

The Aftermath of Crime

A crime has occurred. The victim has suffered a great deal as a result. The victim's sense of safety and security has been shaken. The initial impact is one of shock and disbelief. Then the true impact sets in. The victim may have suffered financial loss and/or physical injury. The victim always sustains emotional turmoil. The victim demands and deserves justice and respect.

It is the goal of the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney's Victim Assistance Unit to balance the scales of justice. Victims have the right to information, respect, dignity, and freedom from harassment and inconvenience. It is our desire to see that the Criminal Justice System does not cause a "second injury" to the victim.

In an effort to limit further trauma by the system, The Victim Assistance Unit is committed to making the system more responsive to the rights of all citizens.

Services Provided by the Victim Assistance Program

Victim Impact Statement

Victims of crime have a right to describe to the court the impact the crime has had on their lives. The Victim Assistance Unit will provide a form, assistance in filling it out and delivery to the judges and deputy prosecutor handling the case.

Crime Victims Compensation

Washington State has a Victim Compensation Law, which provides money for persons who suffer personal injury as a result of a crime. If you suffered an injury that led to medical expense, or resulted in loss of wages, or temporary or permanent disability, you may be eligible for benefits under this State program. There is no money available for property losses. If you think you qualify, please contact the Victim Assistance Unit.

Return of Property

Stolen property that is recovered by the Police/Sheriff Department is placed in an evidence locker in the Property Room. Call the Victim Assistance Unit if you're experiencing a delay in recovering your personal property. We can help speed up the process of property return.

Restitution

The court may order a defendant to pay restitution. Restitution is the money that the offender pays to reimburse you for medical bills, property damage, and other financial losses that were a result of the crime. The Victim Assistance Unit will supply information to the courts. Restitution is paid to the Clark County Clerk's Office where a record is kept of the amount received. The Clerk's Office sends the reimbursement to you or your insurance company when the payment is received from the defendant. You must notify the Clerk's Office if you change your address (be sure to include the defendant's name and case number). Their address and phone number is:

Clark County Clerk's Office
PO Box 5000
Vancouver WA 98666-5000
(360) 397-2295

Questions about how much and how regularly the defendant has paid are best answered by calling the Collections Unit at **(360) 397-6085**.

Community Resources

If the Victim Assistance Unit cannot meet your specific needs, you will be referred to an appropriate social service agency that can help you in coping with the problems resulting from the crime.

Services Available for Crime Victims

1. Ongoing information regarding the status of a criminal case.
2. Explanation of and orientation to the Criminal Justice process.
3. Victim Advocacy referral to community resources and agencies which can help you with short term crises or provide long term assistance if necessary.
4. Assistance with Washington State Crime Victims Compensation claims.
5. Assistance with the return of property held in evidence by the police or the courts.
6. Determination of financial loss for restitution in felony cases.
7. Assistance with victim impact statement.
8. Escort to attorney interviews and to court appearances.

Clark County Victim Assistance Unit

1013 Franklin Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

Phone: 360-397-2008
Fax: 360-397-2057



Common Reactions to Being a Crime Victim

- ◆ Sleep disturbances (nightmares, fear of going to bed, wanting a light on, waking up during the night, fear of sleeping alone or over sleeping)
- ◆ Loss of appetite or overeating
- ◆ Anger, Rage.
- ◆ Irritability, crankiness, short-tempered behavior
- ◆ Needing more reassurance than usual, clinging to friends and family
- ◆ Fears
- ◆ Need to talk about the crime over and over or not wanting to talk about it

REMEMBER, your children will respond in much the same ways as adults do.

Important Phone Numbers

Victim Assistance Unit.....	397-2008
Clark County Crisis Hot Line (24 hrs.).....	696-9560
YWCA (Safe Choice/Sexual Assault).....	696-0167
Clark County Prosecutor's Office.....	397-2261
Clark County Sheriff's Office.....	397-2211
Vancouver Police Department.....	487-7400
Children's Protective Services.....	993-7901

How Can I Help?

1. Emotional Support.

Provide care, love, comfort, and understanding. Let them talk as much as needed. Be a good listener.

2. Encouragement.

Let the victim know you are on his/her side. No blaming. The victim is not at fault.

3. Information.

Give the victim helpful resources such as information on local victims' service agencies, self-help groups, and crisis and mental health counseling centers. The Victim Assistance Unit can help with this information.

4. Companionship.

Provide security and support.

5. Tangible Aid.

Assist the victim with financial aid, transportation, household and child care assistance.

Tips for Helpers

◆ Do not push.

Everyone recovers in their own time. Sometimes when victims are pushed to hurry up and "get better" they stop the necessary recovery process.

◆ Get support for yourself.

Crime adds stress to friends and loved ones. If the victim becomes concerned about you, she or he may ignore his or her own needs for recovery.

◆ Discuss

Future safety with the victim.

Message from the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney



Art Curtis
Prosecuting Attorney

Too often victims of crime take a "back seat" to criminals when it comes to having "rights" within the criminal justice system. Here in Clark County, the Prosecuting Attorney's Victim Assistance Unit is doing everything possible to see to it that the victims of crime are treated with the respect, dignity and courtesy that they so rightly deserve. Providing the services that we do to crime victims helps to enhance the "justice" in the criminal justice system. We strive to provide justice for the victim as well as the criminal.

CLARK COUNTY
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
**VICTIM ASSISTANCE
UNIT**
Art Curtis
Clark County Prosecuting Attorney

**Information
For
Crime
Victims**