

Victim Rights

Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights

As a victim of violent crime, the guardian of a victim, or close relative of a victim, you have certain rights in the Texas Criminal Justice System. You have the right:

- To be protected from harm or threats;
- To be informed about the defendant's right to bail and to have your safety considered in the setting of bail;
- To be informed about court proceedings, if you so request;
- To be informed about stages in the criminal justice system in general, including criminal investigations, trials, plea bargaining, appeals and parole;
- To provide information to the probation department concerning the impact of the crime for inclusion in the presentence investigation report to the judge, and to complete a Victim Impact Statement;
- To receive information regarding compensation to crime victims under the Crime Victim's Compensation Act, payment for a medical examination for a victim of sexual assault, and referral to available social service agencies that may offer additional assistance;
- To be notified, if you so request, of any parole proceedings regarding the defendant, and the right to participate in those proceedings;
- To have a waiting area in the courthouse separate from the defendant and his or her family and witnesses, or if a separate area is not possible, to have safeguards to insure minimal contact;
- To prompt return of property held by law enforcement or the attorney for the state after the property is no longer needed as evidence;

- To have the attorney for the state notify your employer if you must be absent from work in order to be in court or to otherwise cooperate in the case;
- To counseling and testing for AIDS and HIV-related infections, if the crime was sexual in nature;
- To be present at all public proceedings subject to the approval of the judge;
- To privacy – as far as is reasonably practical, the address of the victim may not be part of the court file except as necessary to identify the place of the crime. The phone number of the victim may not be a part of the court file;
- To request victim-offender mediation coordinated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division;
- To be informed of the uses of the Victim Impact Statement to complete the statement, and to have the statement considered by the prosecutor, the court and the prison system; and
- If you are a victim of sexual assault, to have a properly trained advocate present during a forensic medical examination. If an advocate is available and if the advocate's presence would not impede treatment of the victim's medical condition.

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