



Eric Hawkins  
Chief of Police

**ALBANY, NEW YORK**  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
165 HENRY JOHNSON BOULEVARD  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12210



1789

**VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE**  
**GENERAL ORDER NO: 2.5.15**

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to protect and preserve the rights of all victims and witnesses; and to provide social assistance, referral, emotional support, and other help to victims and/or witnesses who are physically, financially, or emotionally harmed by crime.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Albany Police Department to be committed to assisting victims and witnesses of crime in a fair, compassionate, and dignified manner. Department personnel shall ensure that victims and witnesses of crime are afforded all rights and entitlements provided by law.

**DEFINITIONS:** **Victim** – A victim is an individual who suffers direct or threatened physical, psychological, and/or financial harm as the result of the commission or attempted commission of a criminal offense. Victims also include an individual's spouse or former spouse; intimate dating partner, past or present; parent, child, or the lawful representative of a victim who is deceased; and a minor, incompetent or physically or psychologically incapacitated.

**Witness** – A witness is a person who has been, or is expected to be, summoned to testify for either the prosecution or defense, or who by reason of having relevant information is subject to be called or is likely to be called as a witness for the prosecution or defense, whether or not any action or proceeding has yet been commenced. All victims are witnesses.

**Victim Advocate** – Victim advocate applies to a wide range of service providers, rape crisis counselors, social workers, victim witness providers within a prosecutor's office, and law enforcement officers, including departmental victim advocates. Depending on the primary functions of these different advocates, the levels of confidentiality and privilege vary and should be communicated to the victim.

**I. PRODEDURES**

**A.** The Albany Police Department recognizes the rights of victims and witnesses

and requires that department personnel comply with all applicable provisions of law regarding crime victim compensation and services, including [Article 22 of the NYS Executive Law](#), [Article 23 of the NYS Executive Law](#) and the [NYS Crime Victim's Bill of Rights](#).

1. Department personnel shall ensure the confidentiality of victims/witnesses and their role in case development to the extent consistent with applicable law.
- B.** Personnel shall make every reasonable effort to assist victims and witnesses, and shall be aware of the available local and State crime victim and witness programs. Officers should be knowledgeable that victims and witnesses who suffer physical injury, disability, death, or financial hardship may be eligible to receive services from agencies, which include, but are not limited to the following:
1. [Children and Family Services Unit - Domestic Violence Victim Advocates](#);
  2. [Albany County District Attorney's Office](#);
  3. [Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center \(CVSVC\)](#); and/or
  4. [New York State Office of Victim Services \(OVS\)](#).
- C.** The CVSVC operates in conjunction with the Detective Division when interacting with, and assisting, victims and witnesses.
1. The CVSVC works closely with the District Attorney's Office.
  2. Department personnel shall be knowledgeable on the types of assistance that is offered and should be aware of all available aid that is provided by the CVSVC.
  3. It is the responsibility of all personnel assigned to a case to render appropriate assistance to victims and witnesses of crime, with particular attention to the needs of violent crime victims.
  4. Support and assistance will be provided in a timely manner to assist the emotional and physical recovery of victims and witnesses.
  5. To accomplish these objectives, minimize duplication of services, and enhance efficiency, department personnel assigned, along with members of the CVSVC, must ensure a high degree of cooperation between the Albany Police Department and other governmental and private entities providing victim services.
    - a. This cooperation is essential and will be maintained through personal interaction with other victim advocates, membership in professional organizations, and participation in community functions.
5. The department's Public Information Officer (PIO) shall work with the CVSVC to keep the public and media informed concerning the department's victim and witness assistance services.
- a. Community Service Officers (CSOs) shall also distribute victim and witness service related literature and agency brochures at assigned community functions.

- D.** The Albany Police Department shall make the following victim and witness assistance information available twenty-four (24) hours a day from a single point of contact:
- 1.** Information supplied by other organizations, within the department's jurisdiction:
    - a.** Referral information regarding governmental or private sector services for victims and witnesses can be located on the Albany Police Department's Victim Rights Form, shown on pages 7 and 8 of this order.
  - 2.** Information supplied directly by this department:
    - a.** The department's single point of contact for victim and witness assistance information is the Communications Center, as designated on the Albany Police Department's Victim Rights Form.
  - 3.** An Albany Police Department Victim's Rights Form shall be provided and explained to victim/witnesses by responding officers/detectives during the preliminary investigation process.
- E.** Victim/witness assistance services rendered during the preliminary investigation shall be the responsibility of the officers/detectives assigned to the call, which shall include the following:
- 1.** Provide the victim/witness information about applicable services, such as, medical attention, compensation programs or emergency financial assistance, and victim advocacy.
    - a.** In situations where the needs of the victim or witness cannot be addressed by law enforcement, the CVSVC will serve as a referral center, directing those in need to the appropriate sources of assistance.
    - b.** The CVSVC will act as liaison and referral for victims and witnesses regarding applicable services to include:
      - i.** Professional counseling;
      - ii.** Victim compensation;
      - iii.** Medical assistance;
      - iv.** Emergency financial assistance;
      - v.** Victim advocacy; and
      - vi.** Other sources of victim assistance that may be available.
  - 2.** Provide the victim/witness with the assigned incident number, and subsequent steps in processing the case, which shall include the following:
    - a.** Instructions on how to notify the reporting officer or investigating detective of any changes in information or additional information



5. Assign a victim advocate, if available, to the victim or witness during the follow-up investigation.

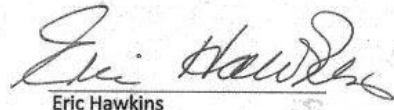
**H. Victims of Sexual Assault:**

1. In addition to the procedures outlined in this policy, victims of sexual assault shall be provided, in writing, the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest rape crisis center:
  - a. Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center  
112 State Street – Room 1110  
Albany, NY 12207  
24 Hour Hotline (518) 447.7716  
Administrative Office (518) 447.7100 or (518) 447.5500
    - i. This information is available on the present Albany Police Department Rights of Victims of Family Offenses Form.
    - ii. Personnel shall provide the victim with a copy of said form, as well as advise the victim of the information contained therein.
2. For further information relating to sex crimes, personnel shall refer to [GO 3.1.55 – Response to Sex Crimes.](#)

**I. Trauma Response Team:**

1. The City of Albany, in conjunction with the CVSVC, the State University of New York at Albany's School of Social Welfare, and numerous service providers are collaborating on a Trauma Response Team (TRT).
2. The TRT will be mobilized based on exposure to traumatic incidents, such as shootings that occur in the City.
3. The TRT will work to serve the emotional and physical needs of victims, their families, witnesses, and the greater community in the aftermath of a shooting.
4. The connection between exposure to violence and the likelihood of committing acts of violence has been well documented. The TRT will address these issues by proactively reaching out to communities that are most in harm's way.
5. The TRT will work to mitigate the aftereffects of violence and address on-going post traumatic stress suffered in the communities affected by violence.
6. The TRT will have a program administrator with a social work background.
  - a. The TRT program administrator will work out of the CVSVC and will be responsible for the following:
    - i. Recruiting volunteers;
    - ii. Ensuring the appropriate training of volunteers;
    - iii. Representing the team at community events; and
    - iv. Ensuring that available services meet the needs of all parties involved.

- b. The anti-violence coordinator will liaison with the TRT program administrator and the CVSVC to ensure implementation and execution.



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If you are the victim of domestic violence, you may request that the officer assist in providing for your safety and that of your children, including providing information on how to obtain a temporary order of protection. You may also request that the officer assist you in obtaining your essential personal effects and taking you, or assist in making arrangements to take you, and your children to a safe place within such officer's jurisdiction. This may include a domestic violence program, a family member's or a friend's residence, or a similar place of safety. If you or your children are in need of medical treatment, you have the right to request that the officer assist you in obtaining such medical treatment. You have the right to seek legal counsel of your own choosing and if you proceed in family court, and if it is determined that you cannot afford an attorney, one must be appointed to represent you without cost to you.

You may ask the law enforcement officer how to proceed in order to prosecute this criminal complaint. You have the right to file a petition in family court when a family offense has been committed against you. Either or both, Family court and Criminal court may issue an order of protection when a family offense has been committed. You may also petition Family court for temporary child support and/or custody of your children.

The resources available in this community for information relating to domestic violence, shelters and referrals are listed on this form. The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Hotline is (English) 1-800-942-6906, (Spanish) 1-800-942-6908.

Officer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Incident#: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Complainant's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Complainant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FILING A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT OR A FAMILY COURT PETITION CONTAINING ALLEGATIONS THAT ARE KNOWINGLY FALSE IS A CRIME.

ALBANY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM  
 Public Safety Building  
 1 Morton Ave., Albany 12202  
 (518) 447-8770

EQUINOX INC.  
 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES  
 95 Central Avenue, Albany 12206  
 24 Hour Hotline (518) 432- 7865

HOMELESS AND TRAVELER'S AID  
 138 Central Ave, Albany 12206 (518)463-2124  
 162 Washington Ave, Albany (518)447-7285

ALBANY COUNTY CRIME VICTIM AND  
 SEXUAL VIOLENCE CENTER  
 112 State Street - Room 1110, Albany 12207  
 24 Hour Hotline(518) 447-7716  
 Administrative Office (518) 447-7100 (518)447-5500

UNITY HOUSE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES  
 504 Broadway, Troy 12180  
 24 hour Hotline (518) 272-2370  
 Administrative Office (518) 272-5917

UNITED WAY 211 NORTHEAST REGION  
 Call 211  
 Monday -- Friday 9:00am -- 5:00pm

IN OUR OWN VOICES  
 CAPITAL REGION LGBT ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT  
 245 Lark St  
 Albany, NY 12210  
 Support line (518)432-4341 Office (518) 432-4188

**INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REFERRAL**

Date of Incident/Accident: \_\_\_\_\_ Incident #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 License Plate: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Shield/Pin: \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Accident / Report**

<input type="checkbox"/> PDAA	<input type="checkbox"/> PIAA
<input type="checkbox"/> HIT & RUN	<input type="checkbox"/> FATAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SIR	<input type="checkbox"/> NO REPORT

**For Copies of Reports Online:**

Secure copies of reports are available online after 3-5 business days at: [www.crashdocs.org/albany](http://www.crashdocs.org/albany).

*Locate your report using your last name, incident number, and date of incident. For help, contact us at 462-8019.*

**For Paper Copies of Reports:**

Copies of reports are available after 2-3 business days at the following location:

*Albany Police Headquarters  
 Administrative Services  
 165 Henry Johnson Boulevard  
 Albany, NY 12210*

(ANY ADJUSTMENTS MUST BE MADE BY THE ORIGINAL OFFICER)

**PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED** i.e. (License, Employee ID, etc)  
 \$0.25/page. Contact us @ 462-8019.

**Other Albany Police Department Numbers:**

**Emergency:** ..... **911**  
 Non-Emergency .....438-4000  
 Chief of Police: .....462-8012  
 South Station: .....462-8049  
 Center Station: .....458-5661  
 Traffic/Special Operations: .....462-6593  
 Detective Office: .....462-8039  
**Inquiries about active criminal case investigations should be directed to:**  
 CCCIU .....462-8075  
 E-mail inquiries to.....[ccciu@albany-ny.org](mailto:ccciu@albany-ny.org)



## Albany Police Department Safety Tips

### PERSONAL SAFETY

- When walking, try not to walk alone.
- At night, walk in well-lit areas.
- Always be alert to your surroundings.
- Trust your instincts. If you see someone that makes you uncomfortable, try to walk away and get help.
- Use a safety whistle to scare away a potential criminal and to summons help.
- A free Albany Police whistle is available by calling: 438-4000. Ask for the Community Services Officer.

### VEHICLE SAFETY

- When parking, be certain to lock your car.
- Secure and hide your valuables. Thieves are frequently attracted to items such as cell phones, change holders, laptop computers, etc. that are left exposed in a vehicle.
- When possible, please take any valuables with you.
- During night hours, please be certain to park your car in a well-lit area.
- Have your key ready when you go back to your car.
- Do not leave your car running and unattended!
- Thieves will easily steal an unlocked and unattended vehicle with the keys inside it.
- The driver of an unattended running vehicle is subject to a violation, with penalties as high as \$100.00 and additional traffic court fees.

### HOME SAFETY/BURGLARY PREVENTION

- When at home, keep all your house doors locked.
- Never answer/open a door before you are certain that you know who is knocking.
- At night, always have an outside light on.
- When away, try to leave both an interior and exterior light on. A motion detector/timer light is suggested.
- Be certain to use deadbolt locks.
- Try to lock/secure windows. Window pins are helpful.
- Call APD, 438-8000 for a free security survey.

### SCAMS

- Home repair scams are frequent. Never agree to pay for home repairs/improvements without fully checking on the contractor. Ask for references before you give any money.
- Telephone telemarketers are very aggressive and are often fraudulent.
- Never give your credit card number.
- Always ask for more information by mail.
- Don't be afraid to just say no and hang-up.

### SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS

- Work out a **safe route to school** with your parents. Choose the quickest way with the fewest street crossings and use intersections with crossing guards. Stay away from places where there aren't many people around.
- Whenever possible walk to and from school with a friend, neighbor, brother or sister. Don't go by yourself.
- Be sure you know your home **phone number** (including area code) and address, the numbers of your parents at work and of another trusted adult and how to use 911 for emergencies.
- Never talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your parents don't know well and trust.
- If you bike or stake to school, **wear a helmet**, and don't forget to lock up your bike with a sturdy lock wherever you leave it.
- If you're home alone after school, check in with a parent or neighbor as soon as you walk in the door.
- Let parents and friends know if you stay late after school. Get permission first if you want to play with a friend instead of going home.
- If you see anyone doing **something that makes you uneasy** or you think isn't right -- a stranger hanging around the school playground, a bigger kid bullying younger children, vandalism or graffiti for example --- tell your parents, a teacher, or another trusted adult.
- HELP McGRUFF TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME!



### NEW YORK STATE CRIME VICTIMS BOARD

For a claim application, the location of your local victim assistance program, or for any questions, contact the Crime Victims Board at:

Albany  
1 Columbia Circle  
Suite 200  
Albany, NY 12203-6383  
(518) 457-8727

New York City 55 Hanson Place Room 1000 Brooklyn, NY 11217-1523 (718) 923-4325	Buffalo 65 Court Street Room 308 Buffalo, NY 14202-3406 (716) 847-7992
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1-800-247-8035  
[www.cvb.state.ny.us](http://www.cvb.state.ny.us)  
TTY: 1-888-289-9747

Local Victim Assistance Program:  
Albany County Crime Victims  
(518) 447-5500

### CRIME VICTIMS CAN GET HELP

- You may be eligible for compensation from the New York State Crime Victims Board for items such as: lost wages, medical expenses, counseling, funeral expenses, essential personal property, occupational rehabilitation, moving expenses or crime scene clean-up.
- Police and District Attorney can help protect you against harassment and intimidation.
- Compensation applications, informative brochures and information cards on crime victim compensation may be found in every police station, precinct house and any location in New York State where a crime may be reported.

See the reverse side of this card for CRIME VICTIMS BOARD contact information. The Crime Victims Board can provide information on compensation and services offered to crime victims and the location of your local victim assistance program.

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