



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

710 – VICTIM / WITNESS RIGHTS AND ASSISTANCE

GENERAL ORDER: 2025-01
ISSUED: January 15, 2025

EFFECTIVE: January 15, 2025

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:
Assistant Chief Nicole Waldner
DATE: December 4, 2024

ACTION: Amends General Order 2022-35 (September 2, 2022)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): 14.1.1, 14.1.2,
14.1.3, 14.1.4

ROLL CALL VERSION

**Contains only changes to current policy.
For complete version of SOP, see SharePoint.**

710.00 PURPOSE (WILEAG 14.1.1)

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that department personnel conduct all department operations in a manner that recognizes the rights of victims and witnesses as defined in [Article 1 Section 9m](#) of the Wisconsin Constitution and the state of Wisconsin Basic Bill of Rights for Victims and Witnesses [Wis. Stat. § 950](#). The purpose of this policy is also to emphasize that an effective response to the needs of crime victims is an integral part of the department's mission. This essential function, performed by both sworn and civilian personnel, should address victims' needs by establishing a continuum of support and resources as victims' progress through the various phases of the criminal justice process.

710.15 MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES DURING INITIAL RESPONSE (WILEAG 14.1.2, 14.1.3, 14.2.1)

A. Victims of crime experience a variety of physical, psychological, and social needs that can be classified under seven categories:

1. Safety

Protection from suspects and assistance in avoiding revictimization.

2. Support

Assistance to enable participation in the criminal justice system processes and repair of harm.

3. Information

Concise and useful information about victims' rights, criminal justice system processes, and available victim services.

4. Access

Ability to participate in the criminal justice system process and have ready

availability to support services.

5. Continuity

Consistency in approaches and methods across agencies through all stages of the criminal justice process.

6. Voice

Opportunities to speak out and be heard on case processing and larger policy questions.

7. Justice

Receiving the support necessary to heal and seeing that suspects are held accountable.

B. When responding to calls for service involving crime victims, members shall:

1. Once the incident is stable, treat individuals with compassion, patience, and respect and utilize a trauma informed approach to develop a supportive presence. This approach includes reassuring the victim that he or she is no longer in immediate danger.
2. Victims who are emotionally distraught should not be left alone. If appropriate, relatives, friends, or a community resource such as a victim services provider should be contacted to provide comfort and support.
3. While collecting information and physical evidence necessary for investigation and subsequent prosecution, members shall be perceptive to and sensitive to the victim's emotional and psychological state through the use of trauma informed practices.
4. Members shall consider the method, manner, location, and timing of the trauma informed victim interview, so as not to subject the victim to additional stress and trauma.

CA. The following information shall be provided by department members to victims and witnesses:

5. Explanation of the process involved in the prosecution of their case and the victim's or witness' role in the prosecution. This explanation should include the member informing the victim of the general direction that the investigation will take, how the department will proceed, who will be responsible for further follow up, and whether the victim should expect to be contacted.

DB. Victims of [Wis. Stat. § 940.22](#) (Sexual Exploitation by Therapist), [Wis. § 940.225](#) (Sexual Assault), [Wis. § 940.302](#) (Human Trafficking), [Wis. § 948.02](#) (Sexual Assault of a Child), [Wis. § 948.025](#) (Engaging in Repeated Acts of Sexual Assault of the Same

Child), and [Wis. § 948.05](#) to [948.11](#) have the right to have a victim advocate present with them during police interviews in accordance with [Wis. Stat. 950.045](#).
(WILEAG 14.1.3.2)

EG. Department members shall respect and ensure the privacy and safety of all victims and shall not release the identity, address, or personal information of any victim without their consent except when in accordance with state law or if the victim is in danger.
(WILEAG 14.1.3.4)

F. The reporting member shall document in his or her report that the victim was properly informed of the rights and available protections and was provided with information relating to referrals.

710.20 MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES DURING FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATIONS (WILEAG 14.1.2)

D. If the victim is in need of further assistance from an outside source or agency or requests additional services, the investigating member or victim advocate shall make reasonable efforts to connect the victim with the appropriate service providers.

710.25 RESOURCES AND TRAINING

A. Department members who have contact with the public in general and victims in particular shall be familiar with governmental and community-based victim support and advocacy organizations.

B. The Milwaukee Police Department will collaborate and provide reasonable assistance to such entities to the extent that it does not place the victim or others at risk, substantially interfere with an ongoing investigation or prosecution, or violate privacy laws or department policy.

C. The Milwaukee Police Department *Quick Reference Guide* was created to provide resources to department members with a quick reference to the many community partners who offer education, faith-based, health, youth, and community housing services that can be accessed on SharePoint under the Handbooks, Manuals, and How-To's [site](#).

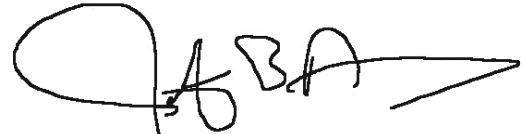
D. Department members shall be attentive to crime victims with special needs. Victims with physical, mental, or emotional impairments, as well as juvenile and elderly victims, should be attended to in a manner that best supports their life conditions and specific situations. Members should select a combination of service provider referrals that can work collaboratively to meet the unique needs of these victims.

E. Members shall also be sensitive to the cultural needs of crime victims by providing materials in a language that the victim can comprehend (when possible) and ensuring access to translator services when appropriate. Cultural background can affect the manner in which crime victims respond and react to being victimized and how they are treated by family and community members. Members should be aware of these

special circumstances and work with the appropriate service providers and community partners to support victims in these situations.

- F. Members shall receive training on providing assistance and services to victims of crime as part of their initial recruit training, through roll call memorandums, and during follow up in-service training.

710.2530 SAFE AT HOME PROGRAM (WILEAG 14.1.4)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.B.N.' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JEFFREY B. NORMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

JBN:mfk