

Policy 336 Victim Witness Assistance

336.1 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.

336.2 POLICY

The Mountlake Terrace Police Department is committed to providing guidance and assistance to the victims and witnesses of crime. The employees of the Mountlake Terrace 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.

336.3 CRIME VICTIMS

Officers shall provide all victims with the applicable victim information handouts.

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 him/her to the proper written department material or available victim resources.

336.3.1 RIGHT OF IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Victims have the right to immediate medical assistance and should not be detained for an unreasonable length of time before having such assistance administered. The officer may accompany the victim to a medical facility to question the victim about the criminal incident if the questioning does not hinder the administration of medical assistance (RCW 7.69.030).

336.4 VICTIM INFORMATION

The Command Services Division Commander 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. 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; RCW 70.125.110).
- c. An advisement that a person who was arrested may be released on bond or some other form of release and that the victim should not rely upon an arrest as a guarantee of safety.
- d. A clear explanation of relevant court orders and how they can be obtained.
- e. Information regarding available compensation for qualifying victims of crime.

- f. 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.
- g. Notice regarding U-Visa and T-Visa application processes.
- h. Resources available for victims of identity theft.
- i. A place for the officer's name, badge number, and any applicable case or incident number.
- j. A written statement enumerating the rights of victims (RCW 7.69.030; RCW 7.69A.030; RCW 7.69B.020).
- k. The name, address, and telephone number of the local victim/witness program, or contact information for the Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates.
- l. An advisement notifying victims of domestic violence of their right to personally initiate a criminal proceeding when an officer does not exercise arrest powers or initiate criminal proceedings by citation (RCW 10.99.030).
- m. Information about the address confidentiality program (RCW 40.24.030).

336.5 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.