



TRANSIT POLICE

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

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Office of Primary Responsibility: Deputy Chief Officer Operations

POLICY

Definitions

Accredited Facility Dog – A specially trained dog, accompanied by its handler, who is Transit Police Personnel. Their role is to a) support wellness of Transit Police Personnel and b) aid in emotionally supporting victims, witnesses, and their family members affected by crime and other traumatic incidents throughout the criminal justice process.

BCPPS – The British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards issued pursuant to the *Police Act*.

Member – For the purpose of this policy, Designated Constable (all ranks), Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and Designated Law Enforcement Officer of the Transit Police.

Metro Vancouver Transit Police (“Transit Police”) – The operating name of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service (Designated Policing Unit and Designated Law Enforcement Unit).

Authority

1. During the course of their duties, Members may handle investigations/incidents involving victims, witnesses, or affected family members who may be traumatized by the events that have occurred. In accordance with requirements under the BCPPS, the provincial *Victims of Crime Act*, *Crime Victim Assistance Act*, and the federal *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, police services are required to provide victims of crime with certain information and services, including referrals to victim services. These include the rights to information, participation, protection, and restitution.

General

2. As Transit Police does not operate its own victim assistance program, Members will provide victims, witnesses, and affected family members access to a victim assistance program through Jurisdictional Police Departments (“JPDs”) or through [VictimLinkBC](#). [Refer to the [Transit Police-JPD Operational Memorandum of Understanding](#).]
3. The structure of each JPD victim assistance program may vary, but generally, they will:

- (1) Provide emotional support and referrals to victims of crime, in a culturally appropriate manner, as appropriate to the circumstances [BCPPS 6.1.1];
 - (2) Provide information concerning criminal injuries compensation; and
 - (3) Involve crime victims in the process to ensure that they remain informed about the status of their case and the submission of Reports to Crown Counsel.
4. When a Member encounters a victim or witness (of crime or another traumatic event), or their affected family member, who may be in need of the services available through a victim assistance program, the Member will advise the victim, witness, or affected family member at the scene that crisis intervention and follow up support services are available.
- (1) The Member will also inform the victim, witness, or affected family member that a victim assistance worker or advocate is allowed to be present for police interviews, if requested by the victim, witness, or affected family member; and that victim assistance staff may assist the victim with the preparation of a Victim Impact Statement.

PROCEDURES

5. In investigations/incidents where the victim, witness, or affected family member requires immediate access to victim services, Members will contact the Transit Police's Operations Communication Centre ("OCC") to have them contact the JPD via [REDACTED] Message and request the attendance of their Victim Assistance Program.
- (1) If the JPD's Victim Assistance Program is not immediately available for in-person support, the OCC will provide the JPD's Victim Assistance Program with contact information for the victim, witness, or affected family member. The Member will also relay contact information for the JPD's Victim Assistance Program from the OCC to the victim, witness, or affected family member.
 - (2) After the initial investigation, if the victim, witness, or affected family member informs a Member that they require Victim Assistance, the Member will inform the Watch Commander, who will request JPD Victim Assistance Program support by contacting the JPD Watch Commander.
6. In investigations where the victim, witness, or affected family member is unsure whether they require victim assistance at that time, Members will provide them with their business card, which has the link to [VictimLinkBC](#)¹ on the back of it. Members will explain how to contact VictimLinkBC (e.g., call or text 1-800-563-0808, or E-mail to VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca) and the assistance that they can provide to people, including referral to a JPD Victim Assistance Program.

¹ VictimLinkBC is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual service available 24/7. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking. VictimLinkBC provides service in up to 150 languages, including many Indigenous languages. In 2019-2020, VictimLinkBC assisted on more than 12,000 calls.

NOTE: VictimLinkBC provides multilingual services. Members may also consider seeking language assistance from another Member who speaks the same language as the victim, witness, or affected family member.

7. Whenever possible, the Member will remain at the scene until the JPD Victim Assistance Program staff arrive and can be briefed on the situation and introduced to the victim, witness, or affected family member.
8. [REDACTED] that victim assistance was offered (including the name of the victim service agency), if a business card was provided with contact info, and whether or not the support was accepted/required by the victim, witness, or affected family member.
9. Victim assistance is to be prioritized and maintained by the investigating Members throughout the investigation and court process (when Transit Police is the primary agency for the investigation), in coordination with the JPD Victim Assistance Program and the justice system.
10. In investigations involving violence in relationships, Members will follow relevant procedures in Transit Police policy chapter [OD160 - Vulnerable Groups / Violence in Relationships](#). Members will pay particular attention to the safety of children and Members' responsibilities under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* to locate or take charge of children, as appropriate, as well as to report to the Ministry of Children and Family Development any incidents of violence in relationships which involve child witnesses, child victims, or children living in the residence.
11. In investigations involving a sexual offence (see Transit Police policy chapter [OB220 - Sexual Offence Investigation](#)), the investigating Member holds responsibility for keeping the victim apprised of the investigation's status, including but not limited to:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
12. In investigations/incidents involving Indigenous victims, witnesses, or affected family members, Members will consider whether the Indigenous Liaison Officer ("ILO") needs to be contacted immediately to help provide culturally appropriate supports, and will liaise with their Supervisor accordingly. When the ILO is not available, the assistance of other internal or JPD specialized resources may be considered.
13. In order to ensure that persons without legal status report crimes against themselves and others, victims and witnesses of crime and their affected family members will not be asked about their legal status in Canada unless bona fide operational reasons

exist to do so. [REDACTED]

14. Members may provide or consult with their Supervisor for access to physical resources that may be useful in helping assist a victim, witness, or affected family member during an investigation/incident (e.g., blankets, socks, water/food, comfort toy for children, and Accredited Facility Dog).
15. To request attendance of the Accredited Facility Dog, Members will contact the Watch Commander, who will then contact the Duty Officer in order to consider deployment of the Accredited Facility Dog, if available².

Support

16. For questions regarding victim assistance, Members are to contact their Supervisor or Watch Commander for assistance. During regular scheduled duty hours, the Staff Sergeant of Operations Support Section may also be contacted for assistance.

References:

[British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards](#)

[Victims of Crime Act](#)

[Crime Victim Assistance Act](#)

[Canadian Victims Bill of Rights](#)

[Transit Police-JPD Operational Memorandum of Understanding](#)

Transit Police Policy [OB220 – Sexual Offence Investigation](#)

Transit Police Policy [OD160 - Vulnerable Groups / Violence in Relationships](#)

Transit Police Policy [OO010 Communications - Operations](#)

Transit Police [SOP 62 – Victims & Witnesses Without Legal Status and Enquiries to CBSA](#)

[VictimLinkBC](#)

[Pacific Assistance Dogs Society](#)

² In addition to victim assistance, Members may also consider requesting the Accredited Facility Dog for assistance in Critical Incident Stress Management or for outreach to mental health clients by the Community Engagement Team.