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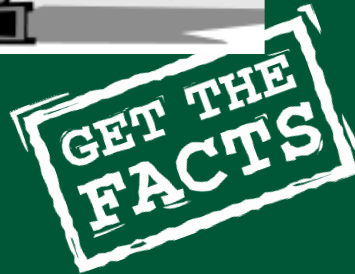
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VICTIMS' RIGHTS

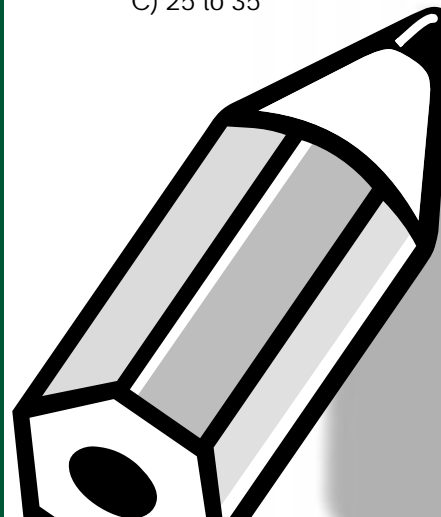


*Questions and answers
on the criminal justice
system in Illinois*

MULTIPLE CHOICE

(Answers to questions are inside.)

- How many murders were committed in Illinois in 1997?
 - 252
 - 1,096
 - 3,053
- Which of the following crimes is most frequently reported in Illinois?
 - Theft
 - Assault
 - Burglary
- What age group has the highest victimization rate for homicides in Chicago?
 - 20 to 24
 - 15 to 19
 - 25 to 35



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

*(Items in **boldface** are defined in the glossary section.)*

What should I do if I am a victim of a crime?

If you are the victim of a crime or if you have information about a crime, you should call the police immediately. If it is an emergency, dial 911. If it is not an emergency, call your police department's nonemergency number (check the phone book). During an investigation, police officers collect evidence related to the crime. The sooner the police can begin their investigation, the better chance they have of gathering evidence that can lead to identifying a suspect.

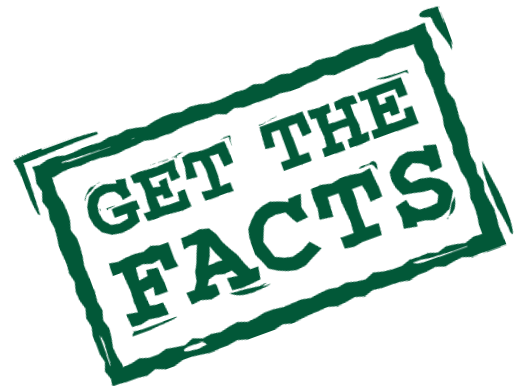
What do I do after I call the police?

Cooperating with the police and the **state's attorney** at all stages of the investigation and court proceedings is not only in your best interest, but your responsibility. Your account of the crime is often the only evidence police have at the onset of an investigation, so the information you provide them should be as accurate as possible. If you are the victim of a violent crime, be prepared to give police a description of the attacker, as well as the location and time of day of the offense. In the case of a property crime, it is important to leave the scene as undisturbed as possible. Immediately make a list of the missing items and all pertinent information. You should also have an inventory of valuable items with serial numbers and estimated worth for your own records. Most importantly, be willing and prepared to cooperate with investigators and prosecutors, and to testify in a trial if the suspect is apprehended.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Offenders seem to have lots of rights. Do crime victims have any?

Yes. Even though many people are not aware of it, victims do have rights. All victims of violent crime in Illinois have: 1) the right to be treated with fairness and respect for their dignity and privacy throughout the criminal justice process; 2) the right to be told when court proceedings will be held; 3) the right to communicate with prosecutors; 4) the right to make a statement to the court if the person accused of the crime is found guilty; 5) the right to information about the conviction, sentence, imprisonment, and release of the accused; 6) the right to the timely completion of the case following the arrest



of the accused; 7) the right to be reasonably protected from the accused through the criminal justice process; 8) the right to be present at the trial and all other court proceedings on the same basis as the accused, unless the victim is to testify and the court determines that the victim's testimony would be affected by hearing other testimony; 9) the right to have present at all court proceedings, subject to the rules of evidence, an **advocate** or other support person of the victim's choice; and 10) the right to **restitution**.

Illinois law guarantees these rights for all violent

crime victims in the state. However, the victim may have to ask to get them. You should take an active role to make sure you get yours.

Is there anyone who could help me make sure that my rights are protected if I become a victim of violent crime?

Yes, there is. Most counties have programs that help victims of crime and witnesses. Staff members for these programs refer victims to social service agencies that can help them with both immediate and long-term needs. They also do what they can to ensure that victims of crime have met their responsibilities (remember that a victim's responsibilities do not end with the reporting of the crime). Every victim of a violent crime has the right to contact this program and ask for their help.

Does the state offer any relief programs for crime victims?

In 1984, the Illinois Violent Crime Victims Assistance Act was enacted to provide funding for victim and witness assistance programs statewide. As a result of that act, the Violent Crime Victims Assistance program was developed to improve the criminal justice system's response to victims and witnesses. It is intended to provide greater access to victim services, and thereby improve victim recovery. The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant program is authorized to fund direct services to crime victims, such as crisis intervention, counseling, emergency shelter, and criminal justice advocacy. Priority is given to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse.

Can I receive compensation for my injuries and expenses?

The Crime Victims Compensation Act was enacted in 1973 to provide financial compensation

to innocent victims of violent crime and their families. Eligible victims or family members receive compensation for certain out-of-pocket expenses, such as medical and hospital expenses, counseling, loss of earnings, and funeral expenses.

There are more than 20 compensable crimes under the Victims Compensation Act, including first and second-degree murder, driving under the influence, reckless conduct, domestic battery, arson, kidnapping, child pornography, and sexual relations within a family.

To be eligible, the crime must have been reported to law enforcement within 72 hours; there must be full cooperation with officials in apprehending the suspect; the applicant must not be the offender or an accomplice of the offender; and the injury or the death of the victim must not have been substantially attributed to or provoked by the victim. An application must be completed and returned by the victim or a relative, within one year of the crime, to the Illinois Attorney General's Office.

Where can I find victim assistance and recovery services?

Services vary from community to community but information can be obtained through police officers, state's attorneys, doctors and schools, or state and national agencies, including the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Illinois Attorney General's Office, the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Domestic Violence Coalition, and the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

You can also find services through your telephone directory, under "Women's Services," "Shelters," "Social Service Organizations," or "Crisis Intervention." Many of these services are provided at reduced or no cost.

GLOSSARY

State's attorney: A county elected official empowered to commence and carry out all civil and criminal prosecutions in the county on behalf of the state. State's attorneys, or their assistant attorneys, prosecute most of the criminal cases in Illinois.

Advocate: A person who is responsible for making sure the rights of the victim are met.

Restitution: Restitution in criminal cases is the act of paying for any loss, damages, or injury that occurs as a result of the crime.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

- 1) **B.** There were 1,096 murders reported in Illinois in 1997.
- 2) **A.** There were 358,383 thefts reported in Illinois in 1997, making it the most frequently reported index crime in Illinois. Index crimes are major crimes reported to the FBI under the Uniform Crime Reporting Act. Index crimes are categorized as either property or violent. Property index crimes are burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Violent index crimes are murder, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.
- 3) **B.** A study by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority has shown that in recent years people between the age of 15 and 19 are the most common victims of homicides in Chicago.