

The Victims' Bill of Rights Overview

Please refer to *Understanding The Victims' Bill of Rights* for a current list of the most serious crimes to see if you are eligible for services under *The Victims' Bill of Rights*.

The meaning of the words in **bold** type are also explained in *Understanding The Victims' Bill of Rights*.

Manitoba Justice recognizes the need to offer information, assistance and support to victims of the most serious crimes.

Crime victim services workers:

- provide information about the justice system and community resources
- advise victims of their options, rights and responsibilities

For information call toll free: **1-866-4VICTIM (1-866-484-2846)**

or go to:
www.manitoba.ca/justice/victims/index.html

What is *The Victims' Bill of Rights*?

The Victims' Bill of Rights recognizes:

- victims of crime have needs and concerns that deserve consideration
- victims should be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect
- victims should have access to appropriate protection and help
- victims should be given information on the investigation, prosecution, and outcome of offence(s).

What are some of the rights that I may request under *The Victims' Bill of Rights*?

At each stage of the justice process you can choose the rights you want to use.

Law Enforcement Agencies

As a crime victim, your first point of contact with the justice system is likely to be a police officer. In Manitoba, this would include RCMP, Winnipeg Police Services and municipal police. Under *The Victims' Bill of Rights*, you may request the following from police:

- the right to give an opinion on **alternative/extrajudicial measures** and release
- the right to be interviewed by an officer of the same gender in a sexual offence
- the right to have personal details about you kept **confidential**
- the right to information about the investigation
- the right to information about an offender's escape from police custody
- the right to have your property returned when it is no longer needed as part of an investigation
- the right to information about the Prosecutions Division (e.g., contact information)

Prosecutions Division

When someone is charged with a crime, a Crown attorney in the Prosecutions Division is responsible for dealing with the case. The Crown attorney must be fair to all parties in the case, including victims, witnesses and the accused. The Crown attorney is not your lawyer but will take into account your concerns. Victims may request the following:

- the right to information about the status of the prosecution
- the right to be consulted about the prosecution
- the right to have the crown request **restitution**
- the right to information about the Corrections Division

Criminal Justice Division – Victim Services Branch

Crime victim services workers are employed by this branch and will contact you when criminal charges have been laid. They will explain the court process, make sure you understand your rights and advise where to get information at every stage.

Court Division

Criminal cases are presented in court. The courts include the physical place where cases are heard and the people who work there such as the judges, clerks and sheriffs. If your case ends up before the courts, you can access the following rights:

- access to court proceedings
- the right to information about how to obtain the date, time and place of a court proceeding

Corrections Division

The Corrections division is responsible for sentenced and unsentenced offenders. If the offender in your case is sentenced and will be handled by the provincial system, you have the right to ask for information such as:

- whether a person is under supervision or in **custody** and the name and location of the jail or supervising office
- where a **pre-sentence** report is being prepared and your opportunity to comment
- estimated dates of release from custody and the dates of temporary absences or other types of release, along with their terms and conditions
- notification of an offender's escape, being unlawfully at large and recapture
- warning of an offender's possible threat to your safety and security

Other rights and services for victims of crime

Going through the justice process can take time away from work. Victims of serious crime have rights outside of the justice system. This includes specific rights from your employers.

You have the right to be granted time off work for parts of a trial if you are:

- testifying
- presenting a victim impact statement to the court
- observing any sentencing of the accused

How do I register for my rights?

For more information about registration and registration forms, ask your local police agency or a crime victim services worker.