



General Order 55.1 - Victim/Witness Assistance

PURPOSE: Describe rights of victims and witnesses, the goals and objectives in working with victims and witnesses, the general guidelines for victim/witness services, how to orient civilian employees to victim/witness needs and services, and the training of deputies in victim/witness services.

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55.1.1 RIGHTS OF VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

- A. The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office is committed to the development, implementation, and continuation of appropriate victim/witness assistance programs and activities.

1. The Kansas Victims Bill of Rights will be used as a guide for victim/witness assistance programs and activities.
- B. The Kansas Victims Bill of Rights states that in order to ensure the fair and compassionate treatment of victims of crime and to increase the effectiveness of the criminal justice system by affording victims of crime certain basic rights and considerations, victims of crime shall have the following rights:
1. Victims should be treated with courtesy, compassion, and respect for their dignity and privacy and should suffer the minimum necessary inconvenience from their involvement with the criminal justice system.
 2. Victims should receive prompt and fair redress for the harm they have suffered.
 3. Information regarding the availability of criminal restitution, recovery of damages in a civil cause of action, the crime victim's compensation fund, and other remedies and the mechanisms to obtain such remedies should be made available to victims.
 4. Information should be made available to victims about their participation in criminal proceedings and the scheduling, progress, and ultimate disposition of the proceedings.
 5. The views and concerns of victims should be ascertained and the appropriate assistance provided throughout the criminal process.
 6. When the personal interests of victims are affected, the views or concerns of the victim should, when appropriate and consistent with criminal law and procedure, be brought to the attention of the court.
 7. Measures may be taken when necessary to provide for the safety of victims and their families and to protect them from intimidation and retaliation.
 8. Enhanced training should be made available to sensitize criminal justice personnel to the needs and concerns of victims, and guidelines should be developed for this purpose.
 9. Victims should be informed of the availability of health and social services and other relevant assistance so that they may continue to receive the necessary medical, psychological, and social assistance through existing programs and services.
 10. Victims should report the crime and cooperate with law enforcement authorities.

55.1.2 OPEN

55.1.3 OPEN

55.1.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. The goal of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office is to provide victim/witness assistance as outlined in [general orders 55.1](#) and [55.2](#), thereby assisting in the successful conclusion of an investigation.

1. Each member of the office has a shared responsibility for delivering victim/witness assistance as outlined in [general orders 55.1](#) and [55.2](#).

55.1.5 VICTIM/WITNESS GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Every member of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office shall deliver victim/witness assistance as the need becomes apparent. This assistance can include, but not be limited to:
1. Referral to appropriate agency or private sector group;
 2. Assistance in locating emergency shelter;
 3. Offering reassurance and comfort;
 4. Explanation of how the case will be handled; and
 5. Point of contact regarding case status information.
- B. Information of a personal nature (names, addresses, etc.) of victims and witnesses shall not be released except as specified in [section 82.1.11](#).
- C. As opportunity presents itself, information on available victim/witness services should be presented to the public.

55.1.6 OPEN

55.1.7 ORIENTATION OF CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

- A. As civilian employees will also be coming into contact with victims and witnesses upon occasion, these employees shall also have knowledge of various victim and witness services that are offered.
1. Written memoranda containing the appropriate information will suffice for civilian orientation.

55.1.8 TRAINING OF DEPUTIES IN VICTIM/WITNESS NEEDS

- A. All deputies will receive training in victim/witness rights and needs and the role of the office in meeting those needs.
- B. In-service training will be given in victim/witness needs and services periodically.