

Financial Assistance (continued)

- **Property Return.** To assist in the investigation and prosecution of certain crimes, the investigating officer may hold your property as evidence. The law allows them to photograph and return certain evidence to you. However, your property may be held until after the trial and any appeals.
- **Restitution.** If you are a crime victim, the defendant may be ordered to repay you under certain circumstances, at least partially, for your losses.
- **Victims' Compensation** may be awarded to victims of a crime who were physically or emotionally injured, and have no means of paying their medical expenses. Surviving spouses, parents, children, siblings or legal guardians may be compensated for certain un-reimbursed losses such as earnings, medical or funeral expenses.

Notifications

- **Employer Intercession.** If you are subpoenaed to court and you give reasonable notice at your workplace, your employer may not fire you, discipline you, or require you to use vacation or sick leave in order to go to court. However, your employer is not required to pay you for your time in court.
- **Status of Release of Defendants or Prisoners.** Victim/Witness Services can assist you in being notified of the release or status change of the defendant in your case.
- **Notification of Prisoner Appeals or Habeas Corpus.** You can be advised if the defendant in your case has appealed his sentence or filed a habeas corpus petition
- **Changes in Court Dates.** You can be notified of any continuances, pleas or other changes in court dates. *You must have your current address and phone number on file with Victim/Witness Services or the Commonwealth's Attorney in order to be notified..*

Victim Input

- **Right to Remain in Courtroom.** Victims have the right to remain in the courtroom during all court proceedings, unless the judge has determined that the victim is a material witness. Victim/Witness Services can accompany victims to court proceedings for support purposes.
- **Victim Impact Statement and/or Verbal Testimony.** In certain cases the judge may consider a Victim Impact Statement or verbal impact testimony when determining the defendant's sentence. This gives the victim the opportunity to tell the court the impact of the crime(s).

Courtroom Assistance

Contact Victim/Witness Services for help in receiving the following Courtroom Assistance services:

- **Interpreters** for non-English speakers and the hearing impaired.
- **Closed Circuit Television** may be available in certain, very limited cases involving testimony of child victims under the age of 14 on the date of the offense and under the age of 16 at the time of trial.
- **Close Preliminary Hearings** in cases involving sexual assault may be available. However, trials are open to the public.
- **Confidentiality** of certain victim information may be requested. The victim must file a *Request for Confidentiality Victim Form* (DC-301) with the Magistrate, Court, Commonwealth's Attorney, Police Department or Sheriff's Office in the locality where the crime occurred.

Post Trial Assistance

- **Case Disposition.** Victims have the right to receive in writing the disposition of the case, crimes of which the defendant was convicted, the defendant's right to appeal, if known, and the telephone number of offices to contact in the event of nonpayment of restitution by the defendant.
- **Bail Release.** Information pending the outcome of an appeal by the agency that has custody of the defendant shall be given to the victim prior to his release as soon as practicable.
- **Retrial.** Victims shall be entitled to the same rights if the defendant's conviction is overturned and the Commonwealth decides to retry the case or the case is remanded for a new trial.



Suffolk Police Department
111 Henley Place
Suffolk, VA 23434

Suffolk Victim/Witness Services

An Information Guide for Crime Victims and Witnesses

Suffolk Police Department Contact Numbers

Emergency	911
Business	(757) 923-2350
Detective Bureau	(757) 514-7930
Precinct 1	(757) 514-7875
Precinct 2	(757) 514-7975
Central Records	(757) 514-7915
Fugitive Unit	(757) 514-7922
Special Investigations	(757) 514-4226

Officer: _____

Incident: _____



A Message from the Chief of Police



The Suffolk Police Department, as our mission statement says, is committed to "law enforcement excellence and public service through partnership with our community." We are proud of the relationships we have developed with our citizens and consider this partnership to be one of the most effective means to combat and prevent crime.

Along with this partnership I ask all citizens to assist the Police Department by **reporting all crimes, cooperating with officers during their investigation, and testifying honestly and completely in court.**

Our officers are dedicated to serving the Suffolk community and preserving the rights of every citizen.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Bennett
Chief of Police

Introduction

Suffolk Victim/Witness Services is located in the office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, and it ensures that crime victims and witnesses receive fair and compassionate treatment while participating in the criminal justice system.

As a victim or witness, your role is an important one. However, the responsibilities involved may be unfamiliar to you. This brochure is designed to acquaint you with the steps involved in bringing a case to trial and your role in the process. It also describes your rights as a victim or witness, and the services available to you.

Victim/Witness Services & After Hours Docket Info Line (757) 514-4366

Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney

C. Phillips "Phil" Ferguson
Commonwealth's Attorney
Godwin Courts Building
150 North Main Street
Suffolk, VA 23434

Call (757) 514-4366 after 5:00 p.m. on the day before you have to come to court. A tape recorded message will tell you whether your case will be heard. By calling this number, you may save yourself an unnecessary trip to court.

Definition of a Victim

The Victims' Bill of Rights and most other victims' rights laws recognize the following individuals as crime "victims":

- Anyone suffering physical, emotional or financial harm as a direct result of a **felony** or **certain misdemeanors**.
- Spouses and children of all victims.
- Parents, siblings, legal guardians, current and former foster parents of minor victims, mentally or physically incapacitated persons, or victims of homicide.

Your Responsibilities as a Victim or Witness

As a victim of crime, you have certain rights under the Victims' Bill of Rights. However, there are specific steps you need to take in order to receive these rights. **Contact Victim/Witness Services at (757) 514-4366 for assistance.** A description of rights and services you may be entitled to follows.

Rights of Crime Victims & Witnesses

The mission of Suffolk Victim/Witness Services is to ensure, where legally allowed, the victims and witnesses of crime:

- Are informed of their rights.
- Are treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity and that their rights are protected.
- Receive authorized services.
- Have the opportunity to be heard at all critical stages of the criminal justice process.
- Can make the courts aware of the full impact on them of the crime.

Victim & Witness Protection

- **No Contact Orders** prohibit the accused person from some or all contact with you. These orders are often requested by victims of *stalking* and *domestic violence*, but can be used in other crimes as well.
- **Separate Waiting Areas** are available, in certain cases, for victims and witnesses who require privacy and protections from intimidation.

Threatening a victim or witness is a serious crime in Virginia.. If you are threatened by the defendant, or anyone else in regard to your case, immediately call the Suffolk Police Department at 911 or the Detective Bureau at (757) 514-7932.

Financial Assistance

- **Compensation for Travel** may be available to victims and witnesses traveling from out of town who are subpoenaed by the Commonwealth. This can include payment for mileage, lodging, meals and airfare for each day's attendance in court.