

**Department of Public Safety**  
**Police Division**  
**Policies and Procedures**

<u><b>Title</b></u>  <b>Victim Services</b>	<u><b>SOP Number</b></u>  <b>13.3.100</b>
<b>Approval Signature</b>  	
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## ***Victim Services***

**I. Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to emphasize that an effective response to the needs of crime victims is an integral part of the University of Cincinnati Police Division's mission. This essential function, performed by both sworn and civilian personnel, should address victims' needs by establishing a continuum of support as victims progress through the various phases of the criminal justice process.

**II. Policy:** As first responders, University of Cincinnati Police Division (UCPD) personnel are uniquely positioned to provide care and support to victims of crime as required by state and federal laws. These efforts can have both an immediate and a long-term impact on the victim's emotional recovery by developing a sense of security and stability and potentially mitigating the traumatic effects of the crime. Therefore, it is the policy of UCPD to:

1. Recognize and address the needs of crime victims by all employees during each contact
2. Support and assist the victims as they continue to interact with the criminal justice system
3. Act as a liaison to appropriate victim assistance and service agencies

**III. Definitions:**

**Crime Victim:** A person against whom the criminal act is committed or the person directly and proximately harmed by the criminal offense.

**IV. Information:**

A. Crime victims are provided with certain rights detailed in the Ohio Constitution Article I, Section 10(a). These rights are outlined below:

1. To be treated with fairness and respect for the victim's safety, dignity, and privacy.
2. Upon request, to reasonable and timely notice of all public proceedings involving the criminal offense or delinquent act against the victim, and to be present at all such proceedings.
3. To be heard in any public proceeding involving release, plea, sentencing, disposition, or parole, or in any public proceeding in which a right of the victim is implicated.
4. To reasonable protection from the accused or any person acting on behalf of the accused.
5. Upon request, to reasonable notice of any release or escape of the accused.
6. Except as authorized by section 10 of Article I of this constitution (the criminal defendants' right to Due Process), to refuse an interview, deposition, or other discovery request made by the accused or any person acting on behalf of the accused.

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7. To full and timely restitution from the person who committed the criminal offense or delinquent act against the victim.
8. To proceedings free from unreasonable delay and a prompt conclusion of the case.
9. Upon request, to confer with the attorney for the government; and to be informed, in writing, of all rights enumerated in this section.
10. To be informed in writing of all rights enumerated in this section.

B. UCPD has established the Crime Victim Services Coordinator role to develop, coordinate and enhance the resources for crime victims at the University of Cincinnati; to ensure the rights of victims and witnesses within the criminal justice system; and to ensure that these individuals receive information and direct services because of their position as victims and witnesses.

### **V. Procedure:**

#### **A. Initial Response**

1. Communications personnel shall treat individuals reporting a crime with compassion, patience, and respect as they collect the information necessary to determine the nature and location of the incident, to include:
  - a. The identity of the caller, victim, and perpetrator, if known;
  - b. Any conditions that indicate that responding officers might be at risk of injury;
  - c. Dispatching officers to meet with the victim as soon as practical.
2. Responding officers shall:
  - a. Immediately ascertain that the victim or witnesses are at a safe location;
  - b. Render emergency first aid, if necessary
  - c. Determine the need for and request additional medical and/or UCPD resources
  - d. Once the incident is stable, develop a supportive presence by reassuring the victim that he or she is no longer in immediate danger
  - e. If the person is a victim of a sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or if determined necessary by the supervisor, the Crime Victims Services Coordinator (CVSC) shall be contacted to respond to the scene
3. The CVSC can be contacted by telephone 24 hours per day and can respond to the scene if needed for further information or to answer questions. In addition, the [Victim Services Rights & Resources Guide](#) contains contact information for further information or questions.
4. Emotionally distraught Victims should not be left alone. If appropriate, relatives, friends, the CVSC, or a member of the clergy should be contacted to provide comfort and support.
5. While collecting information and physical evidence necessary for the

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investigation and subsequent prosecution, officers should be perceptive to and sensitive about the victim's psychological state.

6. Employees shall consider the method, manner, location, and timing of the victim interview, so as not to subject the victim to additional stress and trauma.

### **B. Information and Referrals**

1. At the earliest appropriate time, officers shall explain and provide the victim with the [Victim Services Rights & Resources Guide](#).
2. After the initial investigation, the officer shall:
  - a. Provide the victim with the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the CVSC;
  - b. Encourage the victim or witnesses to contact the UCPD immediately if they are threatened or intimidated by anyone as a result of reporting the crime, or if they learn of any new information regarding the case.
3. The reporting officer shall document in his/her report that the victim was provided with information regarding their rights, available protections, and was provided with information relating to referrals to the CVSC or other services.
4. [Victims' Rights Request Form](#) – Officer Responsibilities
  - a. In all cases involving a violation of a protection order, an offense of violence, or a sexually oriented offense, the investigating officer shall:
    - 1) Review the *Victims' Rights Request Form* in full.
    - 2) Provide a copy of the form to the victim.
    - 3) Inform the victim of arraignment information related to the case.
    - 4) Collect the completed form from the victim at the time of contact, if possible.
  - b. If a police report is not filed, or no arrest is made at the time:
    - 1) The officer shall ensure the victim has access to the Victims' Rights Request Form and advise that it may be completed and submitted later, when appropriate.
  - c. Note: Timely completion of this form ensures the victim's rights are acknowledged and protected as required by Ohio law. ([See Victims' Rights Request Form Flow Chart](#).)
5. The UC Public Safety webpage provides a Clery Reportable Incident Form as an additional mechanism to collect information regarding Clery incidents.
  - a. When the Clery Compliance Coordinator receives a Clery Reportable Incident Form from Title IX, a Campus Security Authority (CSA), or a third party, and the victim's desire for additional police services is unknown, the Crime Victim Services Coordinator (CVSC) will be notified by the Clery Compliance Coordinator.
  - b. The CVSC will attempt to contact the reporting party to attempt to determine

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if the victim needs additional police services.

- c. The CVSC will document the results of their follow-up contact and provide that information to the Clery Compliance Coordinator for retention.

### **C. Investigation and Follow-up**

1. Officers assigned to conduct follow-up criminal investigations shall contact the victim as soon as practical to determine whether the victim has new details concerning the case.
2. The CVSC will relay information when available and appropriate, relating to such matters as
  - a. Arrest and detention of suspects, their name(s) and their pretrial release status
  - b. Court restraining orders
  - c. prosecutor information, court proceedings, and schedules if available;
  - d. Status of stolen, recovered, or removed property
  - e. Possible eligibility for victim compensation
3. If the victim needs further assistance from outside sources or UCPD or requests additional services, the CVSC shall make reasonable efforts to connect the victim with appropriate service provider agencies.
4. If an arrest is made, the CVSC shall contact the victim as soon as practical to provide the following:
  - a. Information concerning the arrest
  - b. The bail status of the suspect, or any change in this status
  - c. An overview of the court process
  - d. A specific point of contact in the prosecutor's office upon determination
5. The victim and witnesses should be advised that if he or she is contacted by the suspect in any way or are threatened or intimidated by anyone, he or she should contact UCPD, through dispatch, immediately.

### **D. Resources**

1. UCPD employees who have contact with the public in general and victims in particular shall be familiar with governmental and community-based victim support and advocacy organizations. It is the policy of UCPD to collaborate and provide reasonable assistance to such entities to the extent that it does not place the victim or others at risk, substantially interfere with an ongoing investigation or prosecution, or violate state privacy laws or UCPD procedures.
2. Victim services information with up-to-date contact information shall be developed and made available to communications, administrative, patrol, investigations, and CVSC personnel.
3. A supply of the Victim Services Rights & Resources Guide and the Victim Rights

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Request form will be maintained by the CVSC.

4. UCPD employees shall be attentive to crime victims with special needs. Victims with physical, mental, or emotional impairments, as well as child and elderly victims, should be attended to in a manner that best supports their life conditions and specific situations. Employees should select a combination of service provider referrals that can work collaboratively to meet the unique needs of these victims.
5. Employees shall also be sensitive to the cultural needs of crime victims by providing materials in a language that the victim can comprehend and ensuring access to translator services when appropriate. Cultural background can affect the manner in which crime victims respond and react to being victimized and how they are treated by family and community members. Employees should be aware of these special circumstances and work with the appropriate service providers and community partners to support victims in these situations.

### **E. Training**

1. UCPD employees must complete training on providing assistance and services to victims of crime as part of their initial orientation program and during regularly scheduled rollcall and/or in-service training. This shall include state and federal laws regarding victims and victims' rights, internal policies related to working with victims, effects of trauma on crime victims, communication skills, integrating the needs of victims into the investigation process, cultural awareness, familiarization with victim and social service providers, and how to contact and access these services. The CVSC will assist with this training.

### **F. Review of Victim Assistance Needs**

1. The CVSC will conduct a documented review of victim needs and available services at least once every two years. The review and any recommendations will be submitted through the chain of command to the Chief of Police for approval of the review and any recommendations, before implementation.

## **References**

Ohio Revised Code 2930.04(B)  
Victim Services Rights & Resources Guide  
Victims' Rights Request Form  
Victims' Rights Request Form Flow Chart