

LOCAL RESOURCES

Rape Crisis Center:

Phone:

Contact:

Locations for Forensic Medical Examinations:

Additional Resources:

Sexual Assault Incident Reports



TIPS

When writing a report:

- Approach every case with an open mind and without making assumptions.
- Document, preserve, and assign a tracking number for every reported sexual offense.
- Write a detailed narrative. Be careful not to use words that imply consent.
- Use the victim's exact words and place those words in quotations.
- The supplemental report form should not be used as a substitute for a complete report.

When interviewing the victim and suspect:

- Interview, do not interrogate, the victim.
- Arrange unbiased, independent translation if English is not the first language of the victim, witness or suspect.

- Document in detail, using the victim's exact words, any coercion, force, or threats used.
- Provide detailed descriptions of victim's condition as observed. Clearly document the victim's feelings as expressed by the victim.
- Document all actions and statements as reported by the victim and suspect including statements that may corroborate pre-meditation and/or grooming behavior.
- Due to the nature of trauma, it is normal for the victim not to remember all of the details of the sexual assault. These memories may unfold over time.
- Make sure the suspect is interviewed in person and allowed to speak freely about the incident.
- Victims of sexual assault may recant or decline prosecution for a number of reasons. A victim's reluctance to participate is not reason to forgo a strong, evidence-based investigation.
- Provide the victim with resources on local counseling services early in the process and in writing if available.

When investigating:

- Do not pressure victims to make any decisions regarding participation in the investigation or prosecution during the initial interview or initial stages of the investigation.

- Do not polygraph victims.
- Identify and interview all outcry witnesses to whom the victim has disclosed.
- Collect forensic evidence up to 120 hours following a sexual assault. Additional physical evidence can be gathered and injuries documented beyond that time.
- Pursue a forensic exam to gather evidence from the suspect following local procedures.
- Be aware that suspects select vulnerable victims who may appear less credible and may be more reluctant to contact law enforcement.
- Understand that assaults often involve alcohol; it enables perpetrators to more easily commit a sexual offense while setting up the victim to be perceived as a less reliable witness.
- Schedule follow-up meetings with victims to build trust and gather additional information to further the on-going investigation.
- Keep in mind the co-occurring nature of violence against women crimes and identify and document all additional crimes (e.g. domestic violence, stalking, abduction, theft).