



Responding to Victims of Crime Checklist

Pre-incident Preparation

- Connect with victim assistance personnel to learn about services and resources available for victims. Partner with—
 - Victim assistance program personnel working in your federal agency;
 - Victim assistance personnel in your district who work at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the United States Attorney’s Office (USAO);
 - Crime victims compensation program personnel;
 - Nonprofit victim assistance resources (domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, organizations assisting homicide survivors);
 - Professionals with training and experience in conducting developmentally appropriate, victim sensitive, and legally defensible interviews of children and adolescents, such as forensic interview staff at Child Advocacy Centers.

At the Crime Scene

- Introduce yourself and briefly explain that you are there to help.
- Tell the victim you are sorry about what happened to them.
- Ask the victim if they want to go to a private location to discuss what happened. (Note: If children are present, do not interview the victim in front of the children.)
- Evaluate whether you need to identify immediate assistance for urgent medical needs (hospitalization), dehydration (offer water), extreme trauma (identify a victim assistance professional), or safety concerns. Victims who are focusing on these issues will not be able to fully respond to your questions.
- Once you have determined that the victim is able to continue the interview, begin your investigation questions.
 - Obtain victim contact information including: first and last name; full street address; city, state, and ZIP code; e-mail address; and, for minors, ask their date of birth. **NOTE:** Getting this information will make it possible for the United States Attorney’s Office (USAO) to register the victim to receive notice through the Victim Notification System (VNS). USAOs can provide samples of standard formats required to enter victim information into VNS if necessary.
 - Explain the investigation and provide general information about the criminal justice process.
 - Obtain information needed for the investigation.
 - Explain that you may ask the victim to repeat or clarify to check your facts, not because something they said was “wrong” or not credible.

- Keep in mind that trauma victims may not remember what happened right away or in the exact order of events. Don't press them. Move on to another question if the victim appears distraught.
- Wrapping up the interview.
 - Briefly summarize the discussion and let the victim know what the next steps are.
 - Explain the federal victims' rights and services to which they are entitled.
 - Refer the victim to victim assistance services –
 - Provide them a Victim Services Information Sheet with your area local resources
 - NPS VAP Brochure completed with your contact information
 - Crime Victim Compensation Program handout if they will have outstanding costs associated with victimization (e.g., funeral, medical, lost wages, mental health therapy).
 - Give the victims your contact information and tell them how you or your victim assistance personnel can help them during the criminal justice process.
 - Tell them the next step in the process and what they can expect.

Follow Up

- Contact the NPS Victim Assistance Program coordinator, Pam McMillan either via phone (559-760-5085) or email pam_mcmillan@nps.gov and advise her of the case
- Get additional information about the crime to answer questions you had that they could not answer at the time. Let the victim know they should contact you if they remember things they did not remember at the crime scene or if there are safety concerns.
- Although you may have explained the criminal justice system, victims often need significant follow up to understand and fully participate in the process. Referring them to victim assistance personnel who can work with them may be all that is needed.
- Contact the victim with case updates, particularly if the defendant is arrested or charged, or if charges are declined. If your agency has victim assistance personnel, you can provide updates to them so they can contact the victim.
- Return personal effects as soon as possible, particularly if the effects are important to the victim.