

Victim and Witness Assistance

318.1 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.

318.2 POLICY

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

318.3 CRIME VICTIM LIAISON

The Chief of Public Safety may appoint a member of the Department to serve as the crime victim liaison. The crime victim liaison will be the point of contact for individuals requiring further assistance or information from the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety regarding benefits from crime victim resources. This person shall also be responsible for maintaining compliance with all legal mandates related to crime victims and/or witnesses.

318.4 CRIME VICTIMS

Public Safety Officers should provide all victims with the applicable victim information handouts.

Public Safety 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. Public Safety 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.

318.4.1 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS REGARDING VICTIMS

Investigating public safety officers shall ensure victims receive applicable handouts within 24 hours of their initial contact with the victim when statutorily required (MCL 752.953; MCL 780.753; MCL 780.782; MCL 780.813; MCL 780.755).

318.5 VICTIM INFORMATION

The Service 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 (MCL 764.15c; MCL 752.953).
- (b) The written notice to victims of domestic violence as required by MCL 764.15c including contact information for the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety.

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- (c) Availability of emergency and medical services, if applicable (MCL 780.753; MCL 780.782; MCL 780.813).
- (d) 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; MCL 752.953).
- (e) 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.
- (f) A clear explanation of relevant court orders and how they can be obtained.
- (g) Information regarding available compensation for qualifying victims of crime.
- (h) 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.
- (i) Notice regarding U visa and T visa application processes.
- (j) Resources available for victims of identity theft.
- (k) A place for the public safety officer's name, badge number and any applicable case or incident number.
- (l) Contact information for the prosecuting attorney who coordinates victim's rights in the jurisdiction of the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (MCL 780.753; MCL 780.782; MCL 780.813).
- (m) Information required under the William Van Regenmorter Crime Victim's Rights Act (MCL 780.751 et seq.).
- (n) The rights of crime victims provided under Const. 1963, art 1, § 24.

318.6 WITNESSES

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

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