

Justice

Victim Services of York Region
Victim/Witness Assistance Program
York Region Crown Attorney's Office
York Regional Police

Victim Services of York Region Inc.

Address: 4891 Hwy 7 East, Unit 12A, Box 243
Markham, ON. L3R 1N1

Location: Service provided at home, hospital, police station or crime scene upon police request and presence

How To Contact Us: Phone 905-474-2955
Fax 905-513-7933
Website www.victimservices-york.org
E-mail victimservices@yrp.ca

Commitment: Victim Services of York Region Inc incorporates, amongst its main principles, the principles of the Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995.

Victims should be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect for their personal dignity and privacy. Victim Services is committed to working with the police, social service agencies, municipalities, community and other local organizations to promote the development of an integrated service delivery framework for providing assistance to persons victimized by crime or tragic circumstance.

Victim Services is committed to providing equal treatment for all people accessing our services, while being sensitive to the issues of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and or abilities of individuals.

We Will: We will, within the mandate of our services, work in partnership with York Regional Police, Ontario Provincial Police, social services agencies, municipalities, community and other local organizations to promote the development of an integrated services delivery framework for providing assistance to victims, including the provision of safety planning for victims where necessary.

We will provide equal treatment for all people accessing our services, while being sensitive to the issues of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and or abilities of individuals.

Accountability: Concerns regarding the quality or nature of our service can be directed to the Executive Director of Victim Services.

Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Service is provided free of charge. We are a not-for-profit, charitable agency.

What We Do:

- Provide immediate 24 hour crisis assistance to victims of

domestic violence by attending the scene, a victim's home, the police station or the hospital if referred by York Regional Police or the Ontario Provincial Police

- Provide emotional support and practical assistance to the victim, family members and witnesses
- When required and safe, provide transportation for the victim to the Police Station, Hospital, Shelter or home.
- Explain police procedures and ensure the victim is prepared for any actions throughout the process while acting as a liaison between Police investigator and victim.
- Provide information about medical proceedings again ensuring a referral to the SADV where appropriate.
- Provide the victim with information on safety planning and the availability of safety planning information and assistance within the community.
- Explain court procedures, provide support and assist the victim/witness to undertake their involvement in the court process through a referral with the Victim Witness Assistance Program
- Continue follow up with the victim as needed to ensure connections to the community

Who We See: Victim Services of York Region Inc. provides services to any persons victimized by crime or tragic circumstance.

Procedures: On-Scene Response

- Victim Response Teams are on call 24/7 to York Regional Police and Ontario Provincial Police in York Region for on-scene interventions.
- Attendance at a crime scene, police station, hospital or home for interventions for police referrals only.

Telephone Crisis Response

- 24 hour telephone crisis assistance and community referrals to persons victimized by crime or tragic circumstance.
- Follow-up on police attendance for telephone crisis support and community referrals for persons victimized by crime or tragic circumstance.

Support Link Program

This program is designed to offer assistance to persons at high risk of experiencing violence from an intimate ex-partner. Persons at risk of sexual assault, domestic violence and/ or criminal harassment may apply to receive a mobile phone that is pre-programmed to dial 911 only.

This program has three components

- A personal safety plan is developed for the client.
- The client is provided with a mobile phone that is pre-programmed to dial 911.
- The client receives ongoing support, updates and reviews to the Personal Safety Plan.

Physical Access: Wheelchair accessible at each police station

Languages: Interpreters available with multiple languages currently our team represents 27 languages, which is subject to change depending on team.

Last Updated: November 2006

Victim/Witness Assistance Program (VWAP)

Address: 50 Eagle Street West, #2004
Newmarket, ON
L3Y 6B1

Location: Newmarket Courthouse
(Eagle Street West & Yonge Street)

How To Contact Us: Phone 905 853-4818
Fax 905 853-4883
Website www.mag.on.ca

Commitment: To support victims/witnesses of crime within a broader continuum of services. The Victim/Witness Assistance Program is committed to the values of acceptance, self-determination and respect for the individual.

The cultures of individuals, families, groups and communities must be respected, without prejudice.

VWAP endorses and adopts as part of its operational policies, the principals set out in the *Victim's Bill of Rights* that applies to the treatment of victims of crime.

We Will: Provide court-based service to victims/witnesses who are involved in the criminal justice system from the time a charge is laid in criminal court. Most services terminate upon disposition of the criminal case, but may, on occasion, extend to follow up after final disposition.

Client participation is voluntary. VWAP does not discuss evidence with clients.

There is no fee for our services.

Accountability: Any concerns can be directed to the Manager, Victim/Witness Assistance Program York Region

Hours of Operation: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

What We Do: The mandate of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program is to provide information, assistance and support to victims and witnesses of crime throughout the criminal justice system in order to improve their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal justice process.

Our primary goals are:

- To enhance victim/witness understanding of and participation in the criminal justice process
- To assist the victim/witness to regain a sense of well-being
- To ensure coordination with community support structures for the assistance of victims of crime

Who We See: We see victims/witnesses of:

- Child abuse
- Sexual assault
- Domestic violence (including current, former and same sex partners)
- Elder Abuse
- Families of homicide victims
- Families of criminal negligence causing death
- Hate crimes

We see victims/witnesses with special needs (including sight and hearing impaired, intellectual disabilities).

The most vulnerable victims of crimes of violence listed below will be offered services on a priority basis.

Procedures: Services include provision of information, crisis intervention, needs assessment, referrals to community agencies, ongoing emotional support, advocacy, court preparation and orientation, debriefing and follow up information.

Core services include:

- Early contact by letter and follow-up contact by phone
- Information about the client's case
- Information about the criminal justice process
- Ongoing outreach
- Emotional support including, crisis intervention, advocacy and debriefing
- Needs assessment and referrals to community agencies, including discussion of safety issues and referrals to agencies for comprehensive safety planning
- Liaison with the Crown and Police, including providing information about the client's views
- Court preparation and orientation
- Advocacy
- Information about Victim Impact Statements and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
- Providing a safe waiting area for victims/witnesses during court proceedings

* VWAP does not provide child care services.

* VWAP does not provide transportation services.

Physical Access: Wheelchair accessible

Languages: English
Interpreter services available
Hearing impaired services available

Last Updated: September 18, 2006

York Region Crown Attorney's Office

Ministry of the Attorney General

Address: 50 Eagle Street West
Newmarket, Ontario

Location: Newmarket Courthouse (Eagle and Yonge)

How To Contact Us: Phone 905 853-4800
Fax 905 853-4849
Website www.mag.on.ca

Commitment: Prosecution of all Criminal Code charges. This includes the prosecution of offences defined as domestic violence.

Criminal Code offences include, but are not limited to, homicide, assault, assault causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, sexual assault, uttering threats, forcible confinement, harassment, breaches of court orders, break and enter, mischief.

We Will: See "Commitment" and "What We Do".

Accountability: Issues can be raised with Lee-Anne McCallum, Assistant Crown Attorney and Lead of the Domestic Violence Unit or Paul Tait, Crown Attorney.

Hours of Operation: 8:30 – 4:30 pm.
Monday – Friday

- What We Do:**
- The mandate of the Crown Attorney's Office is to represent the public interest in all prosecutions. We are not the lawyer for the victim. However, the victim's interests form part of the broader public interest in the course of our dealings with criminal charges. We become involved in a prosecution upon the police or private individuals laying a charge. Part of the role of the victim of domestic violence will be to testify in court as a witness for the prosecution if a charge proceeds to trial. There are some rare exceptions to the victim being a witness and that is determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - In carrying out our mandate, we:
 - Provide pre-charge advice to police.
 - Conduct bail hearings.
 - Advise victims of the court process with the assistance of

the Victim Witness Office.

- Provide relevant disclosure to the accused.
 - Review charges to determine appropriate resolution.
 - Conduct pre-trial meetings with defence counsel, accused and the judiciary.
 - Prepare witnesses.
- Conduct preliminary hearings and trials in both the Ontario Court of Justice and Superior Court of Justice.
 - Conduct sentencing hearings as part of the trial process.

Who We See: The Crown's office may meet and prepare for trial all witnesses and victims of criminal offences.

Procedures: Victims of domestic violence may become directly involved with members of the Crown Attorney's Office once criminal charges have been laid.

Physical Access: Wheelchair accessible

Languages: English, with interpreter services available

Last Updated: September 29, 2006

York Regional Police

Address: 17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 4W5

Location: On Yonge Street south of Davis Drive (Hwy #9)

How To Contact Us: Phone Newmarket/Aurora/King 905-895-1221

Markham/Gormley/Stouffville/Richmond
Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan 905-881-1221

Automated Attendant 905-764-1300

Toll-Free 1-866-876-5423

Fax 905-853-5810

Website www.yrp.ca

E-Mail info@yrp.ca

Commitment: In domestic violence cases (a police term which includes woman abuse), the primary responsibility of the police is to investigate all reported cases and determine if there are reasonable grounds to lay charges against the abuser.

If reasonable grounds exist to believe a criminal offence occurred, police are mandated to lay charges against the abuser. It is not the woman's responsibility or decision to lay charges.

The priority in all police investigations of woman assault is the woman's safety and, if she has children, her children's safety.

We Will: Police ensure women's and children's safety by:

- Laying charges against the abuser when there are reasonable grounds that an assault or another criminal offence has occurred.
- Informing women of their legal rights and providing information about any charges laid against the abuser, the abuser's arrest and/or his release conditions.
- Providing women with information about community resources, counselling agencies, shelters and Victim Services.
- Accompanying a woman and her children to a place of safety or to her home to retrieve personal belongings.
- Cooperating with other systems such as counselling agencies and shelters by providing information about the functions and responsibilities of the police.
- Calling an ambulance or accompanying a woman to a hospital,

which may include the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care Centre.

- Maintaining confidentiality about the woman's whereabouts.

Accountability: In the conduct of their services, all members of York Regional Police are required to adhere to a Code of Professional Ethics and Quality Service Standards. The York Regional Police are required to provide services in accordance with the Police Services Act.

In the conduct of their services, all members of York Regional Police:

- Understand their primary responsibility is to share with the community the responsibility for improving quality of life by safeguarding lives and property, preventing and investigating offences and preserving peace and order.
- Are guided by the Values of the Service, which include integrity, community, respect, accountability, competence, leadership and teamwork.
- Appreciate the importance and responsibility of their positions as a symbol of public faith, adhering to the same standards of conduct that they are bound by duty to enforce.
- Preserve the rights and freedoms of all individuals in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Faithfully administer the law in a just, impartial and reasonable manner to all individuals, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, age, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation.
- Understand and encourage continuing awareness of the culturally diverse nature of York Region, remain responsive to community issues and concerns, and are committed to developing and enhancing community partnerships.
- Never permit personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence professional decisions and actions and refrain from accepting gratuities or favours that may compromise them as individuals or members of York Regional Police.
- Perform their duties within the limits of authority and recognize the importance of consistently enhancing their level of knowledge and competence.
- Ensure good faith in all their actions and respect the confidentiality of any information obtained in the course of duty.

- Remain faithful in their allegiance to Canada and strive to attain excellence in the performance of their duties.

Complaints may be made at any operational division of the York Regional Police. Complaints may also be made in writing to the Chief of Police or the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services. In order that the complaint conforms to the provisions of the Police Services Act, the complaint *must be in writing and signed by the person who was directly affected by the incident*. The complaint must normally be made within six-months of the incident that forms the subject matter of the complaint.

Hours of Operation: 24 hours, 7 days a week

What We Do: Service our vast and diverse communities.

Who We See: Anyone.

Procedures: A GENERAL OVERVIEW:

- Police are obligated to respond to every domestic violence incident reported. These calls are unpredictable and it is standard practice for at least two officers to attend the scene. Every domestic violence incident is considered a priority call for service and officers will attend even if the initial call is withdrawn.
- When police arrive at the scene of a domestic violence incident, they will quickly conduct an assessment of the situation. If the abused woman requires immediate medical attention an ambulance will be called. If children are in the home, the police will assess if they have been harmed in any way. If either party has children less than 16 years of age, the Children's Aid Society will be contacted.
- Police will separate all parties involved in order to conduct a thorough investigation. If a language barrier exists, police will access official interpreter services or utilize an officer fluent in the language.
- If there are reasonable and probable grounds which indicate a criminal offence has occurred, the offender will be arrested. Police are mandated to do so through provincial legislation.
- When criminal charges are laid, women will be encouraged to provide a statement. If a statement is not provided, police will continue to pursue the investigation to the best of their abilities.
- Photographs of any injuries may be taken immediately at the scene of the assault, the police station or a hospital, and again at the police station 24-48 hours following the assault. The victim may choose to attend The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Care Centre for York Region, located at York Central Hospital, 10 Trench Street, Richmond Hill. This centre has specially trained domestic violence nurses who can provide medical

treatment and other forms of support.

- When charges are laid in a domestic violence investigation, the police will complete a Domestic Violence Supplementary Report. This report will capture risk indicators that the police, crown attorney, justice of the peace or judge may take into consideration when determining what the accused's release conditions will be.
- When charges are laid, officers will notify Victim Services of York Region, who will contact the victim and offer additional support including safety planning and referrals to other agencies.
- The Victim/Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) is available to her if criminal charges have been laid. This service provides support and resources and will keep the woman advised on court proceedings.
- The accused will likely be held in custody for a bail hearing. If the accused is released on bail conditions, the Victim Notification Officer from the Newmarket court house will contact the victim and advise of his release conditions.

Physical Access: Wheelchair accessible

Languages: English, with interpreter services available

Last Updated: November 2006