

Reporting a crime

If you believe that you are the victim of a crime or have witnessed a crime, you should report it to the police as soon as possible. It may seem like a frightening step, but the best way to get immediate help is through the police. It can also prevent crime from happening to others.

For help in making a police report, contact the Victims of Crime Helpline on 1800 819 817. Helpline staff will discuss your options, and can put you in touch with a victims support service in your area.

You are respected under law as a victim of crime through the Victims' Charter. You have right to access information, support, and in some cases financial assistance.

If you require immediate police assistance, call 000.

To report a crime, call your nearest police station. You may then have to visit the station in person.

Making your report

- Tell the police exactly what happened and describe any injuries or losses, including as much detail as possible.
- Police may ask questions that make you feel uncomfortable. These questions may be difficult to answer, but they are an important part of the investigation.
- You may be asked to have a medical examination or have photos taken of your injuries.
- Police may remove property to use as evidence in the trial. You will be issued with a receipt.
- You may be able to use your property before the trial if you make it available to the court.
- Police may ask that you stay out of areas where the offence was committed (the crime scene) so they can take photographs or fingerprints. Although this may be difficult for you, the police may find important evidence for the investigation.

- You may be asked to identify the offender. This might be in a police line-up or by looking at photographs.
- Police will provide you with a *Notice to the Victim* form, which details some of your rights.

If you are the victim of a violent crime police are also required to give you a booklet called *A Victim's Guide to Support Services and the Criminal Justice System*. It provides information to help you to understand the criminal justice process.

How police can help you with information

Your *Notice to the Victim* form (sometimes called an L1 form) will include the name of the police officer who is dealing with your case (the investigating officer). You can contact this person if you have any questions about your case, or if you have information that you think will help the police.

Police can give you general information about your case, but may not give details if this could affect the investigation. If your investigating officer is unavailable, ask for the officer in charge, who will be able to help you.

Victim's Charter enquiries and complaints process

The Victims' Charter is a law in Victoria that sets out the rights of victims of crime. You have the right to be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity by police, court staff and victim support services.

If you believe any of the Victims' Charter principles have not been followed in your case, you also have the right to make a complaint.

If you would like to know more about your rights as a victim of crime, you can call the Victims' Charter Enquiries and Complaints Line on 1800 118 728.

Victim support services

If you've been affected by violent crime, support is important to help you get back on track. Family and friends can be a great source of comfort, but sometimes it might not be enough.

If you need help with any ongoing effects of crime, there are trained staff all over Victoria that can support you, your family and others affected by the crime.

The Victim Assistance and Counselling Program (VACP) is a network of support services that can help you with:

- making police reports and communicating with police
- finding accommodation, transport and medical services
- finding local support groups and other services like lawyers or legal aid
- information about what happens at court
- support at court and tribunal hearings
- writing a Victim Impact Statement
- applying for an Intervention Order
- short-term counselling
- applying for counselling and financial assistance at the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal.

To find your local VACP and check your eligibility call the Victims of Crime Helpline on 1800 819 817.

Where to go for help

Police

If you are in immediate danger, you should always call the police on 000.

The Victims of Crime Helpline

1800 819 817

8am to 11pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.
(free call, except from mobile phones)

Ask a question by SMS – 0427 767 891

Email: vsa@justice.vic.gov.au

www.justice.vic.gov.au/victimsofcrime

Victims' Charter Enquiries and Complaints Line

1800 118 728

Victoria Legal Aid

1800 677 402

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au