

Court Orientation

Victim Services will work with you to answer your questions, provide assistance and emotional support, provide information about the criminal justice proceedings, and accompany you to court if you wish.

Victim Services provides court orientation classes for those who will be required to testify in court. The class explains court procedures, courtroom personnel and their role, discusses fears and concerns that many people experience, and offers ways to cope. Our hope is to make you feel more comfortable in attending court. For information on our court orientation class or one-on-one for those unable to attend the class please call **780-391-4078**.

Court Accompaniment

Going to court can seem overwhelming to a victim or witness. Having someone attend court with you may make the experience easier. Victim Advocates, familiar with the court process, are available to accompany witnesses.

If you would like assistance in preparing for court, or court accompaniment contact our Victim Services office - Court Support at **780-391-4078** for more information.

Court Status

Victim Services can provide an update on the status of your case within the judicial system.

Community Assistance

Police, Fire, Ambulance Emergency only: 911
Non-emergency Police Assistance: 780-423-4567
24-hour Distress Line: 780-482-4357
Community Referral: 211

Canadian Victim's Bill of Rights

Under the Victim Bill of Rights you are entitled to the following:

- Information about the criminal justice system, your role, and opportunities to participate in the criminal justice process.
- Information about the status of your investigation, the scheduling, progress and final outcome of the proceedings, and the status of the offender in the correctional system.
- Information about available victim assistance services, including victim impact statements, requesting restitution, means of obtaining financial reparation and other programs.

Administration

Nexus Business Park
#110, 14315-118 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5H 0H7
Phone: **780-421-2217**
Email: vsu@edmontonpolice.ca
Business hours - Mon - Fri from
8:00 am to 8:00 pm
Victim Services Website
www.edmontonpolice.ca/VSU

Victim Services Unit

Assistance for Victims of Crime and Tragedy

Our Mission

"To provide timely intervention, prevention and supports to individuals, families and communities affected by crime, trauma and tragic events."

The investigating police officers will initiate the process of obtaining assistance for you. They may advise you to contact the Victim Services Unit. This unit is made up of Edmonton Police service staff and Victim Advocates, who are volunteers from the community extensively trained by the police in areas such as:

- > crisis intervention
- > trauma
- > court support
- > bereavement
- > suicide awareness
- > personal safety
- > crime prevention
- > community programs

Advocates are first available to provide support during the first few critical hours after an incident. This is particularly relevant for those who do not have a family or friend support base to rely upon.

The Victim Services Unit acts as a central information point for victims regarding the status of the investigation, the court case, and the trial disposition.

Dealing with Children's Feelings

Children experience the same feelings as adults, but they may be more intense and children may have difficulty expressing their feelings in words. Their fear, anxiety, or anger may be expressed in changes in behaviour. They may have nightmares, or trouble eating or sleeping. These responses are natural reactions to stress. Do not hesitate to see your doctor for help in dealing with these feelings especially if they go on for a long time.

Victims of crime or tragedy may experience:

- > shock & disbelief
- > anger & frustration
- > suspicion
- > guilt
- > changes in behaviour
- > sense of violation
- > fear
- > stress & sleeplessness
- > nervousness

What can you do about it? Don't keep it inside. One of the most effective coping strategies is to talk it out. Talk to family or friends or contact Victim Services - all calls are confidential.

Victims of Crime Protocol

The Alberta Victims of Crime Act establishes a protocol that ensures victims are supported. The Victims of Crime Protocol Booklet informs victims of what they can expect from the criminal justice system from the moment they report a crime. Victims of Crime Protocol booklets are available from any Victim Services office or you can request a copy through www.victimservices.alberta.ca.

Remember, you are not alone.

Statement?

If you have been a victim of a serious crime you may suffer physical and emotional effects. A Victim Impact Statement allows you to express in writing to a judge how being a victim of crime has affected you. Your Victim Impact Statement should describe the harm done, the loss suffered by you, and the emotional impact you have experienced. Filling out a Victim Impact Statement is voluntary. Your statement should be sent to the court and will be considered by the judge only at the time the offender is sentenced. Victim Impact Statements can also be used during Parole Board hearings.

What are Financial Benefits?

The Financial Benefits Program recognizes victims who were physically or emotionally injured as a direct result of a violent crime in Alberta. It provides direct assistance with a one-time financial benefit based on the severity of the victim's injuries. For more information contact Financial Benefits Program at 780-427-7217.

What is Restitution?

If you have suffered financial loss as a result of a crime, you may have the right to seek restitution from the offender. Restitution is a way for the offender to repay you for the loss you have suffered.

