
**Section: THREE
Chapter: TWENTY-SIX**

SUBJECT: Victim and Witness Assistance
ISSUE DATE: 03-26-16
REFERENCE: 29.4, 29.5

I. PURPOSE

- A. To emphasize the needs of victims of criminal and non-criminal incidents and the responsibilities of the members of the Palmyra Police Department to provide support.
- B. To provide information and guidance to the victims and witnesses who show a need.

II. POLICY

- A. Officers of the Palmyra Police Department are often in a unique position to provide assistance to the victims of crime and other traumatic incidents. These experiences may have both immediate and/or long-term effects on the individual's emotional recovery.
- B. It is the policy of the Palmyra Police Department to facilitate the ability of victims to secure the assistance and guidance that is necessary for their physical and emotional recovery.
- C. The personnel of the Palmyra Police Department will support and aid victims as they continue to interact with the criminal justice system.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Safety & Security

- 1. Officers are responsible for securing the crime or incident scene to protect lives and ensure the safety of the victims, the public, and officers of the Palmyra Police Department;
- 2. Officers will summon any necessary medical assistance and render any other assistance required;
- 3. After completing their involvement, and whenever possible, officers should not leave a distraught victim alone.
- 4. Arrangements should be made to have a relative, friend or clergyman join the victim for emotional support and comfort.

B. Information & Referral

- 1. It is important that officers take the steps necessary to meet the victims' needs for support and information. These may include:
 - a) Leaving the officer's name, the case number and Department telephone number.
 - b) Encourage the victim to contact the Palmyra Police Department to report additional information about the incident or to request information or assistance
- 2. Provide information on victim service agencies available in the community:

- a) Eligible crime victims shall be provided with the State of New York Crime Victims Board brochure titled "Claim Application and Instructions". This brochure contains a crime victim claim form.
- b) Members of the Department assist the victim understanding the content of the brochure and claim form.
- c) Members of the Department will be required to advise victims of their option to contact the Wayne County District Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Program coordinator or regional Crime Victims Office for assistance or guidance in submitting or completing the Crime Victim's Claim Form.

C. Report of Sex Offenses and Domestic Violence Reports

1. When an officer is called to investigate a sex crime, or a domestic violence incident, it is the policy of the Palmyra Police Department to inform the victim(s) of the Victim's Resource Center's services.
2. If the victim of a sex crime requests a Rape Crisis counselor's presence, the investigating officer will contact the Victim Resource Center (331-1171) and request a case worker be sent to victim's location.
3. As required by Subdivision 2-A of Section 642 of the Executive Law, the Department must provide a "private setting" for interviewing such victims from which the occupants are not visible and their conversation cannot be heard.
4. Only those persons directly and immediately related to the interviewing of a particular victim shall be present during questioning. Such persons may include:
 - a) A social worker, Rape Crisis counselor, psychologist, or other professional providing emotional support to the victim unless the victim objects to the presence and requests exclusion of such person.
 - b) Only those police personnel directly involved in the case who need to be present during questioning.
 - c) Where appropriate, the parent or parents of the victim shall be present during the interview if requested by the victim.
5. Victim Assistance:
 - a) In every case, the victim, or alleged victim, of a sex crime will be provided in writing with the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest Rape Crisis Center.
 - b) In Wayne County, sexual assault counseling services are provided by the Victim Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, Inc.(VRC). The VRC can be contacted via their hotline at (800) 456-1172. The VRC office is located at 132 Harrison Street, Newark.

By the Order of:

David B. Smith
Chief of Police