

## Victim and Witness Assistance

### 309.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

**Agency Content**

All members of the department shall be responsible for providing assistance to victims and witnesses as necessary during the course of an investigation, to include:

- (a) Informing victims and witnesses of emergency response numbers.
- (b) Referring victims and witnesses to appropriate service agencies (e.g., counseling, medical attention, compensation programs, victim advocacy groups, etc.).
- (c) Providing departmental Victim/Witness assistance form(s) pursuant to departmental policy (i.e., Domestic Violence, Family Offense, etc.).
- (d) Advising victims and witnesses the appropriate action for them to take should someone attempt to threaten or intimidate them.
- (e) Providing victims with the DR number and, when appropriate, copies of police reports at no cost.
- (f) Describing the steps the department will follow in processing the case.
- (g) Providing victims with appropriate telephone numbers and/or persons to contact to report additional information or to learn the status of their case.
- (h) Initiating all appropriate steps to ensure the confidentiality of victim/witness, consistent with applicable law.

### 309.2 OFFICERS FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES

**Agency Content**

Officers conducting follow-up investigations shall be responsible for providing assistance to victims and witnesses as necessary, which may include:

- (a) Re-contacting victims and witnesses and ascertaining if their needs are being met.
- (b) Scheduling interviews, line-ups, and other procedures at the convenience of the victim or witnesses, whenever possible.
- (c) Arranging transportation for victims and witnesses, when necessary.
- (d) Informing victims when arrests are made in their cases, and explaining the prosecution process to them.
- (e) Providing frank disclosure when an arrest or solution does not appear likely or imminent.

### 309.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

**Agency Content**

The commander responsible for community relations operations shall administer and coordinate the department's victim/witness assistance program, and shall ensure that a liaison with other criminal justice agencies, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and organizations

# Syracuse Police Department

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concerned with victim/witness needs and rights are maintained. The scope of these liaisons will be determined by periodic review of victim/witness needs. Liaisons will be maintained with:

- (a) NYS Crime Victims Board.
- (b) Victim Assistance Services.
- (c) District Attorney's Office.
- (d) Probation and parole agencies.
- (e) Local criminal court personnel.

The commander responsible for department's community relations operations, or designee, shall be responsible for conducting an analysis of victim/witness assistance needs and available services within the department's service area at least every two-(2) years. The focus of this analysis will be to determine the victim/witness needs, along with the appropriate level of departmental response to address these needs. The analysis should include:

- (a) The extent and major types of victimization within the department's service area.
- (b) An inventory of information and service needs of victims/witnesses in general (including relatives of homicide or suicide) and special victims such as those victimized by domestic violence, abuse and neglect (especially children and the elderly), sex crimes, and drunk drivers.
- (c) Victim assistance and related community services available within the service area.
- (d) Identification of unfulfilled needs, and the selection of those that are appropriate for the department.
- (e) Maintaining information regarding victim/witness assistance programs and referral services in the lobby of police headquarters.

The commander responsible for department's community relations operations shall, based upon the analysis of victim/witness assistance needs and available services, develop policies and procedures that will:

- (a) Govern the implementation and delivery of promoting victim/witness assistance services by department personnel.
- (b) Ensure the confidentiality of records and files of victims/witnesses and their role in case development to the extent consistent with applicable law.
- (c) Govern department efforts to periodically inform the public and the media about the department's victim/witness assistance service.