



## **CHESTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE** **VICTIM ASSISTANCE ADVISORY**

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**Police Department**

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**Telephone Number**

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**Police Incident Number**

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**Contact Person**

**Responding Officer, please do the following:**

- 1. Give this informational booklet to all victims of crime.**
- 2. Fill out the top portion of this page to assist the victim with future contact with your agency.**
- 3. Have the victim sign the back page of this booklet and separate the signature portion from the card and file it with your police report.**
- 4. If the victim needs immediate assistance, contact:**

**The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc.**  
**610-692-7420**

**or**

**Domestic Violence Center of Chester County, Inc.**  
**1-888-711-6270**

# INTRODUCTION

Being a victim of crime can be very hard and confusing. This is a normal reaction. The legal system can be difficult to understand.

After a crime happens people are often confused and overwhelmed. This is normal. There are people to help you. The helpers are called "Victim Advocates." They will help you for free, make things easier to understand, and answer your questions. They can also help in other ways as well. Call them using the phone numbers on pages 3 & 4 to find out what they can do for you.

You may have heard that the person who committed the crime against you has "rights" under the law. Pennsylvania has a "Victims Bill of Rights." This packet tells you about your rights.

Some of your rights are to:

- Be told about help you can get;
- Be told about court hearings and have someone be with you if you want;
- Be told if the person who committed the crime against you has been arrested;
- Be told if the person who committed the crime against you escapes;
- Tell the judge how you have been hurt;
- Have anything taken from you for evidence returned when it is not needed any more for court;
- Be told what happens at the end of your case; and
- Recover financial losses that you experienced as a result of the crime.

There are many more rights that you have. A Victim Advocate will be able to help you understand them and tell you which ones apply to your case.

## **AGENCIES THAT CAN ASSIST VICTIMS IN CHESTER COUNTY**

### **The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc. (CVC)**

#### **Telephone Numbers:**

24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline: 610-692-7273

24 Hour Other Crimes Hotline: 610-692-7420

Website: [www.cvcofcc.org](http://www.cvcofcc.org)

#### **CVC offers the following:**

##### **Sexual Assault Victim Services for Children & Adults:**

Crisis response, counseling, accompaniment through police, medical and legal procedures, advocacy, support, information, and referral for victims of sexual assault and their significant others.

##### **Adult Victim/Witness Assistance and**

##### **Juvenile Court Victims/Witness Assistance Programs:**

Information on victims' rights and services for all victims/witnesses in the criminal and juvenile justice systems and community.

##### **Other Crimes Victim Services include, but not limited to, Homicide, Child Abuse, Elder Abuse, Robbery, Assault, and Burglary Services, Stalking & Harassment, Internet Crimes, Human Trafficking:**

Crisis response, counseling, accompaniment through police, medical and legal procedures, advocacy, support, information, and referral for all victims/witnesses and their significant others of crime.

##### **Victim Compensation Assistance Program:**

Information and help with money lost and bills related to the crime

## **AGENCIES THAT CAN ASSIST VICTIMS IN CHESTER COUNTY**

### **Domestic Violence Center of Chester County, Inc. (DVCCC)**

#### **Telephone Numbers:**

24 Hour Hotline:	610-431-1430
Toll Free Hotline:	1-888-711-6270
TTY Line:	610-431-7262
Website:	<a href="http://www.dvccc.com">www.dvccc.com</a>

#### **DVCCC offers the following:**

##### **Domestic Violence Services:**

Emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, support groups, court accompaniment, legal representation and advocacy, and referrals for victims of domestic violence and their children.

### **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)**

#### **Telephone Numbers:**

24 Hour Victim Hotline:	1-800-848-6233
Phone:	610-328-9942
Website:	<a href="http://www.maddpa.org">www.maddpa.org</a>

#### **MADD offers the following in Chester County:**

Advocacy, support groups, and memorial programs for victims of drunk driving.

### **Chester County Department of Aging**

<b>Telephone Number:</b>	1-800-564-7000
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#### **Department of Aging offers the following:**

##### **Elder Abuse Services**

Protective Services for victims of abuse and neglect who are 60 years of age or older.

## **VICTIMS' COMPENSATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

This program may be able to help reimburse for money you had to pay or lost caused by a crime. Compensation may be paid to you or others for medical expenses, counseling, lost work earnings, loss of support, funeral expenses, travel costs, childcare, stolen cash, relocation, the costs to clean up a crime scene, and other expenses.

### **TO RECEIVE COMPENSATION, YOU HAVE TO:**

- Be a victim of a crime that happened in Pennsylvania.
- Report the crime or file a Protection from Abuse Petition.
- Cooperate with the police, courts, and the Victims' Compensation Assistance Program.
- File the claim within two years of the crime.
- Not be involved in illegal activity that caused the crime to happen.
- Lose at least \$100 because of the crime (if you are less than 60 years old).
- Be a victim of an eligible crime.

*There are exceptions to the above requirements (especially if the victim is younger than 18 years old).*

### **THIS PROGRAM WILL NOT REIMBURSE YOU FOR:**

- Pain and suffering.
- Stolen or damaged property (except some medical items).
- Proactive steps (such as installing a security system).

REMEMBER, you or a family member may receive compensation even if you do not meet all of the above requirements. To see if you may be eligible, or for help in filing a claim, please contact The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc., or the Pennsylvania Crime Victims' Compensation Assistance Program at (800) 233-2339.

The best way to file a claim is with the help of a Victim Advocate at The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County (610-692-7420). You can also file a claim by yourself on the Internet at [www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us).

## **PROTECTION FROM ABUSE (PFA) ORDER**

If you are a victim of domestic violence, you have the right to go to court and file a PFA order which could:

- 1) Restrain the abuser from further acts of abuse;
- 2) Order the abuser to leave your household;
- 3) Order the abuser from entering your home, school, or work;
- 4) Order you or the other parent temporary custody of or visitation with your child or children;
- 5) Order the abuser to pay support to you and the minor children if the abuser has a legal duty to do so;
- 6) Order the abuser to give up any weapons;
- 7) Order the abuser to stop stalking or harassing you or other persons in your family; and
- 8) Order the abuser to pay for your losses from the abuse.

For more information, contact the  
**Domestic Violence Center of Chester County**  
24 Hour Hotline: 610-431-1430  
Toll Free Hotline: 1-888-71-6270

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## **ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM (ACP)**

If you are a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and the person who committed the crime against you does not know where you have moved or where you are about to move, this program may be able to help you stay safe.

To apply for or learn more about the program, contact:

**Domestic Violence Center of Chester County**  
24 Hour Hotline: 610-431-1430  
Toll Free Hotline: 1-888-711-6270  
**The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County**  
24 Hour Hotline: 610-692-7420  
**Office of the Victim Advocate** 1-800-563-639

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS**

You have the right to have a Forensic Rape Exam (FRE) without paying for the exam or having to speak with police. The police will hold onto the FRE Evidence Kit for two years. Without your permission, the police will not investigate the sexual assault. If at the end of the two years you still do not make a report to police, you will be notified 60 days before the kit is destroyed. If you choose to report to the police before the two years is up, the kit will not be destroyed.

### **Protection of Victims of Sexual Assault or Intimidation Act:**

If you are a victim of a sexual assault or stalking you may be able to go to court and file a No Contact Order against the offender.

### **Sexual Violence Protection Order:**

If you are a victim of sexual assault and the abuser is not a family member or household member, you may be able to go to court and file a No Contact Order against the offender.

### **Protection from Intimidation Order:**

If you are under the age of 18 and you are being harassed or stalked by a person over the age of 18 and they are not a family member or household member, you may be able to go to court and file a No Contact Order against the offender.

### **For assistance, contact:**

**The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County**

24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline: 610-692-7273

24 Hour Other Crimes Hotline: 610-692-7420

## **NOTIFICATION**

You can register to be notified when a particular inmate is released, transferred, or escapes from a county jail or state prison. For more information, go to [www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com) and click on 'PA-SAVIN', or contact The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc

## VICTIMS' RIGHTS

Victims' Rights are found in many different laws. Below is a list of your rights. You do not have to do anything to get most of these rights. However, you must ask for the ones that are underlined.

If you are a victim of crime in Pennsylvania, you have the right:

- To be notified of basic information on available services;
- To be notified of certain significant actions within the justice system pertaining to your case, including the granting or denial of bail to an adult offender, the detention or release of a juvenile, the filing of a petition alleging delinquency, and escape and subsequent apprehension of an adult prior to trial or a juvenile prior to adjudication;
- To be accompanied at all proceedings by a family member, a Victim Advocate, or other support person;
- To give prior comment on the sentencing decision regarding an adult offender or the disposition of a delinquent child and to receive help in preparing oral and written victim impact statements detailing the physical, psychological, and economic effects of the crime that will be considered by the courts;
- To collect restitution and to receive assistance with preparing, submitting, and follow-up with a claim for compensation;
- To be notified of an adult offender's transfer from a state prison to a mental health facility and the discharge, transfer, or escape of the adult offender from that facility;
- To receive immediate notice of the release of an adult offender on bail who is incarcerated in a local prison for a violation of a Protection From Abuse (PFA) order or for a personal injury crime committed against the victim protected by the PFA;
- To have property returned that was seized as evidence but is no longer needed for prosecution; and
- To have notice of and to provide prior comment on the judicial recommendation that the defendant participate in a motivational boot camp.



**Victims of personal injury crimes have the following additional rights:**

- To receive notice of the arrest of a suspect or the filing or forwarding of a complaint relating to the crime, including notification in 24 hours or less of a complaint alleging delinquency of a juvenile;
  - Upon request, to receive notice when an adult offender is released from incarceration at sentencing;
  - To receive notice of the opportunity to give prior comment on and receive post-sentencing decisions involving a release from a state prison such as work release, furlough, parole, pardon, or community treatment center placement;
  - To receive notice of and provide prior comment on recommendations sought by the Department of Corrections that an offender participate in a motivational boot camp.
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- To receive notice of the release of an adult offender from a local correctional facility including work release, furlough, parole, release from a boot camp or community treatment center placement;
  - To receive immediate notice of an escape of an adult offender and subsequent apprehension;
  - Upon request, to receive notice of the filing, hearing, or disposition of appeals;
  - To receive notice of commitment to a mental health institution from a local or state institution; and
  - To receive notice of the termination of the court's jurisdiction.

**Victims of crimes committed by a juvenile have the following additional rights:**

- To receive prior notice of delinquency hearings and notification of hearings about transfer of a juvenile to and from criminal proceedings; and
- To receive notice of the details of the final disposition of a juvenile's case.

**Victims of personal injury/burglary crimes have the following additional rights:**

- To give prior comment on the potential reduction or dropping of charges or any changes of a plea in a criminal or delinquency proceeding, diversion of a case, including an informal adjustment or a consent decree.

**Victims of personal injury crime committed by a juvenile have the following additional rights, upon their request:**

- To receive notice prior to the release of a juvenile from residential placement, a shelter facility, or a detention center;
- To be notified if and have the opportunity to submit a written objection prior to the transfer or release from a placement facility of a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent when such action is contrary to a previous court order or placement plan approved at a disposition review hearing;
- To be given immediate notice of a juvenile's escape from residential placement, a shelter facility, or a detention center and subsequent apprehension; and
- To submit written comment and oral testimony at a disposition review hearing.

**For more information or help in understanding these rights, please contact:**

**The Crime Victims' Center of Chester County, Inc. (CVC) at 610-692-7420.**

Victim Advocates at CVC will be able to help explain your rights, which can be hard to understand. They can also help you with any questions you may have.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A VICTIM OF CRIME**

Although you are not responsible for your victimization, there are certain actions you can take that will help address many issues that have resulted from your victimization.

In order to be kept informed about your case and to get information, you must give your address and telephone number to agencies that will assist you with your rights. You must also tell them if your address or telephone number changes.

For child victims, the parent or legal guardian must provide your address and telephone number.

For a homicide, a surviving family member(s) must provide your address and telephone number.

Only staff who work for the Police, District Attorney's Office, Victim Services, or the Corrections Department will see your address and telephone number.

No one else will be given your address or telephone number unless you approve it in writing.

## Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information

- I acknowledge that I have received the above information on the basic services available for victims of crime.
- My name, telephone number, and address may be provided to the appropriate victim service agency listed in this brochure.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a telephone number and/or address where you can be reached.