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- I. Purpose

This Directive establishes procedures for investigative efforts of the Maryland-National Capital Park Police, Montgomery County Division, in relation to the victim's rights laws of Montgomery County and the state of Maryland.

- II. Policy

The Division does not maintain a separate victim/witness assistance program. All personnel are required to provide victims and witnesses of crimes with information on assistance resources available to them. The investigating officer/criminal investigator will be a contact person for information during the follow-up investigation.

- III. Resources

- A. Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office
Victim/Witness Coordinator Program
50 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-7300

The State's Attorney's Office's Victim/Witness Coordinator is responsible for victim/witness contact after charges have been brought by the investigating officer/criminal investigator. This responsibility may begin immediately if there is no need for a follow-up investigation to identify the suspect(s).

- B. Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP)
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 4100
Rockville, Maryland 20850
Crisis Line 240-777-4000
Administration Line 240-777-1355
TDD (for hearing impaired) 240-777-1347

- 1. The VASAP outreach worker provides crisis counseling, information, and companion services to victims and their families. Program services include:
 - a. On-going professional counseling - individual, couple, family, and group.
 - b. Assessment and treatment of child sexual assault victims.
 - c. Collaboration and advocacy with police, medical personnel, State's Attorney's Office and other county agencies (with the victim's permission).
 - d. Companion services for medical, police and court procedures.
 - e. Anonymous third party reporting of sexual assault crimes.
 - f. Educational programs on sexual assault and prevention for parents, children and community groups.

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- g. If the victim requests, the counselor or volunteer will attend the medical examination if it does not conflict with hospital regulations. Upon request of the victim, the counselor or volunteer will attend the police interview.
 - h. The outreach worker will advise the victim and family or friends present of the support services available.
 - i. VASAP staff will work with the State's Attorney's Office's Victim/Witness Coordinator to keep the victim informed of all developments in subsequent judicial proceedings.
2. Sponsor: Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
 3. Staff: All counselors have at least a Master's degree in the human services with specialized training in working with victims of crime. Assistance with the criminal justice system is provided by Victim Assistants who have at least a Bachelor's degree. All services are augmented by trained volunteers.
 4. Eligibility: Montgomery County residents or victims whose assault occurred in Montgomery County. No age or sex restrictions. Victims do not have to report the crime to the police to be eligible for services.
 5. Fees: Fees for ongoing counseling services are charged on a sliding scale based on ability to pay. No one is denied services due to lack of funds.

C. Handouts

1. "Crime Victims and Witnesses" brochure from Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention.
2. Incident Information Form (Officer's information on front, crisis numbers on back).

IV. Procedures

- A. *The officer in charge or designee will be responsible for notifying the next-of-kin of deceased, seriously injured or seriously ill persons.*

Each case has its own different set of circumstances and must be handled tactfully and compassionately because of the emotional impact to the family.

- B. Responsibility upon receiving a complaint of a rape or First, Second or Third Degree Sex Assault and attempts of same:

1. All Officers
 - a. Will verify the nature of the offense.
 - b. Will contact the VASAP outreach worker (240-777-4000) and arrange for a counselor to meet with the victim at the hospital or police station.

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- c. Will, at the victim's request, allow the counselor/volunteer to attend the police interview.
 - d. Will, in cases of misdemeanor sexual assaults, provide the victim information as to the services available through VASAP.
 - e. Will make every effort to support and assist in the crisis intervention efforts of VASAP.
 - f. Will ensure the confidentiality of victims and witnesses is protected. (For further information, refer to Divisional Directive governing Release of Information to the Media.)
2. Supervisors/Watch Commanders
 - a. Will respond to the scene of all complaints of rape and sexual assaults received by this Division.
 - b. Will insure that the procedures outlined in this Directive are adhered to and that full cooperation between this Division and VASAP are maintained.
 - c. Will insure that victims of rape and sexual assault are provided with proper support and crisis intervention services.
 - d. Will complete a Commander's Report relating details of the incident and crisis intervention services rendered prior to the end of their tour of duty.
 - e. Will make appropriate Command Staff notification as required by the Divisional Directive on 'Notifications'.
- C. Responsibilities involving all reported crimes
1. All Officers
 - a. Will detail all victim/witness contact information in report for follow-up use by investigator and State's Attorney's Office.
 - b. Will advise victim(s)/witness(es) of the procedures and their role(s) in developing and prosecuting the case.
 - c. Will provide victim(s)/witness(es) with the incident information: case number, investigator (if known), contact numbers.
 - d. Will provide the victim(s)/witness(es) with appropriate assistance resource information.
 - e. Will ensure the confidentiality of victims and witnesses is protected. (For further information, refer to Divisional Directive governing Release of Information to the Media.)
 2. Investigators (including any officer conducting a follow-up)
 - a. Will contact Montgomery County Police to coordinate rape or homicide investigations.
 - b. Will re-contact victim(s)/witness(es) periodically to update them on status of the follow-up investigation.
 - c. Will advise victim(s)/witness(es), once charges are brought, of the role of the State's Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Coordinator.
 - d. Will schedule line-ups, interviews, and other required appearances at the convenience of the victim(s)/witness(es) and, wherever possible, assist in obtaining transportation, if feasible.

- e. Will promptly return any victim(s)/witness(es) property taken as evidence (except for contraband, disputed property, or weapons used in the course of a crime), whenever possible and not restricted by law, rules of evidence, or other applicable Division Directive, policy or S.O.P.
3. Supervisors
- a. Will ensure that victim/witness contact information is completed in the report.
 - b. Will ensure that victim(s)/witness(es) are provided with the appropriate assistance resource information.

**Approved Park Police Document
Signed Original on File**

End of Directive