

# Burleson Police Department

## Administrative Policy and Procedures

Number: 05-005

Document Title: Victim Assistance

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CALEA Standards Referenced: 22.1.5; 55.1.1a/b/c/d/e; 55.1.2; 55.2.1a/b; 55.2.2; 55.2.3a/b/c/d; 55.2.4a/b/c/d/e/f; 55.2.5; 55.2.6

ISSUING AUTHORITY: \_\_\_\_\_

Billy Cordell, Chief of Police

- I. It is the policy of the Burleson Police Department to observe the rights of victims and witnesses and to ensure that they will be treated with fairness, compassion, and dignity. Victim's needs will be met through a twenty-four hour per day, seven days per week on-call victim assistance unit. Victim assistance information can be obtained in the lobby at the Police Department, by telephoning the police department dispatch or by going to the city's website. [55.1.1c / 55.2.1a] Although it is the Victim Assistance Coordinator's primary responsibility to provide services to victims, all employees must be aware of the rights of victims and be sensitive to their needs. During the preliminary investigation, officers shall evaluate the needs of the victim and supply them with the appropriate referral service contact information. [55.1.1a] The officer will provide the victim with a case number, if available, and an information pamphlet containing pertinent information regarding their rights and services available. [55.1.1a/e / 55.2.1b / 55.2.3a/c/d]
- A. The City of Burleson Victim Assistance Program staffs one Victim Assistance Coordinator and volunteers to assist in call outs when the coordinator cannot be available. The Victim Assistance Program will be supervised directly by the Administrative Sergeant. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will be responsible for:
1. Providing services to victims
    - a. counseling
  2. Analyzing the extent and major types of victimization within the City
  3. Inventorying the service needs of victims in general
  4. Surveying other victim assistance and related community services available
  5. Identifying all unfulfilled victim related needs and selecting those that are appropriate to meet
  6. Submitting a written report to the Chief of Police on items # 2-5 every two (2) years [55.1.2]
  7. The selection, training and supervision of victim assistance volunteers
- B. Duties of the Victim Assistance Coordinator

1. Immediate crisis intervention with victims, family members, witnesses.
  2. **Coordinate** for emergency housing. [55.2.2]
  3. Maintaining confidentiality of victim's files and cases in accordance with state law. [55.1.1b]
  4. Court accompaniment, where needed.
  5. Provide information to community groups and the media on victim issues and victim assistance services. [55.1.1c]
  6. Assisting with Victim Impact Statements in conjunction with other agencies, where appropriate.
  7. Assistance with Crime Victim Compensation to those who qualify.
  8. Peer support.
  9. Training and familiarization for police employees on victim issues when hired into the department.
  10. Liaison between the police and the victim if needed.
  11. Periodic re-contact of victims in cases of severe physical, emotional or financial impact to the victim. [55.2.4a]
  12. Explaining prosecution procedures to victims / witnesses. [55.2.3c / 55.2.4b]
  13. Assisting in the scheduling of interviews, line-ups and other required appearance when requested. [55.2.4c]
  14. Assisting in the expeditious return of returnable property to victims. [55.2.4d]
  15. The victim will be assisted by the same victim assistance person if the department has more than one victim advocate. [55.2.4e]
- C. Types of crimes where victim assistance coordinator **shall** be notified. Notifications will be authorized by the on-duty supervisor and dispatch will make the request.
1. Sexual assault (rape) that just occurred
  2. Homicide
  3. Suicide
  4. Fatal traffic accident
  5. Domestic violence with serious bodily injury to victim
- Should the Victim Assistance Coordinator not be available to take calls, a volunteer and/or Department Chaplain will be assigned to assume those duties. If none of these can be located immediately, dispatch will continue to make periodic attempts and a message left for them.
- D. Incidents that **may** require the Victim Assistance Coordinator to be notified:
1. Aggravated assaults with serious bodily injury
  2. Domestic violence
  3. Child abuse, child sexual abuse
  4. Incidents involving elderly citizens who may require additional attention

The location of the initial meeting between the Victim Assistance Coordinator and the victim will be by agreement between the duty supervisor and the Victim Assistance Coordinator, with the physical safety of the Victim Assistance Coordinator of paramount concern. Suggested locations are Police Departments, Hospitals, etc.

- E. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will coordinate with other criminal justice, governmental, non-governmental and organizations concerned with victim rights with emphasis on updated referrals and effective communications among the entities. [55.1.1d / 55.2.4f]
- F. **The Victim Assistance Coordinator will** offer appropriate assistance to those who, in the judgment of the Police Department, have expressed specific, credible reasons for fearing retaliation, intimidation or further victimization. [55.2.2 / 55.2.3b]
- G. **The Victim Assistance Coordinator will** offer appropriate assistance to those who are victims of “HATE” crimes.
- H. The Victim Assistance Coordinator shall notify the victim, when possible, of the arrest, the charges and any change in the arrestee’s custodial status. [55.2.5]
- I. **Line-of-Duty Death or Injury [22.1.5 / 55.2.6]**  
The Victim Assistance Coordinator, along with the Department Chaplain may be requested to render appropriate services to the families of officers following line-of-duty deaths or serious injuries.  
Examples of services provided by the Victim Assistance Coordinator are:
  - 1. Notifying the family of the dead or injured officer
  - 2. Assisting the family at the hospital
  - 3. Helping the family with legal and benefit matters
  - 4. Supporting the family during criminal proceedings
  - 5. Continue follow-up with the family
- J. **Death and Injury Notifications [55.2.6]**  
Notifications of death or serious injury/illness shall be made by the Victim Assistance Coordinator or by one of **their** volunteers in a prompt and considerate manner. **A uniformed officer will accompany victim Assistant.** Whenever possible assistance should also be obtained from clergy, relative(s) or close friend. Victim Assistance shall also make notifications within our city limits for other agencies following the above guidelines.