

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Subject Victim / Witness Assistance			
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I. Policy

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department to treat all ~~When employees come in contact with~~ victims and ~~/or~~ witnesses of criminal activity ~~employees shall treat them~~ with fairness, compassion, and dignity. The Department is committed to the development and implementation of appropriate assistance programs and activities for victims and ~~/or~~ witnesses. The Department ~~will~~ shall work cooperatively with, and assist the members of, the ~~Conasauga Circuit~~ Victim / Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) for the Conasauga Judicial Circuit of Georgia and other related agencies.

II. Victim / Witness Assistance Program

- A. ~~A~~ Victims ~~to a~~ of crimes ~~has~~ have certain rights that have been recognized by the Georgia General Assembly and written into law. Passage of victim-related bills outline ~~for~~ law enforcement's ~~their~~ obligations to victims under the law.
- B. Through a collaborative effort between the ~~Dalton Police~~ Department and the Conasauga Judicial Circuit's ~~Victim / Witness Program~~ VWAP, victims / witnesses shall have the following rights:
 1. ~~They have a right~~ To be informed of the criminal justice process, ~~notified of the~~ release from custody of offenders ~~notification~~, and informed about the various stages of the judicial process prior to trial.
 2. ~~They have a right~~ To certain compensation, when eligible.
 3. ~~They have a right~~ To due process in criminal proceedings.
 4. ~~They have a right~~ To professional and aggressive prosecution within the bounds of the law.
 5. ~~They have a right~~ To assistance with their employers concerning court appearances.
 6. To confidentiality of their identity and role in the case development, to the extent consistent with the Georgia Open Records Act.

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- C. This program shall also attempt to provide the following assistance through the ~~Victim / Witness Program~~ VWAP or District Attorney's Office with ~~law enforcement assistance~~ support from this Department and other law enforcement agencies:
1. Referral to social agencies in the community that provide emergency care, food, shelter, clothes, and support
 2. Preparation and orientation for court appearances
 3. Escorts and moral support in the courtroom
 4. Information regarding the status and disposition of ~~their~~ cases
 5. Property return and assistance with restitution
 6. Assistance in applying for crime victim's compensation
 7. Other ~~appropriate~~ information or assistance ~~that is needed~~ ~~or determined appropriate.~~
- D. Details of this program and links to VWAP resources are made available on the Department's website and through social media.

III. **Preliminary Investigations**

- A. The primary responsibility for providing assistance to a victim or witness ~~will be the first responder~~ shall be that of the initial responding Officer(s) to a scene.
- B. At the point of initial contact with the victim or witness of a crime, and after emergency assistance has been rendered, the initial responding Officer(s) shall render the following services in addition to ~~performing~~ other normal investigative measures:
- 1.A. When applicable, provide each victim / witness of a crime with a Crime Victim's Bill of Rights notification. The Bill of Right's Notification provides the case number, ~~name of the Officer's name~~ working the case, and information regarding the applicable services provided by the ~~Victim / Witness Program~~ VWAP.
 - 2.B. Inform ~~the~~ victim / witness of the subsequent steps in the processing of the case.
 - 3.C. Provide a telephone number that the victim / witness may call to report additional information about the case or receive information ~~of~~ ~~about~~ the status of the case.
 - 4.D. Advise the victim / witness to call 911 if the suspect, ~~or~~ the suspect's companions, or ~~the suspect's~~ family threatens or otherwise intimidates him or her.

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- 5.E. Advise the victim / witness to call 911 if ~~they~~ he / she needs any additional assistance with victim / witness services.
- 6.F. Refer the victims / witnesses to other service agencies, both private ~~or~~ and public, that may be of assistance.

IV. **Follow-up Investigations**

- A. Scheduling line-ups, interviews, and other required appearances ~~should~~ shall be at the convenience of the victim / witness, whenever feasible. Factors ~~which should that~~ shall be considered in ~~this~~ scheduling these activities include the physical, financial, and emotional well-being of the victim / witness.
- B. If necessary, the ~~Dalton Police~~ Department shall provide transportation to and from the ~~location~~ required appearance for the victim / witness.
- C.A. Whenever feasible, the ~~victim / witness~~ property taken from the victim / witness as evidence by the Department ~~will~~ shall be promptly returned (with the exception of contraband, disputed property, and weapons used in the commission of a crime).
- D.B. Whenever there is a traumatic incident, which requires more than the average amount of victim / witness assistance, the Officer / Investigator shall ~~periodically reconnect with~~ re-contact the victim / witness within a reasonable amount of time to determine whether ~~his / her needs are being met~~ further assistance is required.
- E.C. The ~~Detective or~~ investigating Officer or Investigator shall explain to the victim / witness the procedures involved in the prosecution of their case and their role in these procedures. Caution ~~should~~ shall be used to explain these procedures in such a manner as not to endanger the successful prosecution of the case.
- F.D. If ~~needed~~ required, the ~~detective or~~ investigating Officer or Investigator shall refer the victim / witness to the ~~Conasauga Circuit Victim / Witness Program Vwap~~ for assignment of an advocate and ensure copies of incident and / or supplemental reports are forwarded to the DA's Office.

V. **Threatened Victims / Witnesses**

- A. Threats to any victims or witnesses ~~will~~ shall be documented by an incident report and forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division for follow-up.
- B. Appropriate assistance and / or protective measures ~~will~~ shall be determined by the nature of each individual case, the level of threat, and the resources available to the Department.
- C. Appropriate assistance may range from the arrest of the individual making any threats to simply talking with the threatened victim / witness.
- D. If the Department becomes aware of danger to a victim or witness, every effort shall be made to promptly contact and offer any assistance and / or protective measures to the threatened person.

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- E. If danger to a victim or witness is occurring outside this jurisdiction, the ~~Detective~~ ~~or~~ investigating Officer or Investigator learning of such threat ~~will~~ shall also notify the appropriate jurisdiction.

VI. **Review of Assistance**

- A. The Criminal Investigations Division Commander or his / her designee shall complete a documented review of victim / witness assistance needs and available services within the ~~agency's~~ Department's service area at least once every ~~three~~ two years.
- B. This review is designed to identify appropriate victim / witness services that the Department can provide without duplicating services offered elsewhere in the community, whether by another government agency or by a private-sector organization.

This policy supersedes any previous policies issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

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