

Victims can explain how the crime have affected them so that the police official can refer the victim to service providers in the area for trauma counselling or other available victim friendly services

Victims can request a copy of the statement

✓ **A victim has the right to receive information from the police when reporting a crime**

A victim may discuss the case with an attorney of their choice

When reporting the case a police official will explain the nature and purpose of the victim's statement

The police official will provide the victim with the case number, the name of the investigation officer



The investigation officer will keep the victim informed about:

- The arrest of the suspect(s)
- The court case number
- Whether the victim is required to attend an identity parade and of its date
- The progress of the investigation of the case and the prosecution of the suspect(s)

✓ **The victim has the right to protection**

The victim has the right to safety if they believe that their life is in danger

The victim has the right to be placed at the witness protection programme if it is deemed necessary

The victim has the right to apply for a protection order to ensure safety in cases of domestic violence

✓ **The victim has the right to assistance**

The police official will explain the police procedures when the

case has been opened

The victim can request that the necessary crime prevention advice is provided

The police official must address the victims' safety as priority

VICTIM FRIENDLY ROOMS

This is a dedicated room within a police station to provide a space for victims of intimate violence (gender-based violence, child abuse, sexual offences and domestic violence) to make their statements in private within a non-threatening environment;

ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE VICTIM EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

The community members can assist the police with the provision of victim friendly services by:

- Being actively involved in the Community Policing Forum in the community to assist the police with identifying crime issues within the communities
- Becoming volunteers working at Victim Friendly Rooms at police stations or in other Victim Empowerment Centres within the communities

CONTACT DETAILS

Visible Policing: Gender-based Violence and Victim Empowerment

012 421 8000

SAPS Emergency Line

10111

SAPS Crime Stop

08600 10111

Stop Gender Violence Helpline

0800 150 150

Childline

0800 055 555

AIDS Helpline

0800 012 322

Compiled by the Section: Gender-based Violence and Victim Empowerment in the Division: Visible Policing



VICTIM EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME



SAPS Crime Stop
08600 10111

www.saps.gov.za

WHO IS A VICTIM?

A victim is a person who suffered physical, mental or emotional harm, including economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights through crime and may, include a victim of abuse of power by authorities;

IF A VICTIM REPORT A CASE AT THE SAPS HOW MUST THE VICTIM BE TREATED?

The SAPS must provide a professional, accessible and sensitive service to you the victim of crime and/or violence when you report the case, and also during the investigation of crime.



Police officials have to provide the following victim empowerment/support to a victim:

- Treat victims with fairness, respect and courtesy in private, without discrimination regardless of circumstances, race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and appearance.
- Take a statement in a professional and sensitive manner with respect for the victim's right to privacy and complete all the necessary forms to register the crime.
- The member will interview the victim in a language that he/she understands, and if the member cannot speak the language, he/she will arrange for an interpreter.
- A trained member of the SAPS, who is the same gender as the victim (if possible), will interview the victim.
- In the case of a sexual offence, the member must assist the victim to obtain alternative clothing to wear if his/her clothing is required for evidence.
- An investigating officer must be summoned to attend to the victim. Victims must be offered a suitable place to wait, for example in the Victim Friendly Room, especially in cases like domestic violence or sexual offences.
- Provide victims with information about the reported case, such as the case number, the details of the investigating officer and a copy of the statement.

- A victim has the right to change and review his/her statement.
- Conduct a professional investigation of the case, including regular feedback on the progress made with the case.
- Educate victims with regard to police investigative and criminal justice procedures.
- Provide crime prevention advice.
- Refer victims for medical attention, legal advice and/or counselling support services in the community, if required.
- A victim-friendly service.

WHAT IS A VICTIM FRIENDLY SERVICE?

It is a service where the dignity and rights of victims are protected, and the victim is empowered and not subjected to secondary victimization by the inefficiency of the members of the criminal justice system.



The four basic elements of victim empowerment are -

- emotional support
- practical support
- providing information
- referral to professional support services

VICTIMS' HAVE RIGHTS

The Charter of Victims' Rights is a Government initiative that contains the minimum standards of service that victims are entitled to when they visit a police station or any other civil service provider for assistance

The rights afforded to victims in accordance with the Charter of Victims' Rights are already embodied in the Constitution (Act No 108 of 1996).

The following are the victims' charter of rights that the victim is entitled when they visit a police station or any other service provider for assistance:

- ✓ **A victim has the right to be treated with fairness and respect for their dignity and fairness**

Victim can expect that all role players will treat them fairly, with respect for their dignity and privacy, and in a sensitive manner.



Once a victim reports a crime to the police, the police must do the following:

- Respond as quick as possible to the complaint
- Interview the victim in private in order to compile a statement and open the case (this interview can take place in a dedicated Victim Friendly Room or in case there is not such a room another private room)
- Investigate the crime
- If necessary, refer the victim to other service providers such as health for medical evidence, social development for counselling etc

- ✓ **A victim has the right to offer information during the investigation of the case**

The victim provides the necessary information to the police in order for a statement to be taken

The police will take steps to ensure that any evidential material provided by the victim is correctly gathered and protected and will take the necessary steps to facilitate a medical examination if needed

The police official must ask the victim to read the statement and to confirm its contents and to sign it. If the victim cannot read the police official or another person appointed by the victim can read the statement before it is signed. The statement must be done in a language which the victim understands and if that is not possible an interpreter if one is available can read the statement

If a victim realises that the statement is wrong or incomplete the victim is allowed to add or amend the initial statement or to make a further statement