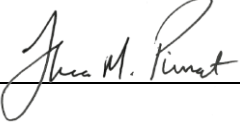


LEESBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS AND GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL		
General Order Number: 119	Section: ADMINISTRATION	Effective Date: MARCH 2023
Title: VICTIM / WITNESS ASSISTANCE		
Accreditation Standards: ADM.14.01; ADM.14.02; ADM.23.01; ADM.23.02; ADM.23.03; ADM.23.04		
Review Date: JANUARY 2024	Total Pages: 3	Chief of Police: 

I. VICTIM/WITNESS RIGHTS

- A. The General Assembly has determined that aid, care and support will be provided by the Commonwealth as a matter of moral responsibility to innocent persons or their dependents who suffer personal physical injury or death as a result of criminal acts or in their efforts to prevent crime or apprehend persons committing or attempting to commit crimes (See Virginia Code §19.2-11.1, and §19.2-11.01). The Leesburg Police Department recognizes the rights of victims and witnesses, and all employees shall treat victims and witnesses of crime with fairness, compassion, and dignity. The Department is committed to the development, implementation and continuation of appropriate victim/witness assistance programs and activities. The Department coordinates with the Loudoun County Commonwealth Attorney's Victim Witness Coordinator and is afforded all the services of the Loudoun County Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP). This program provides services to crime victims and witnesses at each stage of the criminal justice process.

II. ANALYSIS OF VICTIM/WITNESS NEEDS AND SERVICES

- A. The Leesburg Police Department is afforded the assistance of the Loudoun County Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP). After completing an analysis of victim/witness assistance needs within Loudoun County, it was determined that the victim/witness population which would benefit most from services was victims who suffer most physically, emotionally, and financially. This includes but is not limited to victims of:
1. Sexual Assault
 2. Robbery
 3. Assault (misdemeanor, felony and domestic)
 4. Survivors of Homicide Victims
- B. The following services are provided to crime victims and witnesses through V/WAP:
1. Court-related victim/witness services
 2. Information, referral and community networking
 3. Assistance with restitution and compensation
 4. Support groups
 5. Victim impact statement
 6. Parole alert and victim input
 7. Victim/witness protection
 8. Public awareness, education, and outreach
 9. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the program to assess the needs of victims/witnesses and to determine program effectiveness.

III. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. The implementation and delivery of victim/witness assistance services is the responsibility of the investigating officer/detective.
- B. The release of victim/witness information will be governed by the procedures set forth in General Order 118.

- C. The Criminal Investigations Commander or designee is responsible for the liaison with the Loudoun County Victim/Witness Assistance Office to maintain lines of communication for offering and receiving suggestions to improve the effectiveness of services.

IV. ASSISTANCE DURING PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS

- A. During the preliminary investigation of all crimes against persons, serious property crimes, or any other case which the officer/detective deems appropriate, officers/detectives shall:
1. Distribute the Victim Witness Program Brochure to all victims and/or witnesses and advise them of, applicable services available, i.e., medical services, compensation programs, counseling, legal services, etc. Officers/detectives must document the distribution of the Victim/Witness Program Brochure.
 2. Provide assistance in contacting LAWS counselor for safety planning, housing options, etc.
 3. Complete Lethality Assessment Protocol screening if applicable.
 4. Provide to the victims/witnesses with the applicable case number and information regarding the subsequent steps in the processing of the case.
 5. Assist victims/witnesses who are threatened or intimidated
 6. Petition for, or assist in petitioning for, an emergency protective order, when necessary.
 7. Provide a telephone number for the victims/witnesses to call to report additional case information or receive information about the status of the case.
 8. Provide transportation for victims to a safe place or to a medical facility.

V. ASSISTANCE DURING FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIONS

- A. Officers/detectives conducting follow-up investigations shall, at a minimum:
1. Explain to the victim/witness the procedures involved in the prosecution of their case and their role in those procedures.
 2. Schedule lineups, interviews, and other required appearances at the convenience of the victim/witness, if feasible, and provide necessary transportation.
 3. Promptly return any property taken as evidence where permitted by law, rules of evidence and Department property procedure.
 4. Advise the victim/witness that a full-time victim/witness coordinator is available through V/WAP.
 5. In instances where the impact of a crime is unusually severe, contact the victim/witness periodically to determine whether their needs are being met and if not, facilitate getting them the assistance they need.
 6. Photograph any injuries/marks that may have become visible since the initial investigation.

VI. ASSISTANCE UPON REQUEST AND DURING POST-ARREST

- A. When a suspect in a crime is arrested, the investigating officer/detective shall, whenever possible, notify the victim/witness of the arrest, the specific charges placed, and the custody status of the arrestee immediately after the arrest.
- B. In instances where an arrestee poses a physical threat to a victim/witness of a crime, the investigating officer/detective shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that the victim/witness is notified of the arrestee's release from custody. This may be accomplished by providing the victim/witness with the contact information for the Virginia Statewide Victim Information & Notification Everyday (VINE) program at (800) 467-4943 or www.vinelink.com, which will automatically notify the victim/witness of changes in the arrestee's custody status.

VII. ASSISTANCE TO AGENCY PERSONNEL

- A. In the event of a serious line-of-duty injury, or line-of-duty death, the Chief of Police or designee shall be responsible for:
1. Notification to family and next of kin
 2. Providing needed transportation and assistance at the hospital for immediate family members
 3. Assigning a liaison officer to assist family
 4. Providing assistance with funeral arrangements, and support during funeral and burial
 5. Arranging for counseling with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

- B. The EAP will provide assistance service to Department personnel and their families upon referral, following a serious line-of-duty injury or death. These services include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Counseling regarding finances and other possible problems
 - 2. Referral assistance with legal and benefit matters
 - 3. Referral assistance for long-term counseling and information needs.

- C. The Human Resources Director or designee will provide the following assistance to Department personnel and their families in instances of serious line-of-duty injury, or line-of-duty death:
 - 1. Referral to EAP
 - 2. Assistance with benefits.

- D. V/WAP will provide support in criminal proceedings resulting from line-of-duty serious injury or line-of-duty death.

VIII. PERSONAL EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

Emergency messages may be delivered by a patrol officer at the discretion of the patrol supervisor or designee. Any message pertaining to a death, serious injury or serious illness will be delivered in person by an officer. The police chaplain may be contacted to accompany an officer on a notification whenever the chaplain is available. The message shall be delivered to an adult family member or close friend. The officer shall offer assistance in contacting close friends, relatives, or clergy that can provide comfort. The officer notifying a citizen of a death or serious injury, or illness must advise that citizen how the police department received the information.