



Policy Name:	VICTIM SERVICES		
Policy #:	OP 6.1.1	Last Updated:	2022-04-07
Issued By:	COMMUNITY POLICING BUREAU	Approved By:	SURREY POLICE BOARD
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RELATED POLICIES

OP 4.52.1 *Vulnerable Persons – Trauma-Informed Practices*

OP 4.52.4 *Vulnerable Persons – Victims of Crime*

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To provide efficient and effective support services to victims and witnesses of crime or trauma that seek to mitigate the negative impacts of the incident, increase victim safety, reduce further victimization, and promote victim centered criminal justice system services.
- 1.2. To comply with requirements of the federal *Canadian Victim Bill of Rights* and the provincial *Victims of Crime Act* and *Crime Victims Assistance Act* (the Acts).

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Surrey Police Service (SPS) Employees.

3. POLICY

- 3.1. SPS Victim Services will provide support, information, referrals, and practical assistance to primary and secondary victims of and witnesses to crime and trauma in Surrey. Where appropriate, services may also be extended to family members of victims.

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1. Victim Services staff and volunteers will:

- i. treat a victim with courtesy and respect and must not discriminate against a victim on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, gender, sexual orientation, political belief or age;
- ii. provide services, at the earliest opportunity, including through the provision of crisis intervention, to victims, and witnesses of crime and trauma, who are referred to the Victim Services program or who are entitled to services under the Acts;
- iii. release information to victims as outlined in the Acts;
- iv. support participation of victims in decisions that affect their rights under the Acts;
- v. seek to protect victims against the commission of criminal acts and support their safety;
- vi. assist victims in seeking appropriate restitution or a financial benefit where allowed by the Acts;
- vii. assist victims with completing Victim Impact Statements and applying for testimonial aids in court proceedings;
- viii. provide services to victims and witnesses of traumatic incidents that may include but are not limited to the following non-criminal incidents: sudden death, suicide/ attempted suicide, industrial accidents, missing persons, natural disaster, family disputes (other than intimate partner violence), and motor vehicle incidents (including fatalities);
- ix. provide services in a manner that minimizes barriers (e.g., by providing services with the assistance of a translator);
- x. provide services that are culturally appropriate; and
- xi. document their actions.

Referrals to Community-Based Victim Services for certain offences

4.2. Victim Services staff and volunteers may respond in the first instance to provide support to victims of intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence. The Victim Services worker will request advance, informed and written consent from the victim before referring and transitioning the file to the designated community-based victim services program at the earliest opportunity.

Delivery of Services

4.3. Victim Services staff, which may include volunteers, may provide the following services:

- i. emotional support;
- ii. crisis intervention;
- iii. information on the criminal justice system;
- iv. information on the status of police investigations;
- v. referrals to community services including other victim support services;
- vi. court support services, including court updates, court orientation, court accompaniment, attendance at Crown Counsel meetings, and witness coordination with Crown Counsel;
- vii. transportation (where appropriate);
- viii. assistance with Crime Victim Assistance applications, Victim Impact Statements and other relevant forms;
- ix. crime prevention information;
- x. safety planning;

- xi. community presentations related to Victim Services and victimization;
- xii. provision of accredited facility dog services; and
- xiii. any other services mandated under the Acts.

Program Structure

4.4. Under the authority of the Chief Constable, the Victim Services program:

- i. reports to the Superintendent, Investigative Services Bureau; and
- ii. is administered by a Victim Services Program Coordinator, who will recruit and train qualified staff.

Staff Requirements

4.5. SPS will ensure that only persons having the appropriate background, skills and abilities are engaged in this function. All Victim Services workers and volunteers will receive training in trauma-informed practices.

Stakeholders and Working Relationships

4.6. Victim Services staff will encourage and promote cooperative and coordinated relationships with stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- i. police officers;
- ii. other Victim Services programs and other services funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division;
- iii. other community service organizations;
- iv. Emergency Social Services;
- v. Crown Counsel, corrections, and justice system partners; and
- vi. Other relevant stakeholders and local committees.

Police Investigations

4.7. Victim Services staff will support police investigations by:

- i. ensuring confidential investigative information is not released without police consent;
- ii. recommending victims and witnesses only disclose information relating to an ongoing investigation to the investigating Member;
- iii. acting in a manner that supports the investigative goals of police;
- iv. informing police of reports involving potential/real harm to self/others and criminal offences;
- v. referring all media requests to the Strategic Communications Manager (unless directed otherwise); and
- vi. storing all confidential file and client information appropriately in secure areas or on a secure database.

Access to Police Files

4.8. All information and records obtained by Victim Services staff will be:

- i. classified as confidential, for police information only, unless otherwise specifically indicated;
- ii. kept in a sealed folder with the investigative file, with all Victim Services records kept separate from the investigative records. See *Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada v. Pasmén* (oral reasons for ruling on production of third-party documents, Supreme Court of British Columbia, Vernon Registry, No. 36204-2, October 17, 2002). If Victim Services records are properly maintained in separate folders and not part of the investigative file, Victim Services records are not subject to disclosure under section 278.1 of the *Criminal Code* because they are not in the possession and control of the Crown or the police; and
- iii. available only to Members or authorized civilian Employees.

4.9. In certain circumstances, the police may choose to restrict Victim Service staff access to information found in the General Occurrence report.

4.10. Although discretionary powers are granted to the police, information restrictions will be for one of the following reasons:

- i. the file folder has been stamped or marked "Not for Victim Service program";
- ii. contact with the victim/witnesses may put the Victim Service staff or volunteer at risk;
- iii. the accused or suspect is a Young Person under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*;
- iv. the victim/witnesses have indicated they do not want to receive assistance from the Victim Service program; or
- v. the Chief Constable or designate directs that access will not be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Media Requests for Information

4.11. Victim Services personnel and volunteers have no authority to release information to the media. Therefore, Victim Services staff and volunteers will refer all media requests for case-specific information to the SPS Media Liaison Officer.

4.12. Media requests for information regarding the Victim Services program will be referred to the program coordinator.

Referrals

4.13. Victim Services staff provide services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at police request.

4.14. All requests for after-hours services will be screened by a Supervisor and by the on-call Victim Services worker.

4.15. In some circumstances, Victim Services staff may not attend a scene where illegal drugs and substances and/or alcohol or other risk factors are present (e.g., where the individual or location is deemed unsafe for responding worker(s)). In all cases where Victim Services staff or volunteers are required to attend, police may be required to remain on scene to ensure the workers' safety.

4.16. With the victim's consent, Members may refer victims to Victim Services. Members may consider a proactive referral when no consent is given but the Member feels Victim Services support would be beneficial to the victim. Additionally, Members may refer other individuals who they feel would benefit from Victim Services.

4.17. Referrals may be screened to prevent conflicts of interest and to ensure the safety of staff.

4.18. Victim Services staff may accept referrals directly from:

- i. Members;
- ii. victims;
- iii. other community services agencies / providers;
- iv. other criminal justice system personnel; and
- v. other appropriate services and individuals.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

“Member” means a sworn Police Officer appointed by the Surrey Police Board.

“SPS” means Surrey Police Service.

“Supervisor” means a Team Leader, Manager, Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Inspector, Superintendent, Deputy Chief Constable, Chief Constable, and any other person acting in a Supervisory capacity who is accountable for a particular area or shift on behalf of SPS.

“Victim” means an individual who suffers from, or is a witness to, physical, mental, or emotional injury or harm, significant emotional trauma, property damage, or economic loss, as a result of an act or omission perpetrated against them that forms the basis of an offence or an alleged offence, including direct and indirect victims, such as spouses, siblings, children or parents of the individual.

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES

Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, S.C. 2015, c. 13, s. 2

Crime Victim Assistance Act, S.B.C. 2001, c. 38

Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada v. Pasmén, oral reasons for ruling on production of third-party documents, Supreme Court of British Columbia, Vernon Registry, No. 36204-2, October 17, 2002

Victims of Crime Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 478

Youth Criminal Justice Act, S.C. 2002, c. 1