

the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board;

7. Use interpreters and translation services as appropriate to deal with culture/language differences; and,
8. Provide victims of domestic violence a written notice of their rights as required by the Annotated Code of Maryland.

.15 RESPONDING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. During their contact with victims and witnesses, officers will conduct a thorough preliminary investigation and provide reasonable and appropriate assistance to victims as dictated by the circumstances and degree of need.
2. Members will distribute the brochure, "Crime Victims and Witnesses: Your Rights and Services" supplied by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for the State of Maryland which deals with compensation programs, emergency financial assistance, medical attention, counseling, etc.
3. Officers will advise the victim what to do if the suspect or the suspect's companions/family threaten or intimidate them, to include, but not be limited to:
 - A. Explaining the provisions of the Annotated Code of Maryland dealing with witness intimidation;
 - B. Giving the phone number to call for an appropriate police response;
 - C. Explaining the laws governing telephone misuse, criminal harassment, and stalking;
 - D. Notifying the Frederick County State's Attorney assigned to the case about the threats;
 - E. Providing appropriate assistance to those victims who express specific, credible reasons for fearing intimidation or further victimization. This assistance may range from placing a victim in protective custody to completing periodic drive-bys of their residence to offering a frightened witness words of encouragement. The State's Attorney's Office will be informed as soon as possible when witness protection is considered or warranted. When evaluating these types of requests, the evaluation will be based on the nature of the case, the availability of resources, and/or the danger faced by the victim; and,
 - F. Notifying the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which a victim is currently located if the victim is in another jurisdiction. If the witness is a participant in the Federal Witness Protection Plan, the officers will promptly notify the U.S. Marshall's Service.
4. Officers will provide the victim with their name and identification number, the case report number, and a telephone number that the victim may call to report additional information about the case or to receive information about the status of the case. This may be written on the front of the crime victim brochure or by use of a business card. Officers will advise the victim of subsequent steps in the processing of the case, which includes, but may not be limited to:
 - A. Advising the victim of the necessity for the victim to follow-through with the case;

- B. Making the victim aware of any statements made by the defendant of a threatening nature, especially if directed at the victim;
- C. Notifying the victim of the defendant's bond status, e.g., released on personal recognizance, personal bond, incarcerated, etc., if known, or referring them to the District Court Commissioner for information; and,
- D. Explaining the confidentiality clause pertaining to juveniles who are not charged as an adult, and the need to refer the victim to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) for specific information.

.20 FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The Victim Services Unit will:
 - A. Periodically recontact the victim (as appropriate) to determine whether needs are being met if, in the opinion of the officer and the Department, the impact of a crime on a victim has been unusually severe and has triggered the need for above-average assistance;
 - B. Explain to the victim the procedures involved in the prosecution of their cases and their role in those procedures, if not an endangerment to the successful prosecution of the case. The State's Attorney's Office also has individuals assigned to assist victims (as Victim/Witness coordinators) that may wish to assist the VSU during the explanation.
2. Personnel assigned to conduct the follow-up investigation will:
 - A. Schedule line-ups, interviews, and other required appearances at the convenience of the victim and provide transportation, if feasible;
 - B. Subject to the approval of the State's Attorney's Office, and if feasible, return property to the victim taken as evidence promptly (except for contraband, disputed property, and weapons used in the course of the crime);
 - C. Whenever possible, notify the victim of the issuance of a warrant, arrest of the offender, charges placed, and status of the defendant (if known); and,
 - D. Keep victims apprised of the status of their case and notify them when the Department closes the case by any means. These contacts with the victim will be documented in a supplemental report.
3. The above responsibilities may be conducted cooperatively between the follow-up officer and the VSU.

.25 CONFIDENTIALITY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING VICTIMS:

1. While the Department realizes that victims must be kept informed of the status of the case in which they are involved, personnel are nonetheless cautioned about releasing information to victims regarding juvenile offenders unless the juvenile is charged as an adult.
2. Past arrests, criminal history and/or other matters that a particular victim is not involved in will not be discussed or divulged.

3. Records pertaining to victims, especially if they are juveniles, will NOT be divulged by personnel to anyone not associated with the case. Such records include, and are not limited to:
 - A. Any background information, such as prior arrest/criminal records;
 - B. School records;
 - C. Photographs of the victim;
 - D. Medical records pertaining to the victim;
 - E. Statements made by the victim;
 - F. The name, address, and phone number of the victim; and,
 - G. Any other information of a sensitive nature or that that would potentially place the victim in danger.
4. If a victim has criminal history information, personnel with knowledge of it will NOT divulge or discuss it, except with appropriate criminal justice members, e.g. the State's Attorney assigned to the case.

.30 MEDIA REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE VICTIM:

If a member of the media asks a member of the Department if the victim could be contacted to determine if he would consent to an interview, the Department member will refer this request to the investigating officer, who will contact the victim and make them aware of the reporter's request. Unless the victim consents, the Department will NOT furnish the victim's address or phone number to the media. The decision to talk with the media will be left up to the victim; however, the investigating officer should advise the victim of what is or is not permissible to say to avoid jeopardizing the investigation.

.35 INFORMING THE PUBLIC ABOUT VICTIM ASSISTANCE SERVICES:

1. Victims may contact the Department 24 hours a day for assistance. They may speak with the appropriate on-duty personnel or be forwarded (in non-emergency situations) to the voice mailbox of the VSU or the employee they wish to speak to.
2. The Duty Desk will maintain copies of the "Crime Victims and Witnesses Rights" brochure with the services directory and corresponding phone numbers for referral.
 - A. The communications dispatcher will determine if the caller is in a position of safety and whether or not emergency services are immediately needed.
 - B. If emergency police services are not needed, the communications dispatcher will forward the caller to the VSU and/or 211 for further assistance.
3. The Department may publish victim assistance services and programs via the departmental web site if available.

.40 LIAISON WITH OTHER VICTIM ASSISTANCE AGENCIES:

Since all personnel will be responsible for assisting victims and witnesses, personnel must be familiar with the activities and programs offered by agencies other than the Department. Personnel will maintain liaison with other criminal justice agencies, governmental and non-governmental agencies,

and organizations concerned with victim/witness needs and rights. The Department will share information with those agencies and organizations unless such disclosure is prohibited by law or Department policy.

.45 VICTIM CONTACT PROGRAM:

The VSU will make contact with all crime victims in accordance with G.O. 1320. The objectives of such contact are:

1. To assure the victim that the Department is interested in the victim's individual case and address any questions the victim may have;
2. To gain from the victim any new information that the Department does not have that might assist in producing new leads or producing more accurate details concerning patterned crimes;
3. To refer the victim to any outside agencies/programs which may be of assistance to them; and,
4. To enhance community relations between the public and the Department.
5. To identify underlying issues that contribute to repeat calls for service and link those callers to resources to meet their needs.