

POLICE RESPONSE  
TO CRIMES OF  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE



This project was supported by subgrant No. 2009/2010-VA-06-20570 awarded by the state administering office for the STOP Formula Grant Program. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the state or the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

## About PCAR

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) is a statewide nonprofit organization widely respected for its leadership and initiative in working to prevent sexual violence at the statewide and national levels. Since its inception in 1975, PCAR has been at the forefront of the anti-sexual violence movement, utilizing its voice to advocate for the rights of countless victims and to affect critical change through its active role in public policy, education, and prevention.

*The mission of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape is to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault.*

Copyright © 2012

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Victims</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>Understanding the Victim</i> .....	2
<i>The Victim's Perspective</i> .....	2
<i>The Victim's Response</i> .....	3
<i>Responding to the Scene</i> .....	3
<i>Victim Assistance</i> .....	4
<i>Interviewing the Victim</i> .....	4
<i>Knowing the Victim's Rights</i> .....	6
<b>Suspects</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>Dealing with the Suspect Before an Arrest</i> .....	8
<i>Identifying the Suspect</i> .....	8
<i>Interviewing the Suspect</i> .....	8
<i>Arresting the Suspect</i> .....	9
<i>Interviewing the Suspect after an Arrest</i> .....	9
<i>Interview Considerations</i> .....	9
<b>Investigating Sexual Violence</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<i>Securing the Crime Scene</i> .....	10
<i>Finding Evidence</i> .....	11
<i>Evidence Packaging</i> .....	16
<b>Building the Case for Court</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<i>The sexual assault forensic exam</i> .....	18
<i>Pennsylvania Sexual Assault Laws</i> .....	19
<b>Sexual Violence Investigation Checklist</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<i>Dispatcher Response Checklist</i> .....	25
<i>General Dispatcher Guidelines</i> .....	25
<i>Initial Officer Response Checklist</i> .....	27
<i>Follow-up Investigator Response Checklist</i> .....	37
<i>Things to Consider During the Investigation</i> .....	41
<b>Pennsylvania Crisis Centers</b> .....	<b>42</b>

# Introduction

---

Responding to crimes of sexual violence is one of the most difficult duties a police officer faces. Investigating such crimes entails a wide variety of responsibilities. Please use this manual as a quick reference guide when facing the numerous tasks of responding to and investigating a sexual assault case.

Remember the following three basic, yet important steps when you respond to a report of sexual assault:

1. Attend to the victim.
2. Gather vital information about the crime.
3. Secure the crime scene and protect the integrity of the evidence.

Although males can be victims of sexual assault and females can be perpetrators, in the vast majority of cases the victims are females and perpetrators are males. Therefore, for the purpose of this manual, the victim will be referred to as female and the perpetrator as male.

Timely and responsive law enforcement intervention can increase reporting, enhance victim safety, improve investigations, and facilitate successful prosecution.

Officers should be expected to take a serious, victim-centered approach to sexual assault reports and to investigate these crimes in a manner that restores the victim's dignity and sense of control while decreasing the victim's anxiety.



# Victims

---

## Understanding the Victim

When responding to a crime of sexual violence, a police officer's best source of evidence is generally the victim. To gather the most accurate information, the officer should try to understand the victim's perspective and response.

## The Victim's Perspective

There are several reasons that a victim may withhold information, including:

- Fear of getting in trouble for other acts and loss of credibility (i.e., if she consumed any drugs or alcohol).
- Fear that the officer will not believe her (i.e., if she later remembers details that add to or differ from her initial report).
- Fear of retribution by the offender.
- Fear of losing the support of family and friends.
- Fear of changes that will impact her life.
- Fear of law enforcement and uncertainty about justice agency responses (e.g., The International Organization of Chiefs of Police responding to hate crimes)
- Fear, for gays, lesbians, and the transgendered, of repercussions for being outed to family and employers.
- Fear, for illegal immigrants, of jeopardizing immigration status, being reported to the United States Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or deportation.
- Fear of being unable to communicate due to cultural and language barriers.

To minimize these fears, a victim advocate—a person specifically trained to help victims deal with the process and their emotions—should be called. Working partnerships between police departments and rape crisis centers are vital.

## The Victim's Response

Crimes of sexual assault are traumatic, regardless of the victim's age, sex, occupation, racial ethnicity, sexual orientation, or economic status. However, victims' responses vary, so a police officer should respond to each victim as an individual. Immediately following the assault, the victim may be in a state of shock and display a range of emotions, including:

- Anger
- Sobbing or crying
- Fear
- Smiling anxiously
- Anxiety
- Laughing
- Calmness
- Showing little or no emotion

Regardless of the victim's expressed emotions, the responding officer should create an environment of safety and trust for the victim by assuring the victim that they will not be judged and that this report will be taken seriously.

Victims of sexual assault often blame themselves. It is helpful to reassure the victim that regardless of their behavior, no one has the right to sexually assault them. Again, a victim advocate can help a victim to understand what is happening and help her deal with her emotions.

## Responding to the Scene

Prior to arriving at the scene of a sexual assault, the responding office should gather the following information from the dispatcher:

- Whether the crime is in progress
- Whether the suspect is on the scene
- Whether weapons are present

“When first responding to the scene of the crime, officers should use professional judgment and follow state law and department policies and procedures in determining a proper response to the radio call. Officer and victim safety must always be the first priority.”

## Victim Assistance

Once the responding officer arrives on the scene, he or she should attend to the victim.

The officer can do the following to help.

1. Ensure the victim's safety, by offering medical assistance (contact the hospital immediately, if necessary). Reassure the victim that she is safe and that her physical and emotional well-being is a top priority.
2. Advise her to receive medical treatment and to be examined for evidence at the hospital even if she does not need immediate medical assistance. Keep in mind that physical evidence such as bruises, wounds, or internal injuries may not be apparent until later.
3. Advise the victim not to bathe, shower, douche, eat, drink, urinate, or defecate before going to the hospital. Explain that these actions can destroy evidence.
4. Explain what your duties are as a responding officer, for example:
  - Taking a statement.
  - Collecting and retaining the evidence recovered at the hospital.
  - Arranging for the crime scene to be secured and examined.
  - Identifying, detaining, and arresting the suspect, if appropriate.
  - Following-up with the victim as the investigation progresses.
5. Offer to contact the local rape crisis center for the victim.
6. Offer to call a family member or friend for the victim.

## Interviewing the Victim

The goal of interviewing the victim is to obtain necessary information without further traumatizing her. More than one interview may be necessary to accomplish this. However, an immediate interview is necessary to accumulate valuable details before they are suppressed or forgotten. Regardless of the victim's behavior or emotional state, you should avoid being abrupt or rushed and maintain a respectful, professional manner while:

1. Introducing yourself to the victim.
2. Asking the victim if she feels able to speak with you right now. Make every effort to ensure that she is as comfortable as possible; avoid standing over the victim during this initial contact.



3. Arranging unbiased, independent translation if English is not the first language of the victim.
4. Obtaining important details by asking questions such as:
  - Where did this happen?
  - Did the offender touch anything in the room/area?
  - Did the offender move you from one place to another?
  - Did the offender take anything?
  - What did the offender look like (i.e., size, sex, racial ethnicity, hair, facial characteristics, clothing, approximate age, etc.)?
  - Did the offender say anything?

Or other questions required by your department's protocols.

If the offender has recently left the area, alert dispatch with his description. Secure the crime scene, to ensure that evidence is not contaminated or destroyed. Next, continue your interview with the victim.

5. Give the victim a checklist of her rights. Checklists are provided by the District Attorney's Office.
6. If victim is able to provide a statement, using the victim's exact words, document in detail any coercion, force, or threats used against her.
7. Avoid questions that imply guilt on the part of the victim or do not directly relate to the case.
8. Ask the victim if she has anything to add.
9. Let the victim know that it may be necessary for her to talk to more than one investigator as the investigation proceeds. Let her know that if there is an arrest she may need to speak with the District Attorney's office.
10. Provide information about how she can ensure her safety in case the offender returns.
11. Do not make promises or guesses about the investigation's outcome.
12. Ask the victim to keep the police department informed of any developments related to the investigation, and explain how the victim can reach you or an advocate.
13. Give the victim or a family member the number of the local rape crisis center (listed in the Pennsylvania Crisis Centers section) or the District Attorney's victim advocate's office.

14. Thank the victim for her help, and remind her that you or another officer may be contacting her again.
15. Do not make the victim take a polygraph test.

## Knowing the Victim's Rights

### The Officer's Responsibility to the Victim

Law enforcement agencies must make victims aware of their rights under the Victims of Crime Compensation Act. This act enables victims to receive restitution and compensation for violent crimes. Under this legislation, the term "victims" includes family members and significant others affected by the crime.

Within 48 hours of the crime, provide the victim with the forms provided from the Bureau of Victim Services. The forms list the name, business address, and telephone number of the local victim's services agency. If there is no local agency, the forms provide the location of the Bureau of Victim Services in Harrisburg.

After giving the victim and her family notice, obtain a record and an acknowledgement from them that they were notified. This acknowledgement begins the one-year period within which a victim can file a claim with the Bureau of Victim Services.

### The Victim's Bill of Rights

The information in the Victim's Bill of Rights is a guideline for all police officers.

1. The victim should be informed of her basic rights at the initial interview.
2. The victim must be given notice of significant actions and proceedings within the criminal justice system. This is usually done by the District Attorney's office or by the victim advocate.
3. The victim has the right to be accompanied to all public proceedings by a family member, another person, or a victim advocate.
4. Where there is bodily injury, the victim has the absolute right to submit prior comment to the District Attorney's office on any possible reduction of charges or changing of a plea. This, again, is usually done through the victim advocate's office or directly through the District Attorney's office.
5. The victim has the absolute right to offer her comments on the sentencing, including an impact statement detailing physical, psychological, and economic effects of the crime on her and her family. Again, this is usually done through the victim advocate's office or directly through the District Attorney's office.
6. The Victims of Crime Compensation Act provides for compensation to the victim in the form of restitution, return of property, and compensation for

injuries. Compensation request forms must be made available to the victim, and usually to the victim advocate's office. If there is no such office, the District Attorney's Office will help her file the appropriate forms.

7. Where there has been a state sentence, the victim also has the right to provide comment on the inmate's parole and post-sentencing release, including work release, furlough, and parole, pardon, or community treatment center placement. The victim also has the right to receive immediate notice of escape.
8. Where the defendant has been sentenced to a local correctional facility, the victim has the right to receive notice of the date of his release, including work release, furlough, parole, or community treatment center placement, as well as immediate notice of escape.
9. Where the offender has been committed to a mental health facility, the victim has the right to be given notice of discharge, transfer, or escape.
10. The victim has the right to assistance in the preparation of and follow-up on financial assistance claims to the Bureau of Victim Services.



# Suspects

---

If the suspect is not in custody, broadcast the crime committed, the identity or description of the suspect (including any vehicle involved), the direction of travel after the crime, and whether the suspect is armed.

## Dealing with the Suspect Before an Arrest

When reading the following sections, remember the importance of consulting with the District Attorney in determining the most appropriate course of action for identifying and detaining suspects.

## Identifying the Suspect

If the victim is physically and emotionally able, ask her to identify the suspect. Explain the proceedings to the victim prior to the identification. Let her know if she will identify the suspect in the street—if the suspect is not wearing handcuffs—or in the police station. If necessary, the victim may need to hear the suspect's voice in order to identify him. If more than one witness will view the suspect in order to identify him, make sure that each person does so independently, so as not to taint the identification procedure.

## Interviewing the Suspect

Always focus the investigation on the suspect rather than the victim.

### Non-custodial interview of the suspect

During a non-custodial interview, the suspect is not in custody and knows that he may end the questioning and leave at any time. The interrogation may occur anywhere — at the police station, at the suspect's home, or at the suspect's place of employment — but regardless of the location, you must not deprive the suspect of his freedom. He must be able to end the interview.

A non-custodial interview of a suspect should:

- Take place as soon as possible (preferably before he learns of the investigation).
- Not require Miranda warnings (because no arrest has been made).
- Establish rapport, put at ease be patient and use their language.
- Encourage the suspect to talk by asking indirect, rather than direct questions.

Make simple, empathetic statements:

You must feel awful, glad we are going to get this resolved today

I know you have been through a lot...

I am going to help you bring this to closure today

## Arresting the Suspect

The following should indicate it is time to arrest an offender:

- Documented probable cause
- Positive identification by the victim (suggested but not necessary before an arrest)
- A warrant

## Interviewing the Suspect after an Arrest

Take note of the following recommendations before beginning an interview:

- Review the facts of the case.
- Stay non-confrontational and professional.
- Ask questions about consent, use of force and threatened use of force, coercion, and previous encounters with other women.
- Encourage the suspect to provide details.

## Interview Considerations

Details in the suspect's story may eventually help investigators or prosecutors find inconsistencies in his prior or future statements.

While confessions are important in sexual crime cases, incriminating statements are more common and still useful.

Most sex offenders deny the allegations outright, or rationalize their behavior to justify their actions. Pretending that the suspect's actions were understandable and encouraging his rationalizations are effective investigative tools.

# Investigating Sexual Violence

---

The following is a brief overview of the initial steps that an officer should perform to insure a thorough investigation:

1. Secure the crime scene(s).
2. Verify that a crime occurred.
3. Document all facts and observations (including the victim's physical and emotional condition).
4. Photograph the scene and/or the victim.
5. Get a description and/or identification of the offender (including the offender's vehicle and direction, if applicable).
6. Locate the offender or issue a bulletin about the crime over the radio.
7. Interview any people at the scene.
8. Interview neighbors and people who pass through the area regularly.
9. Interview the suspect.

## Securing the Crime Scene

When responding to a complaint of sexual violence, the officer must assure that all areas where evidence may be collected are absolutely secure. A successful prosecution often depends on physical evidence to corroborate the victim's statements. The following steps will assure the proper collection and care of evidence:

1. Secure the victim's clothing and ensure that suitable replacements are provided.
2. Obtain outer clothing (coats, jackets, etc.) because it may contain traces of evidence that could establish contact with the suspect or the crime scene.
3. Place each article of clothing in a separate paper bag.
4. Request that the hospital personnel place the victim on paper while she disrobes, and collect that paper for analysis.
5. Obtain the completed rape kit from the hospital personnel and forward it to the crime lab. Ensure that a chain of custody is established.
6. If the crime occurred inside a vehicle, search for evidence inside the vehicle and around the area where it was parked.
7. If the crime occurred on a bed, secure the sheets, bed covering, etc. to be tested for the presence of semen or trace evidence.

8. If drugs were used to facilitate the sexual assault, obtain a drug-facilitated collection kit. Ensure that a chain of custody is established.

## Finding Evidence

The gathering of physical evidence to corroborate the victim's account of the assault provides the prosecution with strong backup for the victim's testimony. Often it provides irrefutable evidence of the accused person's presence at the scene of the crime. The following sections discuss various sources of evidence.

### Evidence on the Victim

Most Pennsylvania hospitals possess rape kits, which doctors and/or nurses use to gather physical evidence left on the victim's body by the assailant. The rape kits allow the gathering and securing of clothing; fingernail clippings/scrapings; pubic hair combings; oral, vaginal, and rectal samples; and a buccal swab collector for DNA analysis. After testing with the rape kit is completed, it is sent to a forensic laboratory for processing.

Although more evidence can be gathered from a victim before she bathes, encourage any victim who was assaulted in the previous 72 hours, and has already bathed, to undergo an examination for specimen collection and injury documentation. Some exam sites may examine victims beyond 72 hours.

### Evidence on the Suspect

If the identity of the assailant is known and if he is taken into custody, evidence may be collected from him, using a rape kit if desired. Prior to an arrest, some evidence may be obtained from the suspect without a warrant, if he consents. Otherwise, search warrants should be issued for the collection of the following:

- Blood samples
- Fingerprint
- Penile swab
- Saliva samples
- Scalp and pubic area samples
- Hair and clothing samples
- Fingernail scrapings
- Evidence from the suspect's vehicle
- Evidence from the suspect's home

## Evidence from the Crime Scene

To discover the scope of the crime scene, the investigating officer must ask the victim the following questions:

- Where were you?
- Where was the suspect?
- Did the assailant move you? To where?
- Did the assailant touch anything?
- Did the assailant eat or smoke anything?

The crime scene should be preserved and carefully processed for fingerprints, semen, and other bodily fluids. Traces of these fluids are important to the case, so the use of a Woods lamp is encouraged.

Signs of struggle should be photographed and videotaped. If the assault took place outside, or if entry was forced, footprints can be photographed and samples of soil and vegetation can be collected for future comparison.

## Dealing with Various Types of Evidence

### Bodily Fluids

Recognizing, collecting, and preserving bodily fluids—as well as keeping them safe—is vital. Bodily fluids, which include blood, semen, and saliva, can be used to identify or to eliminate someone as a suspect. Here are some tips for dealing with bodily fluids:

- Package items containing body fluids in paper.
- Wrap each item separately.
- Allow moist stains to dry by air before packaging.

### Soil

Soil is important evidence because the soil on the garments and the shoes of a suspect may be similar to the make-up of the soil recovered or deposited at the crime scene.

### Hair

Hair found at the crime scene may corroborate the presence of the offender at the scene. Look for hair:

- At the crime scene
- On the objects at the scene



- On the clothing of the victim or the suspect
- In the vehicle where the crime took place or in which the assailant fled
- On any weapon, tool, or other instrument used in the crime

When collecting hair as evidence, gather it with forceps and place it in a clean container.

### Understanding DNA Evidence

No two people (except for identical twins) have the same DNA. Thus, DNA evidence can be a vital part of solving a sexual assault case because it can either incriminate or eliminate a suspect.

DNA is found in various body parts and excretions, including (but not limited to):

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| • Blood       | • Teeth        |
| • Semen       | • Hair         |
| • Skin Cells  | • Saliva       |
| • Tissue      | • Mucus        |
| • Organs      | • Perspiration |
| • Muscle      | • Fingernails  |
| • Brain Cells | • Urine        |
| • Bone        | • Feces        |

Another person's DNA can easily contaminate DNA evidence. Adhere to the previous packaging instructions, as well as the following tips, when collecting evidence:

- Wear gloves, and change them frequently.
- Before and after handling each piece of evidence, clean all instruments thoroughly (or use disposables).
- Do not touch any area where DNA may be located.
- Do not talk, sneeze, or cough over the samples.
- Do not touch your face while collecting the samples.

## Chain of Evidence

As in other criminal cases, the chain of evidence in a sexual assault case must be kept as short as possible. Each person handling evidence must be included in the chain, and each person must ensure that the investigator is able to:

- Positively identify the particular evidence.
- Discuss the circumstances of its discovery.
- Accurately describe what happened since its discovery.
- Keep written records.
- Prevent contamination or destruction of the evidence.

## Packaging Chart<sup>1</sup>

The chart on pages 16 and 17 describes evidence packaging and submission recommendations.

---

1 “What every Law Enforcement Officer Should Now About DNA Evidence.” National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence. National Institute of Justice.



## Evidence Packaging

Specimen	Identification	Amount Desired	Preservation	Packaging (Do not use plastic)
Whole Blood Sample (Standard Sample)	Label via with donor's name, date of birth, and date of collection	EDTA via (purple) (at least 7ml)	Refrigerate DO NOT FREEZE	Padded packaging to prevent breakage, etc.
Buccal DNA Collector (Standard Sample)	Label collector with donor's name, date of birth, and date of collection	One bode buccal DNA collector	Air dry prior to packaging.	Package in paper bag or envelope.
Liquid Blood at Scene	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Cloth patch (sized to saturate entire patch)	Air dry prior to packaging.	Package in paper bag or envelope.
Dried Blood at Scene (Non-Removeable Item)	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Use slightly moistened patch to collect same	Air dry prior to packaging.	Package in paper bag or envelope.

Dried Blood at Scene (Removeable Item)	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Entire item or stained portion (if large)	Air dry prior to packaging.	Package in paper bag or envelope.
Bloodstained Clothing	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Entire article	Air dry prior to packaging.	Package in paper bag or envelope.
Clothing (Semen or Other Body Fluids)	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Entire article	Air dry prior to packaging.	Package in paper bag or envelope.
Hairs from Scene	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Varies		Package in paper envelope.
Hairs (Standard Sample)	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.	Label packaging with item description, date collected, incident number, etc.		Package in paper envelope.

# Building the Case for Court

---

The best support an officer can give a victim of sexual assault is a thorough investigation that builds a case that will successfully convict the offender. Although Pennsylvania law does not require corroboration in sexual assault cases, keep in mind the following reasons why crimes are often not solved:

- Insufficient physical evidence
- Absence of eye witnesses
- Failure to prove elements of a crime
- Absence of admissions or confessions
- Absence of circumstantial evidence

Also, remember to follow the police procedures and legal requirements in the following areas:

- Pre-trial identification
- Transporting the victim or offender for identification
- Investigative detention
- Arrest without warrant
- Search and seizure
- Confidentiality

Most importantly, contact and work closely with the District Attorney's office throughout the investigation.

## **The sexual assault forensic exam**

Whether or not a victim wants to talk to police, she may receive a sexual assault forensic exam at a hospital emergency department. Allowing the victim to receive an exam right away provides for the best collection of evidence. It may also give the victim time to process what occurred and think through what she wants to do next. Letting the victim get an exam without cooperating with police, is in compliance with the Violence Against Women Act. Critical state funding depends on compliance.

Many hospitals in Pennsylvania have specially trained personnel known as sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFE) or sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) who can conduct forensic exams. A SAFE/SANE registered nurse, physician or physician assistant is specially trained through a 40-hour course, plus additional clinical practice hours, to provide comprehensive care, timely collection of forensic evidence, and testimony in sexual assault cases. Hospitals that do not have SAFE or SANE practitioners should still provide a forensic exam to victims.

The forensic exam in Pennsylvania must follow the minimum standard requirements set by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. This standard includes a head-to-toe assessment; oral, genital and anal swabbing; and the scraping and clipping of fingernails. DNA is also collected using a mouth swab, rather than a blood draw. The standard was designed to be as patient sensitive as possible, while remaining a thorough method of evidence collection.

In many communities SAFE/SANE programs operate best when connected to a sexual assault response team (SART). A SART is a multidisciplinary team working collaboratively to provide services for the community by offering specialized services for victims of sexual assault. The team includes at a minimum, a medical director, a SAFE/SANE specialist, a rape crisis center advocate, a law enforcement representative, and a prosecutor.

## **Pennsylvania Sexual Assault Laws**

See chart on pages 20, 21, 22, and 23.



Offense	Code	Elements	Grade and Statute of Limitations
Rape	§3121	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual Intercourse</li> <li>• Force or threat of force</li> <li>• Unconscious victim</li> <li>• Drug-facilitated assault</li> <li>• Victim under 13 years-of-age</li> <li>• Victim with mental disability</li> </ul>	Felony 1 Adult = 12 Years Minor = until age 50
Involuntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse	§3123	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anal or oral intercourse</li> <li>• Intercourse with an animal</li> <li>• Penetration with a foreign object</li> <li>• Force or threat of force</li> <li>• Unconscious victim</li> <li>• Drug-facilitated assault</li> <li>• Victim with mental disability</li> <li>• Victim under 13 years-of-age</li> <li>• Victim under 16 years-of-age and perpetrator is 4 or more</li> </ul>	Felony 1 Adult = 12 Years Minor = until age 50
Aggravated Indecent Assault	§3125	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penetration with a body part other than the tongue or penis</li> <li>• No good faith basis for penetration</li> <li>• No consent</li> <li>• With force or threat of force</li> <li>• Unconscious victim</li> <li>• Drug-facilitated assault</li> </ul>	Felony 1 (Under 13 years-of-age) Felony 2 (All others) Adult = 12 Years Minor = until age 50



<p>Aggravated Indecent Assault (cont)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victim with mental disability</li> <li>Victim under 13 years-of-age</li> <li>Victim is under 16 years-of-age and perpetrator is 4 or more years older</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual intercourse</li> <li>Victim is under 16 years-of-age and perpetrator is 4 or more years older</li> <li>Consent is not a defense</li> </ul>	<p>Felony 2 Adult = 12 Years Minor = until age 50</p>
<p>Statutory Sexual Assault</p>	<p>§3122.1</p>	<p>Sexual Intercourse Anal or Oral Intercourse No consent</p>	<p>Felony 2 Adult = 12 Years Minor = until age 50</p>	
<p>Sexual Assault</p>	<p>§3124.1</p>	<p>Marry, cohabit or engage in sexual intercourse with an ancestor, descendant, sibling, aunt, uncle, nephew or niece related by blood or adoption</p>	<p>Felony 2 Adult = 12 Years Minor = until age 50</p>	
<p>Incest</p>	<p>§4302</p>	<p>Sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, indecent contact</p>	<p>Felony 3 Adult = 2 Years Minor = 2 Years</p>	
<p>Institutional Sexual Assault</p>	<p>§3124.2</p>	<p>Perpetrator is a volunteer or employee of a school, state or county prison; county juvenile facility; state or county residential facility for juveniles, mental health or mental retardation</p>		

Offense	Code	Elements	Grade and Statute of Limitations
Stalking	§2709.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course of conduct or repeated acts</li> <li>• Intent to cause fear of bodily injury or substantial emotional distress</li> <li>• Includes lewd, lascivious or obscene words, drawings, actions, etc.</li> </ul>	Misdemeanor 1 (1st offense) Felony 3 (2nd offense) Adult = 2 Years Minor = 2 Years
Indecent Assault	§3126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touching of private parts for the purpose of sexual gratification</li> <li>• No consent</li> <li>• With force or threat of force</li> <li>• Unconscious victim</li> <li>• Drug-facilitated assault</li> <li>• Victim with mental disability</li> <li>• Victim under 13 years-of-age</li> <li>• Victim is under 16 years-of-age and perpetrator is 4 or more years older</li> <li>• Touching above or below clothing</li> </ul>	Misdemeanor 1 (Under 13 years-of-age) Misdemeanor 2 (All others) Adult = 2 Years Minor = until age 50
Indecent Exposure	§3127	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure of genitals where conduct is likely to offend, affront or alarm</li> </ul>	Misdemeanor 1 (Under 16 years-of-age) Misdemeanor 2 Adult = 2 Years Minor = until age 50

Open Lewdness		§5901	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission of any lewd act where conduct is likely to be observed by others who would be affronted or alarmed.</li> </ul>		Misdemeanor 3 Adult = 2 Years Minor = 2 Years
---------------	--	-------	--	--	---

# Generally, the time for the statute of limitations begins to run the day after the offense is committed.

\*The time for the statute of limitations begins to run when the minor turns 18 years of age.

# Sexual Violence Investigation Checklist

---

Timely and responsive law enforcement intervention can increase reporting, enhance victim safety, improve investigations, and facilitate successful prosecution.

Officers should be expected to take a serious, victim-centered approach to sexual assault reports and to investigate these crimes in a manner that restores the victim's dignity and sense of control while decreasing the victim's anxiety.

These checklists are designed to allow law enforcement personnel to assess their response to sexual assault cases on both an individual and agency-wide basis. The checklists can be used in many ways by various departments within an agency.

These checklists are divided into sections that correspond with the roles and responsibilities of each law enforcement professional involved in the agency's overall response to sexual assault (i.e., dispatcher, initial responding officer and follow-up investigators).

Each section includes a list of specific steps and strategies officers should take to help ensure optimal response to sexual assault cases.

**Please feel free to make copies of this section and distribute as needed.**

Officers should be expected to take a serious, victim-centered approach to sexual assault reports and to investigate these crimes in a manner that restores the victim's dignity and sense of control while decreasing the victim's anxiety.



## Dispatcher Response Checklist

When answering a telephone call for help that involves sexual violence, the dispatcher should:

	Dispatch Response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Obtain critical status and victim safety information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine the initial facts of the situation (including age and gender of the victim), whether the victim or others are in imminent danger or in need of emergency medical attention, and call for emergency medical assistance as necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Obtain the name, address, phone number, location, and current status of the victim.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explain that the questions being asked will not delay officer response to the scene.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine the suspect's use or possession of a weapon.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine whether there is a relationship between the victim and suspect (e.g., stranger or non-stranger, husband, partner, family member).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Record and preserve the victim's "excited utterances" for evidentiary purposes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notify victim of the availability of crisis response services. If crisis service providers are responding to the scene, notify the victim immediately.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Obtain the suspect's history and information on the likelihood of danger:

## General Dispatcher Guidelines

If you assess that the victim is in imminent danger, advise the victim to move to a safe location (e.g., to the home of a neighbor or a family friend, a police station, a church), as long as moving can be accomplished safely. Obtain the phone number where the victim can be reached at the new location. If the victim is unsure about moving to a new location, stay on the line until responding officer(s) arrives.

Identify the incident as "sexual assault-related" and assign the appropriate priority rating and treatment protocol. (For policy on categorizing and priority rating of sexual assault cases, see protocols established by your department's management.)

Where circumstances warrant, follow the protocol established for crisis intervention with victims of sexual assault. For policy related to crisis intervention, see the

protocols established by your department's management.

If the suspect is not present, attempt to determine his/her location, and the likelihood that he/she may return to the scene or attempt to contact the victim again.

When the reporting party is not the victim, obtain the caller's name, address, phone number, and relationship to the victim, and the names of any other witnesses or parties involved.

If the suspect is a law enforcement officer, dispatch a supervisor to the scene immediately.

Remind the victim not to wash himself/herself, change clothes, eat, drink, urinate, defecate, or clean the crime scene until responding officers have arrived and forensic examinations can be performed to preserve evidence.

Use "Call History," "Criminal History," sexual offender registries, and other available databases to provide responding officers with crucial criminal and civil information, including firearm possession prohibitions, outstanding warrants, or unexecuted sentences (e.g., escape from custody, revoked parole or post-sentence bond, deferred sentence).

In non-stranger cases, determine history of previous incidents of violence, particularly those that may have occurred in other jurisdictions.

Use available databases to obtain information concerning protection orders, conditions of release, or sentences that are pending against the suspect. Inform responding officers of such orders and the terms of each.

Furnish the officer with information on the suspect and specifics about the incident.

Review and preserve all 911 and emergency dispatch tapes, regardless of the delay in reporting. Preserve tapes for a period sufficient to meet the needs of the District Attorney's office during the trial and post-trial process.

## Initial Officer Response Checklist

When answering a call for help that involves sexual violence, the responding officer(s) should follow these guidelines.

	Officer Response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respond to the call
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approach and enter the crime scene
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assess and secure the crime scene
<input type="checkbox"/>	Address the immediate needs of the victim
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct an initial interview with the victim
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine violation of federal law
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide the victim with essential information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify and interview witnesses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interview the suspect
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collect evidence at the crime scene
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collect evidence away from the crime scene
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrest and charge the suspect
<input type="checkbox"/>	Write an incident report

### Respond to the Call

Respond to the dispatch call immediately, whether the report itself is immediate or delayed.

On the basis of information provided by the dispatcher, evaluate the potential for further violence at the scene and secure backup, whenever possible.

### Approach and Enter the Crime Scene

Determine whether there are multiple crime scenes (e.g., an assault that began at one location, but ended at another).

Determine if crimes may have occurred in different jurisdictions. Follow agency policy concerning case coordination with agencies in other jurisdictions.

Suggest that bystanders and others leave the immediate area surrounding the scene to ensure their safety and prevent the destruction or contamination of evidence. Ask

them to stay near for interviewing witnesses.

Enter the area where the sexual assault occurred in compliance with the laws of the state.

### **Assess and Secure the Crime Scene**

Evaluate the scene (e.g., whether it is in damaged or disturbed condition, whether there is evidence of alcohol/drug use, whether there are emergency health issues to be addressed, whether there are other witnesses, or whether additional evidence is present).

If the suspect appears to be a law enforcement officer, implement the department policies and protocols for such situations (e.g., request a supervisor to come to the scene if one has not already been dispatched; secure the suspect's service revolver pending an internal investigation; file a report with the Internal Affairs department).

Photograph or videotape the crime scene before it is disturbed.

Note the locations of the victim (and suspect) when you arrive at the scene.

Take any steps necessary to preserve evidence on the victim (and suspect) at the scene of the crime.

Secure and protect the crime scene, and request that forensic/crime scene technicians be dispatched, as available and appropriate.

Confiscate all weapons used or used to threaten the victim. This includes weapons in plain sight, in the possession of the suspect, or in the immediate location (including the suspect's vehicle)

Seize and secure all items that may have been used in the perpetration of the sexual assault (e.g., items used to sexually penetrate, items used to restrain, items used to threaten).

### **Address the Immediate Needs of the Victim**

Assure the victim that her immediate safety is your first priority.

Summon a victim's advocate to the scene, once it is secure and the victim is safe. If an advocate is not available, refer the victim, in writing and orally, to appropriate sexual assault/rape crisis services.

Assess the need for a sign-language interpreter or translator for the victim, the suspect or witnesses. Do not rely on family members or interested parties for interpretation or translation.

Take necessary steps to protect the victim's personal privacy and sense of dignity (e.g., allow the victim to cover or change out of ripped or bloodied clothes in private and as soon as possible, consistent with evidence collection considerations).



Explain to the victim the reason for the forensic exam, and validate his/her discomfort or concerns.

Inquire as to the victim's need for emergency medical attention, and provide first aid as necessary.

Unless circumstances clearly dictate otherwise, every sexual assault victim should be taken to a medical facility to be examined by someone who is SANE certified, or by a physician, to treat and record his/her injuries; provide testing and treatment for possible sexually transmitted infections; and provide testing and care related to a potential pregnancy that may have resulted from the assault. If the assault occurred more than 72 hours prior to the report, consider whether circumstances still warrant a forensic exam.

Arrange transportation to and from a medical facility, if necessary.

Assess and provide for the safety needs and care of any children present at the scene. Arrange for temporary care if the victim is immediately transported to a medical facility for examination and treatment.

### **Conduct an Initial Interview with the Victim**

If the victim is in critical need of medical attention, do not attempt to interview her until after she has received immediate medical assistance to stabilize her condition. Then proceed only if it is suspected that the perpetrator is in the immediate vicinity or poses a continuing threat. If so, limit the interview to those questions necessary to achieve the apprehension of the suspect and only to the extent the victim's physical and emotional condition permits. Additional questions should be withheld until a follow-up interview.

Before attempting to interview the victim, move her to a place that provides complete privacy. If an advocate is available, give the victim the option of including the advocate in the interview. If an advocate is not available at the scene, proceed with the initial interview.

Indicate to the victim that this is an initial interview intended primarily to gather the essential information necessary to begin the investigative process, identify evidence and witnesses, identify and apprehend the suspect, and meet her immediate medical and psychological needs.

Indicate that a follow-up interview will be scheduled at a later date to gather other details related to the crime.

Take careful notes on the questions asked of the victim and the answers given. Note any statements that describe relevant sensory and peripheral details recounted by the victim (e.g., passing siren to corroborate the time the sexual assault occurred, scent of suspect's cologne, feel of suspect's clothing).

Assume the statements made by the victim are accurate until proven otherwise.

Convey confidence in the victim's statements.

Ask questions in a supportive, blameless, and nonjudgmental manner. Be calm, direct and patient. Be clear that you want to help. Explain the necessity for asking personal questions or questions that may make the victim uncomfortable.

Record the "excited utterances" of the victim, family members, and witnesses.

Note the victim's demeanor, body language, and other nonverbal communication indicating her emotional and physical condition.

Ask the victim about circumstances and symptoms that may indicate the use of a drug to facilitate sexual assault (e.g., did she/he consume a beverage prior to the incident; experience dizziness; experience loss of memory, disorientation, or hallucinations).

Obtain information to determine whether the suspect's conduct constitutes multiple crimes (e.g., domestic violence, assault, violation of a protection order, firearm possession, trespassing).

Obtain preliminary information from the victim about the crime and specifics leading up to the assault, and whether there is a relationship between the victim and the suspect (e.g., stranger vs. non-stranger), any prior history of such assaults, any court orders, any use of weapons during the assault, or any use of alcohol or drugs. Make clear that substance use does not justify the assault.

Obtain the address and telephone number for any temporary residence the victim may stay at following the assault.

Obtain the address and telephone number for any family member or other person entrusted with the victim's forwarding contact information.

Arrange to transport the victim to a safe place if she/he asks (a women's shelter, a friend or relative's house, hotel, etc.).

### **Determine Violation of Federal Law**

Determine if suspect's conduct constitutes a violation of Federal Law (e.g., crossing a state line to inflict bodily injury, to stalk or to violate a protection order). If so, follow the protocol established to notify the appropriate federal authorities.

### **Provide the Victim with Essential Information**

Provide the victim with written referrals to community-based advocacy organizations, with an explanation of each resource.

Notify the victim of his/her rights as a victim under state law. Including:

- The rights to notification, to be present, and to make a statement at criminal proceedings.
- The right to apply for victim's compensation.

Encourage victims who ask to be notified to keep your agency informed of any change in their contact information.

Provide the victim with basic information (both orally and in writing) about investigative processes and what role she/he may play in the investigation. To the extent possible, tell the victim what to expect during the investigation and prosecution.

Provide the victim with immediate short-term safety recommendations and preliminary safety planning strategies, particularly in non-stranger cases.

Advise the victim that the arrest of the suspect is not a guarantee of the victim's safety. Inform her that the suspect may be released on bond shortly after his arrest and may pose an immediate threat to her or a family member, particularly in non-stranger cases.

Advise the victim of laws that offer protection from stalking, harassment and intimidation by the suspect and encourage him/her to contact law enforcement if those laws are violated.

While still at the scene, provide the victim in writing with the name, badge number, and contact information of all responding officers, to the extent practicable, as well as the number of the incident report corresponding to the case.

Protect the confidentiality of victim-related information (including identifying information) to the maximum extent possible. Inform the victim of what information in the report will be made public and what will be kept confidential.

Obtain written permission from the victim for the release of any case information to other involved agencies and organizations, or to the public.

Protect the confidentiality of victim-related information (including identifying information) to the maximum extent possible. Inform the victim of what information in the report will be made public and what will be kept confidential.

### **Identify and Interview Witnesses**

Identify any witnesses and document their full names, addresses and telephone numbers. Note their relationship to the victim and suspect.

Interview nearby residents, co-workers and any others who may have witnessed the sexual assault you are investigating, or previous incidents of sexual assault (or other violence in cases of non-stranger assaults).

In cases where drug-facilitated sexual assault is suspected, interview friends, family members, and associates of the suspect regarding their knowledge of the suspect's

access to and use of drugs that might have been used to facilitate the sexual assault. Also inquire about their knowledge of incidents involving the suspect's use of drugs for that purpose. If at a bar, be sure to interview employees.

Interview children who may have witnessed the assault. In non-stranger cases, inquire as to whether they themselves have been victimized by the suspect. Comply with protocols specifically related to interviews with child witnesses and victims (i.e., do not ask leading questions, use age-appropriate language).

### **Interview the Suspect**

Attempt to interview the suspect, if he/she is present or can be located, prior to arrest and custody.

Use audio or videotape to record the suspect's interview. Where required or when appropriate, inform the suspect that you are recording him.

Obtain general information from the suspect (e.g., name, address, relationship to the victim in non-stranger cases).

Ask the suspect to tell his/her side of the story. Do not interrupt or challenge assertions. Listen to the entire story. Note any relevant statements and admissions.

Ask questions to clarify the statements and facts asserted by the suspect.

Record the suspect's "excited utterances," emotional and physical condition, and demeanor.

Obtain a forensic exam if the suspect was arrested within a reasonable period of time after the assault, or as circumstances otherwise warrant.

Note any evidence of drug consumption (legal or illegal).

If the suspect is known, but cannot be found, apply for an arrest warrant. If he/she is subsequently taken into custody, read him his Miranda rights and then attempt to interview him.

If the suspect is not known, relay a description to dispatch for APB or broadcast alert to patrolling units.



## Collect Evidence at the Crime Scene

Collect and secure evidence of a sexual assault in all cases, regardless of the victim's initial willingness to pursue a complaint.

Determine whether any aspect of evidence collection will require a search warrant, based on Pennsylvania law.

Determine whether there are multiple crime scenes (e.g., did the incident begin in another location, or did a previous and unreported incident occur at another site).

Determine whether clothing or other evidence may be found at another location.

Call in a crime-scene technician.

If crime-scene technicians or forensic specialists will not be called to the scene, undertake the following tasks:

Conduct a preliminary search for all physical evidence without compromising the crime scene.

Assess the crime scene for physical evidence (e.g., fingerprints, body fluids, clothing, bedding, footprints, displaced objects, property destruction).

Obtain evidence of other crimes committed by the suspect (e.g., domestic violence, violation of a protection order, illegal possession of drugs, firearm possession, trespassing).

Photograph and/or videotape the crime scene prior to touching, moving or disrupting potential evidence. Provide an indication of size and scale for all evidence photographed.

Note any evidence of alcohol and/or drug consumption by the suspect (e.g., open alcoholic beverages, beverage glasses, medicine bottles or blister packaging).

Consider the possibility of drug-facilitated sexual assault. If drug-facilitated sexual assault is suspected, implement the appropriate agency protocol for investigation and evidence collection. Collect evidence that may indicate the use of drugs to facilitate sexual assault (e.g., beverage containers, medicine bottles, blister packaging).

Collect all collateral evidence of the sexual assault (e.g., videos, video cameras, pictures, ropes, condoms, pornography).

Collect, properly package, and mark all evidence. Ensure that all evidence has been gathered before releasing the crime scene. Preserve samples of all biological evidence gathered (e.g., blood, semen), pending the victim's decision to go forward with the case.

Diagram the crime scene; use specialized report forms/diagrams, and document all findings.

The victim should contact you to arrange to be photographed if bruises or evidence of injury appear later.

If the suspect is present, take full-body photographs and photograph his/her injuries, if any.

Confiscate all weapons or other instruments used in the commission of the sexual assault, including objects that may have been used to facilitate the crime (e.g., objects used in penetration).

Transport all collected evidence to your agency's property room or a designated crime lab in a way that maintains the proper chain of custody.

### **Collect Evidence Off Site (Forensic Exams):**

Transport or arrange transportation for the victim to a designated medical facility for emergency care and/or forensic evidence collection, if necessary.

Contact victim services to accompany the victim during the forensic exam. Give the victim an opportunity to decline offers of assistance from victim service advocates once they have arrived at the facility. If the victim declines the offer of assistance, provide her with written referrals to sexual assault programs, where available. A list of Pennsylvania crisis centers by county appears in the chapter on Pennsylvania Crisis Centers.

If the victim chooses not to undergo a forensic exam, explain in an objective fashion how her decision could affect the investigation of the case and possible prosecution of the suspect.

Make efforts to ensure the victim is seen promptly at the medical facility.

If a SANE-certified practitioner is available, request that she or he be called. If not, request that the attending physician initiate the existing sexual assault protocol for forensic exams.

If the victim chooses not to undergo a forensic exam, explain in an objective fashion how her decision could affect the investigation of the case and possible prosecution of the suspect.

Make efforts to ensure that the victim's injuries are photographed in detail, with full consideration for the victim's comfort and privacy concerns (i.e., leave the room during the exam). If possible, arrange for a same-sex forensic photographer or medical professional who has been trained in forensic photography, victim sensitivity, and crisis intervention.

If the suspect is in custody, make sure physical and medical evidence is collected from him at a different facility from the victim. In all cases, ensure that the victim and the suspect do not come into contact with one another. Ensure separate exam rooms to avoid cross-contaminating evidence.

Make arrangements to transport evidence that needs to be analyzed to a designated forensic lab or to a designated property room for storage in a way that maintains the chain of custody.

Retain all evidence regardless of the victim's initial willingness to press charges or go forward with the case. Preserve all evidence collected during the investigation for a reasonable period pending the victim's decision to go forward with the complaint. Check your county's protocols to determine what is considered a reasonable period.



## **Arrest and Charge the Suspect**

If the suspect is not known, determine his/her identity. Once the suspect's identity is established, consider making an arrest based on probable cause and the surrounding circumstances. Where appropriate, consult with the District Attorney's office to ensure there is sufficient basis to hold and charge the suspect.

If the identity of the suspect is not known, provide the agency communication center with a physical description, the make, model, year and color of the suspect's vehicle, direction of travel after the assault, and other identifying information for broadcast to other law enforcement units on patrol.

Serve all warrants in a timely manner.

Charge the suspect with all crimes arising from the incident (e.g., assault, sexual assault, violation of a protection order, trespassing, breaking and entering, firearm possession). Contact the District Attorney's office with any questions or concerns regarding appropriate charges.

Adhere to state law regarding the decision to arrest. Do not consider other factors (e.g., speculation that the victim will not go forward, past sexual history, likelihood of conviction, the victim's behavior prior to the incident, the victim's socioeconomic status, class, race, or sexual orientation).

If the suspect is not arrested immediately, explain to the victim and his/her support person the nature of and rationale for the decision (e.g., lack of evidence, inability to establish the identity of the suspect, the District Attorney's office was not sufficiently prepared to charge the suspect).

Notify the sexual assault victim of any arrests, or releases, of the suspect.

## **Write an Incident Report**

Complete a written report whether or not an arrest is made. If an arrest was not made, explain the rationale and circumstances for that decision.

Include diagrams specifying the location of all injuries, including injuries that are not visible.

Indicate in the report that the interview with the victim was preliminary in nature and was not intended to elicit the victim's recollection in detail and that the agency will discuss the case with the victim again.

Provide the follow-up investigator with all related information, reports, and documentation.

Provide victim with a free copy of the incident report.



## Follow-up Investigator Response Checklist

When investigating a crime involving sexual violence, the follow-up investigator should follow these guidelines.

	<b>Investigator Response</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Serve and enforce protection orders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gather further information to support charges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Address victim safety and support needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide the victim with essential information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deliver the case to the District Attorney's office

### Serve and Enforce Protection Orders

Make every effort to serve all protection orders filed against the suspect as soon as she/he is located.

Enforce all criminal and civil protection orders, restraining orders or conditions of parole or probation filed against the suspect, including those issued in other jurisdictions or states.

### Gather Further Information to Support Charges

Consult with the initial responding officer(s) and any agency personnel who were subsequently called to the scene.

Develop an investigative strategy based on the nature of the assault and possible defenses (e.g., question of identity or consent). Investigators should seek strategies to address key issues and consult with the District Attorney's office as necessary.

Determine whether a search warrant is needed with regard to any aspect of the investigation.

Arrange for a follow-up interview with the victim as soon as possible.

Explore strategies to corroborate the victim's statements, including those that support the victim's sensory and peripheral recollections of the crime (e.g., victim recollections concerning sound, smell).

Re-photograph the victim to document changes in the appearance of her/his injuries. Remind the victim that bruises and other evidence of injury may appear later. Ask the victim to contact you to arrange for additional photographs or other documentation, if necessary.

Encourage the victim to contact you or other investigative officers with any new information or evidence that appears after the interview.

Identify and obtain statements from any additional witnesses not interviewed at the scene. Collect all pertinent information from them.

Cross-reference fact patterns and M.O.'s of the crime with any previously unsolved sexual assaults or crimes.

Based on information gathered during the investigation, identify and contact other people who may have been victimized by the suspect (e.g., previous friends and partners).

Based on the statements of the parties involved in the sexual assault and surrounding circumstances, submit a forensic lab service request after evaluating the evidence for its possible relevance.

Maintain contact with the forensic lab to obtain results.

Identify and follow up on any evidentiary leads or issues that may arise.

Obtain further information on the suspect's criminal and civil histories and other relevant background, when available.

Coordinate the prompt return of the victim's seized property as soon as it is no longer needed for prosecutorial purposes.

### **Address Victim Safety and Support Needs**

Arrange for a follow-up discussion with the victim to address her/his safety and support needs.

Allow the victim to have a support person (e.g., family member, friend, spiritual advisor, advocate,) present during the interview if desired.

Explain the scope and purpose of the follow-up interview to the victim.

Adhere to agency policy against the use of polygraphs to establish veracity of victim statements.

If available, activate the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) protocol.

Coordinate with other relevant agencies, assistance organizations, service providers, or SARTs to address the needs of the victim, including:

- Additional medical testing
- Mental health counseling
- Financial assistance
- Guidance throughout the criminal justice process
- Safety planning that takes the following into consideration
  - The suspect's capture and release

- Safety issues around protective orders
- General safety enhancement strategies

Work closely with available victim assistance and advocacy providers to support the victim through interviews, other investigation procedures, and court hearings.

Encourage the victim to call law enforcement if the suspect violates any existing criminal or court orders, or if the suspect contacts the victim or his/her family, friends, or workplace.

Work closely with available victim assistance and advocacy providers to support the victim through interviews, other investigation procedures, and court hearings.

### **Provide Victims with Essential Information**

Notify the victim of any arrests made in connection with the case.

Notify the victim in a timely fashion of the release of the suspect from custody.

Provide the victim with report forms and guidance to assist in documenting the suspect's further actions, if appropriate (e.g., log to track suspect attempts of intimidation, additional details the victim recalls).

Discuss the best means to keep the victim informed during the investigative process. Provide the victim with her notification rights during the criminal justice process.

Adhere to state law and agency policy concerning the victim's notification rights (e.g., notice of arrest, bail hearings, pretrial release).

Keep the victim informed of all developments, to the extent that such information will not compromise the investigation.

### **Deliver the case to the District Attorney's Office**

Discuss the case with the District Attorney's office and conduct any further investigation as requested, securing any additional evidence and communicating any additional information obtained to the prosecutor assigned.

Provide the victim with the name and contact information for the prosecutor assigned to the case, if known, and facilitate the initial contact between them.

Facilitate contact between the victim and prosecutor and a victim services advocate, if available (e.g., provide contact information, arrange a meeting, and notify victim services with the victim's permission).

## Things to Consider During the Investigation

The following table provides some tips for officers investigating sexual assault cases.

What research shows	Police Response
<p>Between 30 and 80 percent of offenders attack other types of victims.</p>	<p>Look for victims outside the normal typology of the offender. A rapist of adult women may also have victimized children. Question children that are accessible to offender.</p>
<p>Sex offending is usually the result of negative role models, a negative view toward women, or violence in the home as a child.</p>	<p>Look for patterns of behavior and speech in offenders that are negative towards women. Offenders will often objectify women and place the blame for the attack on the victim.</p>
<p>Offenders usually have multiple victims.</p>	<p>In cases of rape and child molestation, look for other victims. Consider interviewing family members and others who come in contact with the offender on a regular basis. Rapists are likely to have other victims, even in acquaintance rape.</p>
<p>Offenders target vulnerable victims. Individuals with cognitive impairments, mental health issues, physical disabilities or those who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs are likely targets.</p>	<p>When investigating a sexual assault, remember that offenders choose victims who they believe are unlikely to be believed by the police.</p>

<p>Recanting by the victim is different than filing a false report. Victims who recant often do so when they realize how difficult it is to navigate the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>Encourage the victim to contact a victim advocate. A victim advocate can support the victim throughout the investigation and prosecution of the case. The police officer may need to provide the victim with contact information for the local rape crisis center.</p>
<p>Victims who alter their testimony or give inconsistent testimony may do so because of the impact of trauma on their memory.</p>	<p>Police should give victims at least one sleep cycle before questioning them. Understand that victims may change parts of their testimony as their memory becomes clearer. The victim's perception of time, distance, sequence of events and location may be distorted as the result of the trauma.</p>
<p>Victims will often delay reporting a sexual assault.</p>	<p>Victims may not want parents, co-workers, friends and others to find out about the assault. They may fear retaliation by the offender or by friends of the offender. Victims may eventually come forward with the encouragement of their own friends.</p>
<p>Women with a childhood history of sexual abuse are 4.7 times more likely to be subsequently raped.</p>	<p>Previous victimization can contribute to a victim's subsequent vulnerability. Police should support the victim and put them in contact with a victim advocate.</p>

# Pennsylvania Crisis Centers

The following Pennsylvania crisis centers, listed alphabetically by county, provide various services to victims of sexual violence.

## Adams County

Center Name	Contact
Survivors, Inc.	Business (717) 334-0589
	Hotline (717) 334-9777, or (800) SUR-V106
	Website <a href="http://www.adamscountysurvivors.com">www.adamscountysurvivors.com</a>

## Allegheny County

Center Name	Contact
The Center for Victims of Violence and Crime	Business (412) 482-3240
	Hotline (412) 392-8582, or 1-866-644-2882
	Website <a href="http://www.cvvc.org">www.cvvc.org</a>
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape	Business (412) 431-5665
	Hotline (866) 363-7273
	Website <a href="http://www.paar.net">www.paar.net</a>

## Armstrong County

Center Name	Contact
Helping All Victims in Need	Business (724) 543-1180
	Hotline (800) 841-8881, or (724) 548-8888
	Website <a href="http://www.havinpa.org">www.havinpa.org</a>

## Beaver County

Center Name	Contact
Women's Center of Beaver County	Business (724) 775-2032
	Hotline (724) 775-0131
	Website <a href="http://www.womenscenterbc.org">www.womenscenterbc.org</a>

## Bedford County

Center Name	Contact
Your Safe Haven	Business (814) 623-7664
	Hotline (800) 555-5671
	Website <a href="http://www.yoursafehaven.org">www.yoursafehaven.org</a>

## Berks County

Center Name	Contact
Berks Women in Crisis	Business (610) 373-1206
	Hotline (610) 372-9540- English or (610) 372-7463-Spanish
	Website <a href="http://www.berkswomenincrisis.org">www.berkswomenincrisis.org</a>

## Blair County

Center Name	Contact
Family Services of Blair County, Inc.	Business (814) 944-3583
	Hotline (814) 944-3585, or (800) 500-2849
	Teen Hotline (800) 227-8336
	Website <a href="http://www.familyservicesinc.net">www.familyservicesinc.net</a>

## Bradford County

Center Name	Contact
Abuse and Rape Crisis Center	Business (570) 265-5333
	Hotline 911, or (570) 265-5333

## Bucks County

Center Name	Contact
Network of Victim Assistance	Business (215) 343-6543
	Hotline (800) 675-6900
	TTY (215) 343-6299
	Website <a href="http://www.novabucks.org">www.novabucks.org</a>

## Butler County

Center Name	Contact
Victims Outreach Intervention Center	Business (724) 776-5910 – Cranberry
	Business (724) 283-8700 – Butler
	Hotline (800) 400-8551
	Website <a href="http://www.voiceforvictims.com">www.voiceforvictims.com</a>

## Cambria County

Center Name	Contact
Victim Services, Inc.	Business (814) 288-4961
	Hotline (814) 288-4961, or (800) 755-1983
	E-Mail <a href="mailto:wdvavrek@yahoo.com">wdvavrek@yahoo.com</a>

## Cameron County

Center Name	Contact
CAPSEA, Inc.	Business (814) 486-1227
	Hotline (814) 486-0952
	E-Mail <a href="mailto:cccapsea@alltell.net">cccapsea@alltell.net</a>

## Carbon County

Center Name	Contact
Victims Resource Center 2 (Luzerne County Satellite Office)	Business (570) 325-9642
	Hotline (570) 325-9641, or (866) 206-9050

## Centre County

Center Name	Contact
Centre County Women's Resource Center, Inc.	Business (814) 238-7066
	Hotline (814) 234-5050, or (877) 234-5222
	Website <a href="http://www.ccwrc.org">www.ccwrc.org</a>



## Chester County

Center Name	Contact	
The Crime Victims Center of Chester County, Inc.	Business	(610) 692-1926
	Hotline	(610) 692-7273
	Website	www.cvcofcc.org

## Clarion County

Center Name	Contact	
PASSAGES, Inc.	Business	(814) 226-7273
	Hotline	(800) 793-3620
	Website	www.passagesinc.net

## Clearfield County

Center Name	Contact	
PASSAGES, Inc.	Business	(814) 371-9677
	Hotline	(800) 793-3620
	Website	www.passagesinc.net

## Clinton County

Center Name	Contact	
Clinton County Women's Center	Business	(570) 748-9539
	Hotline	(570) 748-9509
	Website	www.ccwcsafe.org

## Columbia County

Center Name	Contact	
The Women's Center, Inc. of Columbia/Montour	Business	(570) 784-6632
	Hotline	(570) 784-6631, or (800) 544-8293
	Website	www.thewomenscenterinc.org

## Crawford County

Center Name	Contact	
Women's Services, Inc.	Business	(814) 724-4637
	Hotline	(814) 333-9766, or (888) 881-0189
	Website	<a href="http://www.womensservicesinc.org">www.womensservicesinc.org</a>

## Cumberland County

Center Name	Contact	
YWCA of Carlisle – Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Services of Cumberland County	Business	(717) 258-4324
	YWCA	(717) 243-3818
	Hotline	(888) 727-2877
	Website	<a href="http://www.ywcarlisle.org">www.ywcarlisle.org</a>

## Dauphin County

Center Name	Contact	
YWCA– Violence Intervention Prevention Program	Business	(717) 234-7931
	Hotline	(717) 238-7273, or (800) 654-1211
	Website	<a href="http://www.ywcahbg.org">www.ywcahbg.org</a>

## Delaware County

Center Name	Contact	
Delaware County Women Against Rape	Business	(610) 566-5866, or (610) 566-7954, or (610) 566-4386
	Hotline	(610) 566-4342

## Elk County

Center Name	Contact
CAPSEA, Inc.	Business (814) 772-3838
	Hotline (800) 226-4759, or (814) 772-1227
	Website Elkcapsea@windstream.net

## Erie County

Center Name	Contact
Crime Victim Center of Erie County, Inc.	Business (814) 455-9414
	Hotline (800) 352-7273
	Website www.cvcerie.org

## Fayette County

Center Name	Contact
Community Resources of Fayette County Inc. (Crime Victim Center)	Business (724) 438-1470
	Hotline (724) 437-3737
	Website www.crimevictimscenter.org

## Forest County

Center Name	Contact
A Safe Place	Business (814) 755-7880
	Hotline (800) 338-3460, or (814) 726-1030

## Franklin/Fulton Counties

Center Name	Contact
Win / Victim Services	Business (717) 264-3056
	Hotline (717) 264-4444, or (800) 621-6660
	Website www.winservices.org

## Greene County

Center Name	Contact
SPHS C.A.R.E. Center S.T.T.A.R.S. Program	Business (724) 627-6108
	Hotline (888) 480-7283

## Huntingdon County

Center Name	Contact
Huntingdon House	Business (814) 643-2801
	Hotline (814) 643-1190

## Indiana County

Center Name	Contact
Alice Paul House	Business (724) 349-5744
	Hotline (724) 349-4444, or (800) 435-7249
	Website <a href="http://www.alicepaulhouse.org">www.alicepaulhouse.org</a>

## Jefferson County

Center Name	Contact
PASSAGES, Inc. 3 (Clarion County Satellite Office)	Business (814) 849-5303
	Hotline (800) 793-3620

## Juniata County

Center Name	Contact
The Abuse Network (Mifflin County Satellite Office)	Business (717) 447-1885
	Hotline (717) 242-2444
	Website <a href="http://www.abusenetwork.org">www.abusenetwork.org</a>

## Lackawanna County

Center Name	Contact
Women's Resource Center, Inc.	Business (570) 346-4460
	Hotline (570) 346-4671
	Website <a href="http://www.wrcnepa.org">www.wrcnepa.org</a>

## Lancaster County

Center Name	Contact
Sexual Assault Prevention and Counseling Center	Business (717) 393-1735
	Hotline (717) 392-7273
	Website <a href="http://www.ywcalancaster.org">www.ywcalancaster.org</a>

## Lawrence County

Center Name	Contact
Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County	Business (724) 652-9206
	Hotline (724) 652-9036, or (724) 752-7273
	Website <a href="http://www.crisisshelter.org">www.crisisshelter.org</a>

## Lebanon County

Center Name	Contact
Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center	Business (717) 270-6972
	Hotline (717) 272-5308
	Website <a href="http://www.sarcclabanon.com">www.sarcclabanon.com</a>

## Lehigh County

Center Name	Contact
Crime Victims Council of Lehigh Valley, Inc.	Business (610) 437-6610
	Hotline (610) 437-6611
	Victim Dept. (610) 782-3145
	Website <a href="http://www.cvclv.org">www.cvclv.org</a>

## Luzerne County

Center Name	Contact
Victims Resource Center	Business (570) 823-0766
	Hotline (570) 823-0765
	Website www.vrcnepa.org

## Lycoming County

Center Name	Contact
YWCA - Wise Options	Business (570) 322-4637
	Hotline (570) 323-8167 (Crisis Calls Only)
	Website www.ywcawilliamsport.org

## McKean County

Center Name	Contact
YWCA – Victims’ Resource Center	Business (814) 368-4235
	Hotline (814) 368-6325, or (888) 822-6325

## Mercer County

Center Name	Contact
AWARE, Inc.	Business (724) 342-4934
	Hotline (888) 981-1457
	Hotline & TTY (724) 981-1457

## Mifflin County

Center Name	Contact
The Abuse Network	Business (717) 242-0715
	Hotline (717) 242-2444, or (888) 810-2444
	Website www.abusenetwork.org

## Monroe County

Center Name	Contact
Women's Resources of Monroe County, Inc.	Business (570) 424-2093
	Hotline (570) 421-4200, or (800) 799-7233
	TTY (570) 424-3453
	Website <a href="http://www.wrmonroe.org">www.wrmonroe.org</a>

## Montgomery County

Center Name	Contact
Victim Services Center Of Montgomery Co., Inc.	Business (610) 277-0932
	Hotline (610) 277-5200, or (888) 521-0983
	Website <a href="http://www.vscmontcopa.org">www.vscmontcopa.org</a>

## Montour County

Center Name	Contact
The Women's Center, Inc. of Columbia/Montour	Business (570) 784-6632
	Hotline (570) 784-6631, or (800) 544-8293
	Website <a href="http://www.thewomenscenter.org">www.thewomenscenter.org</a>

## Northampton County

Center Name	Contact
Northampton Crime Victims Council	Business (610) 250-6313
	Hotline (610) 437-6611
	Victim Dept. (610) 614-2040

## Northumberland County

Center Name	Contact
Susquehanna Valley Women in Transition	Business/Hotline (570) 644-4488
	Hotline (800) 850-7948
	Website <a href="http://www.svwit.org">www.svwit.org</a>

## Perry County

Center Name	Contact
YWCA - Violence Intervention Prevention Program	Business (717) 238-7273
	Hotline (800) 654-1211
	Website <a href="http://www.ywcahbg.org">www.ywcahbg.org</a>

## Philadelphia County

Center Name	Contact
Women Organized Against Rape	Business (215) 985-3315
	Hotline (215) 985-3333
	Website <a href="http://www.woar.org">www.woar.org</a>

## Pike County

Center Name	Contact
Safe Haven, Inc. of Pike County	Business (570) 296-2827
	Hotline (570) 296-4357

## Potter County

Center Name	Contact
A Way Out: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services	Business (814) 274-0368
	Hotline (814) 274-0240, or
	(877) 334-3136

## Schuylkill County

Center Name	Contact
Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center of Schuylkill County	Business (570) 628-2965
	Hotline (570) 628-2965



## Snyder County

Center Name	Contact
Susquehanna Valley Women in Transition	Business/Hotline (570) 374-7773
	Hotline (800) 850-7948
	Website www.svwit.org

## Somerset County

Center Name	Contact
Victim Services, Inc. 3 (Cambria County Satellite Office)	Business (814) 443-1555
	Hotline (814) 288-4961, or
	(800) 755-1983 (after 5p.m.)

## Sullivan County

Center Name	Contact
Victims Services	Business (570) 946-4063
	Hotline (570) 946-4215

## Susquehanna County

Center Name	Contact
Women's Resource Center, Inc. (Lackawanna County Satellite Office)	Business (570) 278-1800
	Hotline (800) 257-5765

## Tioga County

Center Name	Contact
Haven of Tioga County	Business (570) 724-3549
	Hotline (570) 724-3554, or
	(800) 550-0447

## Union County

Center Name	Contact
Susquehanna Valley Women in Transition	Business (570) 523-1134 Hotline (570) 523-6482, or (800) 850-7948 Website <a href="http://www.svwit.org">www.svwit.org</a>

## Venango County

Center Name	Contact
PPC Violence Free Network	Business (814) 677-4005, or (814) 676-5476 Hotline (800) 243-4944, or (814) 677-7273, or (814) 827-3472

## Warren County

Center Name	Contact
A Safe Place	Business (814) 726-1271 Hotline (814) 726-1030, or (800) 338-3460

## Washington County

Center Name	Contact
SPHS C.A.R.E. Center S.T.T.A.R.S. Program	Business (724) 229-5007 Hotline (888) 480-7283, or (724) 228-7208

## Wayne County

Center Name	Contact
Victims Intervention Program	Business (570) 253-4431
	Hotline (570) 253-4401, or (800) 698-4vip, Regional Only

## Westmoreland County

Center Name	Contact
Blackburn Center Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	Business/TTY (724) 837-9540
	Hotline (724) 836-1122 (Greensburg Area)
	Hotline (888) 832-2272 (Outside of Greensburg Area)
	Website <a href="http://www.blackburncenter.org">www.blackburncenter.org</a>

## Wyoming County

Center Name	Contact
Victims Resource Center, 3 (Luzerne County, Satellite Office)	Business (570) 836-5844
	Hotline (570) 836-5544
	Website <a href="http://www.svwit.org">www.svwit.org</a>

## York County

Center Name	Contact
YWCA of York/Victim Assistance Center	Business (717) 848-3535
	Hotline (717) 854-3131, or (800) 422-3204
	Website <a href="http://www.ywcayork.org">www.ywcayork.org</a>





125 North Enola Drive

Enola, PA 17025

1-800-692-7445

1-888-772-PCAR

[www.pcar.org](http://www.pcar.org)