

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PATRICK DOUGHERTY

Victim Impact Statements:

Victims of crime have the right to participate and to be heard in the criminal justice system through the use of Victim Impact Statements. A Victim Impact Statement provides the victim with an opportunity to address the Court prior to sentencing. This opportunity also allows the victims to personalize the crime and express the impact it has had on them and their families. This process may also aid victims in their emotional recovery.

You are under no obligation to submit a Victim Impact Statement – it is your choice. It is a written statement which will be given to the Judge prior to sentencing. You also have the choice to read your statement to the Judge the day of sentencing.

Typically, the Victim Impact Statement will contain the physical, financial, psychological or emotional impact of the crime. In other words, it answers the following questions:

1. Describe any changes in your emotions that this crime has caused. Have you gone to counseling?
2. Describe any physical injuries you have because of this crime. Did you see a doctor? Describe any medical treatment, ongoing medical problems as a result of the crime?
3. Is there a financial burden of medical treatment, counseling, loss of work, replacing damaged or stolen items?
4. Identify and describe emotional struggles due to fears, loss of a loved one, relocation, ability to relate to others, changes in relationships, trust, etc.
5. Are you, or were you, unable to work as a result of this crime? How has your lifestyle been affected by the crime? Are there any changes in family relationships or roles because of the crime?
6. Explain the importance of restitution to recover financial loss.
7. Describe, in your own words, your opinion of an appropriate sentence for the offender.

Please remember in writing your Statement, you are speaking to the Judge and only the Judge.

If you need any assistance in preparing your Victim Impact Statement, please feel free to contact the Victim/Witness Advocates in the District Attorney's Office at 724-465-3840 (7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday)