

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF CRIME

Many victims and witnesses are emotionally affected by the crime. Although everyone reacts to this impact differently, victims and witnesses report some common behaviors, such as:

- Increased concern for their personal safety and that of their family.
- Trouble concentrating on the job.
- Difficulty handling everyday problems, feeling overwhelmed.
- Going over the circumstances of the crime again and again, thinking about what might have gone differently.

ALL OF THESE BEHAVIORS ARE NORMAL AND WILL PASS WITH TIME

If the defendant is found guilty, you may have the opportunity to submit an "impact statement" detailing the emotional effects of this crime on your life and the lives of members of your family. Your case agent will assist you in preparing such a statement, if appropriate.

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE

We encourage you to contact the victim/witness assistance programs in this area, which are listed on the back page of this brochure. These programs are designed to serve you. You need not deal with these problems alone; help is available to assist you and your family cope with the impact of crime.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

CASE AGENT

(Name)

(Bureau/Office)

(Telephone Number)

(Report Number)

FEDERAL VICTIM WITNESS COORDINATOR

(Name)

(Telephone Number)

CRIMES COMPENSATION

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

U.S. Department of the Interior

Information for Victims and Witnesses of Crime



INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF CRIME

INTRODUCTION

As Federal law enforcement professionals, we are concerned about the problems often experienced by victims and witnesses of crime. We know that as a victim or witness, you may experience anger, confusion, frustration or fear as a result of your experience.

We have prepared the following information to help you deal with the problems and questions that often surface during an investigation and to provide you with a better understanding of how the Federal criminal justice system works. We have included a description of your rights under federal law plus information and services available to you as a federal victim and / or witness. We hope that this information will be helpful and we encourage you to contact your case agent if you have any questions.

THE INVESTIGATION

Even though the days and months ahead may be difficult for you and your family, your continued assistance is required to insure that the aims of justice are fully achieved.

During the investigation, you will be kept informed of the status of your case if you so request. Throughout the investigative process, your case agent will remain your principal contact. If you have any questions, be sure to contact him or her as soon as possible. A federal investigation can be both complex and lengthy. It may involve several organizations, some federal and some local. Remember, your interests are important to us. It is normal to have questions and we are here to help answer yours.

IF YOU ARE THREATENED OR HARASSED

If anyone threatens you or you feel that you are being harassed because of your cooperation with this investigation, contact your case agent immediately. Additional penalties have been established for harassment and other threats. The case agent is available to discuss additional protective measures with you, if necessary.

IF YOU WERE INJURED

If you do not have insurance to pay the cost of your medical bills, Crimes Compensation may be able to assist. We have listed the number(s) for information on the program(s) in this area.

If an individual is arrested and prosecuted, you may be eligible for restitution. Restitution is court-ordered payment to you as a victim of crime. It is made by the offender for any out-of-pocket expenses caused by your victimization. As a requirement of federal law, the judge will consider restitution before passing sentence.

IF PROPERTY WAS STOLEN

If your property was stolen, we hope to recover it as part of our investigation. If we do, we will notify you and make every effort to see that it is returned to you as quickly as possible.

In those cases where the recovered property is needed as evidence, your property will be safeguarded and maintained in good condition until the property is released by the judicial system and it can be returned to you. Restitution may be available for property not recovered or the cost of any necessary repair.

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR EMPLOYER

If appropriate during the course of the investigation, we will contact your employer to discuss the importance of your role as a victim/witness to the government's case.

IF AN ARREST IS MADE

If you request, you will be notified if a defendant is apprehended. Following the arrest, the case agent will make every effort to keep you advised of the status of your case.

Once a case is filed, you will be contacted by the Assistant U.S. Attorney assigned to handle your case. Each U.S. Attorney now has a Victim Witness Coordinator to help answer your questions and deal with your concerns during the pretrial and trial periods.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A VICTIM

As a federal crime victim, you have the following rights:

- The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for your dignity and privacy.
- The right to be reasonably protected from the accused offender.
- The right to be notified of court proceedings.
- The right to be present at all public court proceedings related to the offense, unless the court determines that testimony by the victim would be materially affected if you as the victim heard other testimony at trial.
- The right to confer with the attorney for the Government in the case.
- The right to restitution.
- The right to information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of the offender.