

Victim and Witness Assistance

318.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that crime victims and witnesses receive appropriate assistance and information available through government and private resources and to meet all related legal mandates.

318.2 POLICY

The Beloit Police Department is committed to providing guidance and assistance to the victims and witnesses of crime. The employees of the Beloit Police Department will show compassion and understanding for victims and witnesses and make reasonable efforts to provide the support and information identified in this policy.

318.3 CRIME VICTIMS

Officers should provide all victims with the applicable victim information handouts.

Officers should never guarantee a victim's safety from future harm, but may make practical safety suggestions to victims who express fear of future harm or retaliation. Officers should never guarantee that a person qualifies as a victim for purpose of compensation or restitution, but may direct him/her to the proper written department material or available victim resources.

318.3.1 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS REGARDING VICTIMS

Officers shall ensure that the victim information handout is delivered to victims as soon as practicable but not later than 24 hours after initial contact with the victim (Wis. Stat. § 950.08(2g)).

Sex crime victims require additional actions as identified in the Sexual Assault Investigations Policy (601).

Victims of sexual assault, human trafficking and child sexual abuse have the right to be accompanied by a victim advocate when being interviewed by an officer of the Beloit Police Department or another law enforcement agency. If the victim advocate obstructs or delays the interview, or fails to comply with the Child Abuse Policy and/or Sexual Assault Investigations Policy regarding the confidentiality of information relating to an investigation, he/she may be excluded from the interview and a different victim advocate may be permitted to accompany the victim at the victim's request (Wis. Stat. § 950.045(1)).

318.4 VICTIM INFORMATION

The Inspector or designee shall ensure that victim information handouts are available and in compliance with all legal mandates related to crime victims. These should include as appropriate:

- (a) Shelters and other community resources for victims of domestic abuse.

Beloit Police Department

WI LE Policy Manual

Victim and Witness Assistance

1. The information shall include the availability of shelters and services from lists provided by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (Wis. Stat. § 968.075).
 - (b) Community resources for victims of sexual assault.
 - (c) Assurance that sexual assault victims will not incur out-of-pocket expenses for forensic medical exams, and information about evidence collection, storage and preservation in sexual assault cases (34 USC § 10449; 34 USC § 20109).
 - (d) Information regarding available compensation for qualifying victims of crime (Wis. Admin. Code § JUS 11.11).
 - (e) VINE® information (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), including the telephone number and website to register, to allow victims to check on an offender's custody status and to register for automatic notification when a person is released from jail.
 - (f) A place for the officer's name, and any applicable incident number.
 - (g) The mandated notices contained in Wis. Stat. § 950.08(2g) for crime victims, which includes a list of victim's rights under Wis. Stat. § 950.04(1v) and Wis. Const. Article I, § 9m.
 - (h) Notice of legal rights and remedies available to domestic abuse victims that includes the statement: "If you are the victim of domestic abuse, you may contact a domestic violence victim service provider to plan for your safety and take steps to protect yourself, including filing a petition under s. 813.12 of the Wisconsin statutes for a domestic abuse injunction or under s. 813.125 of the Wisconsin statutes for a harassment injunction" (Wis. Stat. § 968.075).
 - (i) Information on the Wisconsin Department of Justice Address Confidentiality Program for victims of abuse (Wis. Stat. § 165.68).

318.5 WITNESSES

Officers should never guarantee a witness' safety from future harm or that their identity will always remain confidential. Officers may make practical safety suggestions to witnesses expressing fear of future harm or retaliation.

Officers should investigate allegations of witness intimidation and take enforcement action when lawful and reasonable.

Officers may provide witnesses with a witness information handout explaining their rights pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 950.04(2w) when appropriate.

318.6 WITNESS INFORMATION

The Administration supervisor shall ensure that witness handouts are available and current. The handout should include the rights of witnesses contained in Wis. Stat. § 950.04(2w).