



Temple University Department of Public Safety

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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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 law enforcement mission. This essential function, performed by both sworn and civilian personnel, should address victims' needs by establishing a continuum of support and resources as victims progress through the various phases of the criminal justice process.

POLICY:

It is the policy of Temple University Department of Public Safety to recognize and address the needs and rights of crime victims during each contact. As first responders, law enforcement personnel are uniquely positioned to provide trauma-informed care and support to victims of crime. 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.

DEFINITIONS:

Crime Victim: A person who has suffered direct physical, emotional, or financial harm as a result of the commission of a crime.

Personal Injury Crimes: An act, attempt, or threat to commit an act that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony under the following:

1. 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 25 (relating to criminal homicide)
2. 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 27 (relating to assault)

3. 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 29 (relating to kidnapping)
4. 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 31 (relating to sexual offenses)
5. 18 Pa.C.S. § 3301 (relating to arson and related offenses)
6. 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 37 (relating to robbery)
7. 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 49 Subch. B (relating to victim and witness intimidation)
8. 30 Pa.C.S. § 5502.1 (relating to homicide by watercraft while operating under influence)
9. The former 75 Pa.C.S. § 3731 (relating to driving under influence of alcohol or controlled substance) in cases involving bodily injury
10. 75 Pa.C.S. § 3732 (relating to homicide by vehicle)
11. 75 Pa.C.S. § 3735 (relating to homicide by vehicle while driving under influence)
12. 75 Pa.C.S. § 3735.1 (relating to aggravated assault by vehicle while driving under the influence)
13. 75 Pa.C.S. § 3742 (relating to accidents involving death or personal injury)
14. 75 Pa.C.S. Ch. 38 (relating to driving after imbibing alcohol or utilizing drugs) in cases involving bodily injury
15. The term includes violations of any protective order issued as a result of an act related to domestic violence.

Trauma: Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physical or emotional harm, or threats of harm, over which they have or perceive to have a lack of control. Trauma may have lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Trauma-Informed Approach: Policies, procedures, and practices that involve recognizing, understanding, and properly responding to the effects of trauma. Trauma-informed practices:

1. Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery.
2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in those involved within the system.
3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.
4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

Victim Services: Internal or external services offered through department personnel or outside providers specializing in working with crime victims

PROCEDURES:

I. Needs of Victims

- A. Victims of crime experience a variety of physical, psychological, and social needs

classified in the seven categories below. The department and its members will address these needs, where feasible, in the following manner:

- 1. Safety:** Crime victims need protection from perpetrators and assistance in avoiding revictimization.
 - a)** Personnel having contact with a crime victim shall strongly encourage the victim to contact the department immediately if they are threatened or intimidated by anyone as a result of reporting the crime, or if they are contacted by the suspect or third parties on behalf of the suspect in any way that is unwelcome, or threatening or intimidating.
 - b)** Temple University Department of Public Safety personnel shall become familiar with 18 Pa. C.S. Chapter 49, Subchapter B as it relates to victim and witness intimidation.
 - c)** A Temple University Public Safety officer, upon learning of a threat to a victim, must document all relevant details, including names of those involved and anyone informed. The officer must inform the victim about the threat, no matter where the victim is, and offer options for addressing it. Additionally, the officer must notify law enforcement in the victim's area, providing details about the threat.
- 2. Support:** Crime victims need assistance, support, and encouragement regarding their participation in the criminal justice system processes and repair of harm.
 - a)** A victim's sense of control and active participation in the process significantly shape their experience with the criminal justice system. When victims feel they have been treated fairly and their rights are respected, they are less likely to experience further trauma and tend to have greater trust and satisfaction in the system.
- 3. Information:** Crime victims benefit from concise and useful information about victims' rights, criminal justice system processes, and available victim services.
 - a)** Officers having contact with a crime victim will ensure the required notifications, as set forth in section II.E of this policy, are made.
- 4. Access:** Crime victims often desire the opportunity to participate in the justice system process and benefit from access to support services.
 - a)** Providing crime victims with clear information about the justice process enhances their sense of control, reduces feelings of helplessness, and alleviates psychological distress.
- 5. Continuity:** Crime victims benefit from consistency in approaches and methods across agencies through all stages of the criminal justice process.
 - a)** The department will collaborate and provide reasonable assistance to such entities, as long as doing so does not endanger the victim or others, significantly disrupt an ongoing investigation or prosecution, or violate privacy laws or department policy.

6. Voice: Crime victims frequently seek chances to express their views and be heard regarding case proceedings and broader policy issues.
 - a) The inherent loss of control resulting from a crime can leave victims feeling deprived of autonomy. When someone is labeled a "victim," they often experience a sense of lost control. Allowing victims to participate in the criminal justice process can lessen their feelings of estrangement, which arise when they perceive themselves as having no control or significance in the process.
7. Justice: Crime victims deserve the support necessary to heal and see that perpetrators are held accountable.
 - a) Officers having contact with a crime victim shall ensure, to the best of their ability, that victims receive justice, due process, fairness, and respect.

II. Initial Response

- A. When responding to calls for service involving crime victims, officers shall:
 1. Immediately ascertain that the victim(s) are at a safe location;
 2. Render emergency first aid, if necessary;
 3. Determine the need for and request additional resources; and
 4. Once the incident is stable, treat individuals with compassion, patience, and respect, and utilize a trauma-informed approach to develop a supportive presence. This approach includes reassuring the victim that they are no longer in immediate danger.
 - a) Officers shall refer to the department's [Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centered Response Policy](#) to ensure that their interactions are in line with best practices for supporting victims sensitively and respectfully.
- B. Victims who are emotionally distraught should not be left alone. If appropriate, relatives, friends, or a community resource such as a victim services provider or chaplain should be contacted to provide comfort and support.
- C. While collecting information and physical evidence necessary for investigation and subsequent prosecution, officers shall be perceptive to and sensitive to the victim's emotional and psychological state through the use of trauma-informed practices.
- D. Employees shall consider the method, manner, location, and timing of the trauma-informed victim interview, so as not to subject the victim to additional stress and trauma.
- E. Officers shall provide basic information on the rights and services available for crime victims and the availability of crime victims' compensation to the victim or, if appropriate, a member of the victim's family. The information shall be provided when the agency has first contact with the victim or, if appropriate, a member of the victim's family or as soon as reasonably possible. This information shall be provided in the form of a Victims Rights Guide. (PLEAC 4.5.1 B)

1. The Victims Rights Guide was developed by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and provides basic information on services available for crime victims as well as the application form for crime victims' compensation. Additionally, the guide directs victims to the various victim services within the county and/or state.
 - a) Officers can provide Victims' Rights and Victim compensation information by QR Code. Victims are able to scan the QR code and will be taken directly to the Victims' Rights and Victim Compensation Information for their District.
 - b) This information is available in English and Spanish.
 2. Officers shall note in the incident report that the Victims Rights Guide was provided to the victim or the victim's family. (PLEAC 4.5.1 E)
- F.** At the conclusion of the initial investigation, the officer should:
1. Inform the victim of the general direction that the investigation will take, who will be responsible for further follow-up, and whether the victim should expect to be contacted;
 2. Provide the victim with contact information for the appropriate individuals within the department; and
 3. Strongly encourage the victim to contact the department 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.

III. Investigation and Follow-Up

- A.** The primary investigative agency, whether Temple University Police Department (TUPD) or Philadelphia Police Department (PPD), will handle victim notifications based on jurisdiction and case responsibilities as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the departments.
- B.** Detectives and/or officers assigned to conduct follow-up criminal investigations, using a trauma-informed approach, shall contact the victim as soon as practical to determine whether they have new details concerning the case.
- C.** Detectives and/or officers shall relay information, when available and appropriate, relating to such matters as:
 1. Arrest and detention of the suspect;
 - a) In cases involving victims of personal injury crimes, officers shall make reasonable efforts to notify the victim of the arrest of the suspect as soon as possible. Unless the victim cannot be located, notice of the arrest shall be provided not more than 24 hours after the preliminary arraignment. In cases alleging delinquency, notice of the filing or forwarding of a

complaint shall be provided not more than 24 hours after the complaint has been filed or forwarded to the juvenile probation office of the District Attorney. (PLEAC 4.5.1 F)

b) All attempts at notification shall be documented in the incident report or a supplemental report.

c) Victims should be informed that they must register to be notified of an offender's release from jail. They may do so at www.vinelink.com or by contacting Victim/Witness Service during normal business hours.

2. The bail status of the suspect, or any change in this status;

3. Status of stolen, recovered, or removed property;

a) All property of a victim seized as evidence by the Temple University Department of Public Safety, as a result of their investigation, will be returned to the victim if the Prosecutor determines the evidence is no longer needed. (PLEAC 4.5.1 H)

4. In the event of any escape by the suspect, the victim of a personal injury crime shall be notified. This fact will be documented in the incident report. (PLEAC 4.5.1 G)

IV. Resources

A. Department personnel 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.

B. Officers shall be attentive to crime victims with special needs. Victims with physical, mental, or emotional impairments, as well as juvenile and elderly victims, should be attended to in a manner that best supports their life conditions and specific situations.

C. Officers 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 how crime victims respond and react to being victimized and how they are treated by family and community members.

V. Employee Wellness

A. This department recognizes the potential for vicarious trauma and the potential impact on officers who interact with crime victims.

B. Officers shall refer to this department's Wellness policy for available employee mental health services such as employee assistance programs.

VI. Training

A. The Temple University Department of Public Safety shall ensure that all of its officers and employees are familiar with the provisions set forth in the Pennsylvania Crime Victims Act. (PLEAC 4.5.1 A)

B. Additionally, the department will strive to provide additional training on topics such as:

1. Effects of trauma on crime victims;
2. Trauma-informed practices;
3. Communication skills;
4. Cultural awareness, and
5. Vicarious trauma, including how to identify and react to potential signs and symptoms in an effort to build employee resiliency.