at the earliest possible opportunity, if the person charged with an offense has tested positive for hepatitis and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. In such cases, upon request of the victim or the victim's legal guardian, or the parent or legal guardian of the victim if the victim is a minor, the court shall order such person to undergo hepatitis and HIV testing within 48 hours after the charging document is filed or 48 hours from the date of request. (*Section 960.003, Florida Statutes*)
- The right of a victim of a sexual offense to request the presence of a victim advocate during the forensic medical examination. An advocate from a certified rape crisis center shall be permitted to attend any forensic medical examination. (*sec. 960.001(1)(u), Florida Statutes*)
- If a victim has been diagnosed with autism or an autism spectrum disorder, he or she or the parent or guardian, has the right to request that a public safety official make a good faith effort to ensure that a related professional, such as a mental health counselor, special education instructor or clinical social worker be present for all interviews of the individual. All expenses related to the attendance of the professional at the interviews are the responsibility of the requesting victim, parent or guardian; however, the defendant shall reimburse the victim for all expenses related to the attendance of the professional at the interviews, in addition to restitution and penalties provided by law. (*sec. 943.0439, Florida Statutes*)
- The right of a victim, if contacted, to obtain information relating to a criminal proceeding by an attorney, investigator, or any other agent acting on behalf of the criminal defendant, to be informed of (1) the person's name and employer and (2) the fact that such person is acting on behalf of the defendant. (*sec. 960.001(1)(v), Florida Statutes*)

REFERRAL NUMBERS

Abuse Registry - (Elderly and Children) 1-800-962-2873

Crimes Compensation (Attorney General) 1-800-226-6667, www.myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf

Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service 1-800-342-8060

Florida Department of Corrections - VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) 1-877-846-3435, www.vinelink.com

VINE provides custody status and criminal case information. Registration is required for this service

Florida Council Against Sexual Violence 1-888-956-7273, www.fcasv.org

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offender / Predator Unit 1-888-357-7332/1-850-410-8572; For TTY: 1-877-414-7234;

E-Mail: sexpred@fdle.state.fl.us

LOCAL SERVICES

Local Rape Crisis Center, Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties, Inc.

2600 South Street, Leesburg, Florida, 34748, (352)787-1379

Crisis Hotline (352)753-5800

Haven Inc (352)787-5889 (Provides services to victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)

Department of Juvenile Justice - Case Management and Community Control (352)742-6177

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Florida Abuse Hotline (800)962-2873

Administration (352)742-6263

Protective Investigation (352)742-6330

Office of the State Attorney and Victim/Witness Services

550 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida, 32778

Lake County (352)742-4236; Sumter County (352)793-0285

Leesburg Police Department

115 East Magnolia Street, Leesburg, Florida, 34748

Emergency: 911; Non-Emergency: (352)787-2121; Records: (352)728-9860; Fax: (352)365-1026;

www.leesburgpolice.com

Notice of Legal Rights and Remedies for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Repeat Violence, Sexual Violence or Stalking

IT ISN'T JUST WRONG...IT'S A CRIME.**DID YOU KNOW?**

- In Florida, a person is killed by a family member every 36 hours
- Domestic Violence is the leading cause of injury to women
- More than 124,000 incidents of domestic violence are reported in Florida each year, involving victims young and old, male and female.

YOU HAVE RIGHTS - Knowing your legal rights and options is the first step toward ending abuse.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Under the provisions of Section 741.28 of the Florida Statutes, domestic violence means any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any other criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member. Family or household members are spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who are presently residing together as if a family or who have resided together in the past as if a family, and persons who are parents of a child in common, the family or household members must be currently residing or have in the past resided together in the same single dwelling unit.

Domestic Violence includes:

- Physical Abuse – Pushing, slapping, kicking, punching, choking and beating.
- Emotional/Verbal Abuse – Verbal intimidation, credible threats, following, stalking, acting out in anger.
- Sexual Abuse or Battery – Any unwanted touching or forcing of someone to engage in a sexual act against his or her will.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Under the provisions of section 784.046 of the Florida Statutes, sexual violence is one incident of:

- Sexual battery, as defined in Chapter 794;
- A lewd or lascivious act, as defined in chapter 800, committed upon or in the presence of a person younger than 16 years of age;
- Luring or enticing a child, as described in chapter 787;
- Sexual performance by a child, as described in chapter 827; or
- Any other forcible felony wherein a sexual act is committed or attempted, regardless of whether criminal charges based on the incident were filed, reduced or dismissed by the State Attorney.

WHAT IS DATING VIOLENCE

Under the provisions of Section 784.046 of the Florida Statutes, dating violence is violence between individuals who have or have had a continuing and significant relationship of a romantic or intimate nature. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the consideration of the following factors:

- A dating relationship must have existed within the past 6 months;
- The nature of the relationship must have been characterized by the expectation of affection or sexual involvement between the parties; and
- The frequency and type of interaction between persons involved in the relationship must have included that the persons have been involved over time and on a continuous basis during the course of the relationship. The term does not include violence in a casual acquaintanceship or violence between individuals who only have engaged in ordinary fraternization in a business or social context.

WHAT IS REPEAT VIOLENCE

Under the provisions of Section 784.046 of the Florida Statutes, repeat violence means two incidents of violence or stalking one of which must have been within the last 6 months of filing a petition and must have been directed against the petitioner or the petitioner's immediate family member.

WHAT IS STALKING

Under the provisions of Section 784.048 of the Florida Statutes, stalking occurs when a person willfully, maliciously and repeatedly follows, harasses or cyber stalks another person. Aggravated stalking occurs when that person makes a credible threat to that person through stalking.

WHAT DOES THE LAW MEAN?

You have the right to ask the State Attorney to file a criminal complaint and you have the right to go to court and file a petition requesting an injunction for protection against domestic violence, repeat violence, dating violence, sexual violence or stalking if you are:

- The victim of domestic violence, repeat violence, dating violence, sexual violence or stalking;
- The parent or guardian of any minor child living at home who is seeking injunction for protection against domestic violence, repeat violence, Notice of Legal Rights and Remedies for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Repeat Violence, Sexual Violence or Stalking dating violence, sexual violence or stalking; or
- If you have reasonable cause to believe you or your minor child is in imminent danger of becoming a victim of any act of domestic violence.

This may include, but need not be limited to provisions that:

- Direct the abuser to leave your household
- Restrain the abuser from any contact or further acts of abuse as a “no contact” condition of the pretrial release, which will prevent the abuser from being within 500 feet of your residence, vehicle, school, business or place of employment
- Award you custody of your minor child or children
- Direct the abuser to pay support to you and the minor child or children if the abuser has a legal obligation to do so.

For safety reasons, you may furnish your address to the court in a separate confidential filing when filing the petition for injunction.

You are not required to remain in a residence or household where you are a victim of domestic violence. Your address may be different from that of your partner without penalty.

HOW CAN THE LAW HELP ME?

If you have been a victim of domestic violence, repeat violence, dating violence, sexual violence, stalking or if you are afraid that you will be hurt, Florida’s domestic violence law enables you to work with the court system to help keep you safe. Contact your local domestic violence center for safety planning prior to filing for an injunction. The Clerk of the Courts is required to assist you in seeking both injunctions for protection and enforcement for a violation of an injunction. Representation by an attorney is not required of either party as per section 741.30(1)(f) of the Florida Statutes. Go to the Clerk of the Court’s Office in your county courthouse.

- Bring identification
- Bring information about where the abuser can be located
- Bring any other information on the abuser, such as photos or identification
- Bring any papers relating to your case
- Tell the clerk that you are interested in filing a petition for injunction for protection against domestic violence, repeat violence, dating violence, sexual violence or stalking.
- The court clerk will help you in filing the proper paperwork. By filling out these forms, you will be explaining to the Judge exactly what type of protection you need and from whom you need protection.
- After you have completed the paperwork, the court may determine that danger of domestic violence exists. The court may order a temporary injunction, which is good for 15 days. Then a full hearing is held to consider your safety and the safety of your children.
- The abuser must be served with the injunction before it becomes effective. The injunction will tell the abuser what the Judge requires and when to return to court for a hearing. This hearing will be within 15 days unless the abuser cannot be served.
- You are able to request notification of service of the injunction and receive notification automatically within 12 hours after the injunction is served.
- It is important for you to attend the hearing so that you can make sure the Judge understands exactly what help you need and why. If you do not attend, usually the Judge will end the injunction.
- After the hearing, a final injunction may be granted. The final injunction is valid until dissolved or amended by the court.

WHAT DO I DO IF THE ABUSER VIOLATES THE INJUNCTION?

You will receive a copy of the injunction. Keep it with you at all times.

- If the abuser violates the conditions of an injunction, call the police right away.
- The abuser may be arrested.
- If the abuser is arrested, he/she will be held until the court determines bail.
- The Judge will consider your safety and the safety of your children.
- You may go to court if you wish.
- The court may order penalties as allowed by law.

If the injunction has been violated, report the violation to the Clerk of the Circuit Court only if law enforcement states it cannot issue an arrest warrant, or issue a notice to appear because there is not criminal violation. Report the violation in the county where the violation occurred and complete an affidavit in support of the violation. The Judge will determine what action should be taken for your safety and the safety of your children. Under the provisions of Section 741.315(2), Florida Statutes, if you have an out of state court order for protection against domestic violence, federal and state law provides that law enforcement recognize and act on the protections in the order as if issued by a Florida court, as long as the issuing court gave the accused the opportunity for a hearing before issuing the order. This includes orders issued by courts from the District of Columbia, Indian Tribes, Commonwealth Territories or possessions of the United States.

EXEMPTION FROM PUBLIC INSPECTION

Under the provisions of Section 119.071(2)(j) of the Florida Statutes, any information which reveals the home or employment telephone number, home or employment address, or the personal assets of a person who has been the victim of sexual battery, aggravated child abuse, aggravated stalking, harassment, aggravated battery or domestic violence is exempt from public inspection and examination. You must make a written request and provide official verification, such as a law enforcement report, to the custodian of the records that an applicable crime has occurred. Such information shall remain exempt for 5 years, after which it will become available to the public.

WHOM SHOULD I TALK TO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-500-1119 (For legal assistance, hit prompt #3)

Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-962-2873 (To file confidential reports of child abuse)

National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453 (24-hour help line which provides crisis counseling, information and referrals)

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline: 1-866-331-9474

According to Florida Statute 741.29 – “IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, you may ask the State Attorney to file a complaint. You also have the right to go to court and file a petition requesting an injunction for protection from domestic violence which may include, but not limited to provisions which restrain the abuser from further acts of abuse; direct the abuser to leave your household; prevent the abuser from entering your residence, school, business or place of employment; award you custody of your minor child or children; and direct the abuser to pay support to you and the minor children if the abuser has a legal obligation to do so.”

Sexual Battery – Your Rights and Services

If you are the victim of a sexual crime, you have certain rights. Supportive services are also available to you free of charge regardless of whether or not you continue with the criminal justice process.

CALL 1-888-956-7273 TO BE REFERRED TO LOCAL SERVICES. Help Is Available

Victims of sexual crimes need compassion, sensitivity and empathy. Being the victim of a crime can be overwhelming. Your reactions are normal. Local certified rape crisis centers have advocates who are there to help all victims, regardless of whether or not they report to law enforcement. Services are free and confidential —certified rape crisis centers are legally and ethically required to protect your confidentiality, unless you allow, in writing, the release of your information. Advocates are available to:

- Provide crisis intervention
- Speak to you on the 24-hour hotline
- Discuss your options
- Navigate available resources
- Go with you to appointments
- Address safety concerns
- Advocate on your behalf
- Help you apply for victim compensation

Sexual Battery is a Crime

In Florida, the legal term for rape or sexual assault is Sexual Battery (F.S. 794.011). Sexual Battery means oral, anal, or vaginal penetration by, or union with, the sexual organ of another or the anal or vaginal penetration of another by any object, committed without your consent. Consent means intelligent, knowing, and voluntary consent and does not include coerced submission. Failure to offer physical resistance to the offender does not imply consent. A person 16 years of age cannot legally consent to sex. Also, a person 24 years of age or older or a person in a familial or custodial position of authority cannot receive consent from 16 and 17 year-old minors.

Forensic Exam - What is a forensic Exam?

The forensic exam is a head –to-toe exam to collect evidence and check for injuries after a sex crime.

What are my legal rights with regard to the exam?

- Stop the exam at any time
- Have an Advocate from a rape crisis center with you
- Be informed about the status of the kit during processing

What evidence is collected?

During the exam, the medical professional may collect blood, urine, saliva, pubic hair combings and/or nail samples. They may also collect items of clothing. They will ask you questions about the crime and your medical history in order to help them collect evidence.

What happens to the evidence?

If you make a report to law enforcement, your kit will be sent to the regional or statewide lab within 30 days for testing. The lab is required to process the kit within 120 days.

If you don't report the crime to law enforcement at the time you obtain the exam, your kit will be stored anonymously. Your kit may be stored for only a limited time, depending on your community's storage space. The local rape crisis center can advise you about the storage timelines in your community.

Will I be prescribed any medication?

The medical professional may provide HIV prevention medication. Also, you may be able to get emergency contraception if you are concerned about pregnancy as a result of the crime. If the medical professional is unable or unwilling to assist you, the local rape crisis center can assist you. You may be responsible for paying for medications and additional health care cost.

By law, medical providers cannot charge you for an exam, even if you have insurance and even if you don't report the crime to law enforcement.

MYTHS/FACTS

MYTH: You can only be raped by a stranger.

FACT: Most perpetrators are known to their victim. 82% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by non-strangers. 47% of assaults were committed by a friend or acquaintance.

MYTH: Only women are raped.

FACT: 1 in 5 men have been victims of a sexual crime and are eligible for services from Florida's rape crisis centers.

MYTH: I didn't fight back so it's not a crime.

FACT: A perpetrator can be arrested even if you didn't physically resist. Not fighting back does not imply consent!

Natural Reaction

There is no "right" way to feel after being assaulted. Victims experience a variety of reactions, such as: Denial, Shock, Anger, Confusion, Fear, Anxiety.

Victim Bill of Rights

You have the right to:

- Obtain a forensic exam whether or not you report to law enforcement
- Have an advocate at the forensic exam with you
- Have the forensic exam sent for testing within 30 days, if report to law enforcement
- Review the law enforcement report prior to final submission
- Be informed, present and be heard at all crucial stages of the criminal or juvenile proceeding
- Have an advocate with you during discovery deposition
- Request restitution
- Have identifying information about the criminal investigation kept confidential
- Have the offender, if charged, tested for HIV and hepatitis
- Attend sentencing or disposition of the offender
- Notification of judicial proceedings and scheduling changes
- Notification about the release of incarcerated offender
- Give a victim impact statement
- Not be subject to polygraph
- Take up to 3 days of leave from work (with eligible employer)
- Apply for an injunction if you fear for your safety or offender is near release

Sexual Battery – Your Rights and Services

You may be eligible for financial assistance for:

- Medical Care
- Mental health services
- Other expenses related to injuries as a result of the crime
- Relocation
- Lost Income

Contact your local certified rape crisis center for more information.

Local Rape Crisis Center Haven of Lake & Sumter Counties, Inc.

2600 South Street, Leesburg, Florida, 34748, (352)787-1379

Crisis Hotline (352)753-5800;

Haven Inc (352)787-5889 (Provides services to victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)

Office of the State Attorney, Victim/Witness Services 550 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida, 32778

Lake County (352)742-4236; Sumter County (352)793-0285

Florida Council Against Sexual Violence 1-888-956-7273; www.fcasv.org

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offender/Predator Unit, 1-888-357-7332/1-850-410-8572

For TTY Accessibility: 1-877-414-7234; E-Mail: sexpred@fdle.state.fl.us

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Florida Abuse Hotline (800)962-2873; Administration (352)742-6263; Protective Investigation (352)742-6330

Leesburg Police Department 115 East Magnolia Street, Leesburg, Florida, 34748; Emergency: 911; Non-Emergency: (352)787-2121; Records: (352)728-9860; Fax: (352)365-1026; www.leesburgpolice.com

Interviews of Victims, Suspects or Defendants with Autism or an Autism Spectrum Disorder

A law enforcement officer, a correctional officer, or another public safety official shall, upon the request of an individual diagnosed with autism or an autism spectrum disorder or his or her parent or guardian, make a good faith effort to ensure that a psychiatrist, psychologist, mental health counselor, special education instructor, clinical social worker, or related professional is present at all interviews of the individual. The professional must have experience treating, teaching, or assisting patients or clients who have been diagnosed with autism or an autism spectrum disorder or related developmental disability or must be certified in special education with a concentration focused on persons with autism or an autism spectrum disorder.

- All expenses related to the attendance of the professional at interviews shall be borne by the requesting parent, guardian, or individual.
- If the individual is a victim, the defendant shall reimburse the victim for all expenses related to the attendance of the professional at the interview, in addition to other restitution or penalties provided by law, upon conviction of the offense of which the individual is a victim.
- Failure to have a professional as defined by this subsection present at the time of the interview is not a basis for suppression of the statement or the contents of the interview or for a cause of action against the law enforcement officer or agency.
- This subsection applies to such an individual who is the victim, a suspect, or a defendant formally accused of a crime. (sec. 943.0439, Florida Statutes)

Local Resources for Interview Professional Services

The Children's Advocacy Center (352)323-8303; 300 South Canal Street, Leesburg, Florida, 34748

Better Life Behavioral Services of Central Florida (352)314-3760

1650 West Main St. Unit 1, Leesburg, FL, 34748

Contact Name: Cheryl Guerrero, PhD, BCBA-D; Contact Email: Cheryl@betterlifeofcentralfl.com;

Website: <http://www.betterlifeofcentralfl.com>