

First and Foremost,

I am very sorry this has happened to you. I understand that you may be unfamiliar with court procedures and have questions. We are here to help you through the criminal justice process. This brochure is an introduction to the various steps of a criminal case. We hope this helps answer some questions you may have.

It is only with your support and cooperation that we will be able to successfully navigate this process. With your help, we can make our community a safer place to live.

If you have any questions or need further information please feel free to call the Victim Assistance Office at (989) 354-9748.

Sincerely,



Cynthia M. Muszynski



HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

We realize being a victim of a crime can be very difficult for most people. Victim Assistance is an effort to help you return to a normal way of life. We can offer help and provide you an opportunity to express your concerns and problems.

Our services include:

- ↪ Information about the court process and case progress
- ↪ Information on the Michigan Crime Victims Compensation Fund and assistance in completing forms.
- ↪ Making referrals to other community agencies for additional help
- ↪ Accompanying victims to court, upon request
- ↪ Providing and assisting in completion of Victim Impact Statements
- ↪ Providing information and assistance in obtaining restitution
- ↪ Making an oral and written Victim Impact Statement at the sentencing hearing
- ↪ Notification of release, parole, probation, or escape of the offender

The MICHIGAN CRIME VICTIM NOTIFICATION NETWORK (or MCVNN) is available for you to register for notification of a defendant's status, custody, and court information by calling 1-800-770-7657 or by registering for status updates at www.vinelink.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why am I receiving a subpoena?

The law requires live testimony in criminal cases.

Why was this case rescheduled?

Cases are rescheduled for many reasons. Witnesses or attorneys may be unavailable. Multiple hearings are set each day and the court decides the scheduling priority of each case.

How can I get my medical bills paid for or my loss of wages covered?

The [Crime Victim Compensation Fund](#) is able to help with medical, counseling, funeral, and crime scene cleanup expenses. It can also cover loss of wages or support. These expenses, however, can only be covered for victims with physical injuries as a result of a crime. Call our office for assistance.

Why are some cases Plea-Bargained?

The practical demands of the court system, plus the defendant's speedy trial rights, the seriousness of the cases, the victims' wishes, public safety, etc., are all interests that are considered by the Prosecutor when deciding how to proceed. A plea agreement is always designed to balance these competing interests.

What is the difference between no contact orders and PPOs?

A no contact order is issued as a condition of bond, automatically in some cases. This is placed by the judge. If a victim wants the no contact removed, they may contact District Court to request a hearing.

PPOs are initiated by a victim and is outside the criminal case. If successful, the court orders another person to stop threats or violence against you.

Law Enforcement can respond to either violations.

How do I press charges?

If you are a victim or witness to a crime, call the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency as they have to investigate before it reaches the Prosecuting Attorney. Once the report reaches the prosecuting attorney she will decide what, if any, charges to press.

Can I drop charges?

Charges are brought on by Law Enforcement and the prosecuting attorney working together. Crimes are committed against the victim, but also the community. Thus, the State of Michigan presses charges, leaving that burden on the prosecutors. The victim's opinions are important but ultimately it is the prosecutor's decision.