



**SOUTH COAST BRITISH COLUMBIA
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
POLICE SERVICE**

THIRD PARTY REPORTING – SEXUAL OFFENCES

Effective Date: May 11, 2009
Revised:

POLICY

1. The South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service (SCBCTAPS) recognizes that there are a variety of reasons why victims of sexual offences may not want to interact with the justice system. SCBCTAPS also recognizes that information concerning sexual offences is important intelligence that may assist police in preventing and/or investigating other crimes.
2. The purpose of the Third Party Reporting (TPR) Process is to provide an alternative means by which an adult victim of a sexual offence/assault can report an incident to police while remaining anonymous. This reporting process through a Community-Based Victim Assistance Agency (CBVAA) enables a victim to report crucial information to police, in a manner that protects the victim's identity and that does not necessarily lead to a criminal investigation of the alleged offence against that victim. In order for the TPR Process to function as it is intended, the SCBCTAPS is committed to interacting with the CBVAA and handling the TPR in a manner consistent with this Policy and the procedures contained herein, and in accordance with provisions of the SCBCTAPS-JPD Memorandum of Understanding.
3. The TPR Process is not a substitute for calling 911, nor is it a police investigation. The TPR Process is solely a means of engaging a reluctant victim and providing a way for the victim to pass on information about a crime to police, while at the same time remaining anonymous.
4. As a supplementary policing agency (not Jurisdictional Police), SCBCTAPS will notify the Jurisdictional Police Department (JPD) upon receipt of a TPR and transfer the file as so determined by the JPD.

REASON FOR POLICY

5. To ensure SCBCTAPS Members understand the limited role of the SCBCTAPS with respect to the processing, assessment and proper documentation of sexual offence/assault TPR.
6. To ensure that Members are aware of the assistance a CBVAA provides to adult victims of sexual offence/assault and the associated reporting/confidentiality requirements.

PROCEDURES

Definitions

7. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

“CBVAA” means “Community-Based Victim Assistance Agency”, an agency that provides direct services to victims and that receives funding either in whole or in part by the provincial and/or federal governments, and which is responsible for criminal justice matters. Some agencies serve a specific clientele such as victims of family and sexual violence, ethno-specific and diverse communities, and assisting child victims. Services offered may include providing emotional support, practical assistance, information, court orientation and referrals (e.g. Women's Sexual Assault Centre).

“Member” means “SCBCTAPS Designated Constable”.

“PBVS” means “Police-Based Victim Services”, which provide services to victims of crime following their first contact with police. These services are provided on behalf of a jurisdictional police department, as required under the provincial Victims of Crime Act.

“TPR” means “third party reporting” or “third party report”, as appropriate in the circumstance.

“TPR Process” means “third party reporting process”, the process by which an adult victim of a sexual offence/assault can report an incident to police through a third party, thereby allowing the victim to remain anonymous. This reporting process, which involves a CBVAA as the third party, is provided as a last resort for reluctant sex offence/assault victims who are not prepared to interact with the justice system and report the incident directly to police.

“Victim Services Unit” means a Victim Services Unit of a Jurisdictional Police Department, which is a PBVS, and includes employees and volunteers.

Initial TPR Intake and Processing

8. An adult victim of a sexual offence may attend any CBVAA in BC and complete a TPR which will be forwarded to the police agency in the jurisdiction where the report was completed.
9. PBVS agencies cannot accept or process TPRs, because, according to provincial PBVS program policy, a PBVS must report to a police officer any situation of violence in relationships, sexual assaults/offences, child abuse, or suicidal/homicidal behaviour. In addition, PBVS are not able to store TPR victim contact information confidentially, as police may on occasion access PBVS files. As such, a PBVS cannot guarantee confidential communication with the victim.
10. If an adult victim of a sexual offence attends or contacts a PBVS and requests to complete a TPR, the common protocol is for the PBVS to provide the victim with information about the TPR process, and refer the victim to the nearest CBVAA.

NOTE: *As a supplementary policing agency and pursuant to SCBCTAPS Policy Chapter OM050 – Victim Assistance, SCBCTAPS does not operate a PBVS. SCBCTAPS provides access to a victim assistance program through JPDs.*

[See also OM050 – Victim Assistance]

Documentation and Processing if a TPR is Received by SCBCTAPS

11. In the event that the SCBCTAPS inadvertently receives a TPR, the Watch Commander, or designate, will ensure that:
1. an assist file is created in PRIME;
 2. the JPD is notified;
 3. the TPR and any other documentation is forwarded to the JPD; and
 4. the originating CBVAA is notified of the SCBCTAPS actions, unless otherwise instructed by the JPD.

Confidentiality and Protection of Information

12. CBVAA programs are governed by contractual obligations, agency policy and either the provincial *Personal Information Protection Act* or the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. For CBVAA programs, personal information provided by clients is confidential subject to certain basic exceptions:
1. duty to report under s. 13 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act;
 2. reason to believe the client is likely to cause serious physical harm to themselves or another; and
 3. a requirement to release information pursuant to a court order or a requirement to attend court and give evidence.
13. The decisions about whether to provide the victim's name and contact information to police and whether to speak to the police is the victim's to make, unless dire circumstances warrant police intervention. "Dire" circumstances would involve a grave concern for public safety, and intervention would occur only after police have exhausted all other investigative avenues.

NOTE: *In this last resort, police would have to produce a court-ordered search warrant to the CBVAA in order to gain access to the victim's name and contact information.*

[See also: OD020 – General Criminal Investigations]