

STREET LAW SMARTS #8

IF YOU HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF A CRIME

Emergency help

If you are a victim of a crime, you can telephone the police at 9-1-1 to get immediate help. There are also many help lines that you can call for assistance during or after reporting a crime. For example, the Toronto Police Service has a 'Special Victims Section' for victims of sex crimes. There are also specialized agencies to assist preparing young persons for court.

Help Lines

Assaulted Women's Help Line

Tel: 416.863.0511, Toll-free: 1.866.863.0511, www.awhl.org or #SAFE (#7233) on your Bell, Rogers, Fido or Telus mobile phone

Service: 24 hour counselling and referral services by telephone

Kids Help Phone: 1.800.668.6868, www.kidshelpphone.ca

Toronto Police Service

Emergency Tel: 9-1-1, Non-emergency: 416.808.2222

Toronto Police Service Sex Crimes Unit- Special Victims Section

416-808-7474 www.torontopolice.on.ca/sexcrimes/

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre

Crisis Tel: 416.597.8808, General Tel: 416.597.1171

Email: info@trccmwar.ca, Website: www.trccmwar.ca

Service: 24-hour counselling by phone, short-term 1:1 counselling and court support.

Appearing in criminal court

As a victim of a crime, you may be requested to come to court to give testimony against the accused in your case. The Crown Prosecutor or defence counsel may subpoena you so that you must come to court. If you are subpoenaed and you do not go to court, a witness warrant may be issued against you and you can be arrested and brought into court by the police.

If you are testifying, you must tell the truth, or risk being charged with perjury for lying under oath. Importantly, nothing you say while testifying on the stand can be used as evidence against you criminally. For example: You were selling drugs in an alley way and the person buying the drugs from you robbed you - beat you up and stole your wallet. You are now testifying as the victim of the robbery. The Crown Prosecutor asked you what you were doing in the alleyway – and you answered that you were selling drugs. Even though you admitted in court that you were doing an illegal activity,

you could not later be prosecuted for trafficking drugs because you were forced (subpoenaed) to go to court that day and answer questions about the incident.

Civil suits

You can sue someone that hurt you. Superior court claims are for damages over \$25,000. Small claims court, for claims under \$25,000, provides a simplified procedure you to make a legal action against somebody who harmed you. **See Street Law Smarts #7 for more information on small claims court.**

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

If you have suffered injury as a victim of a crime in Ontario, you may make a claim for compensation at the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

There is a two year time limit from the date of the injury to lodge a claim. The claim may take one to a few years to settle, and you must be prepared to submit documentary evidence that confirms your injury through medical and police reports. You may be required to attend a hearing to verify the evidence presented.

Conviction on the accused in your case is not required to claim for compensation. Police records and reports are also not required, but are helpful evidence to prove your case. Claims for injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents will not be accepted. Contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for more information, forms and guides.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

439 University Avenue, 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1Y8
Tel: 416.326.2900, Toll-free: 1.800.372.7463, <http://www.cicb.gov.on.ca/en/index.htm>

Victims Services

Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

Tel: 416.323.9149, www.schliferclinic.com

Legal information and referral service for women who are survivors of violence

Boost Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention

Tel: 416.515.1100 ext. 331, Toll Free: 1-855-424-1100, www.boostforkids.org

Child abuse prevention and intervention services; support for child witnesses in court

Ministry of the Attorney General's Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services (VCARS)

Tel: 416.314.2447, Toll-free: 1.877.579.2888, www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/ovss

Services: 8am-10pm Victim Support line, 7 days a week

Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Care Centre (SA/DVCC)

Tel: 416.323.-6400, www.satontario.com

The Sexual Assault Care Centre can collect medical and legal evidence at your request.

Toronto Police Service Victim Services

Tel: 416.808.7066, www.victimservicestoronto.com