

SUBJECT: WITNESSES – NOTIFICATION OF VICTIMS AND VICTIM'S NEXT-OF-KIN

POLICY

Crown prosecutors owe victims, and a victim's next of kin, a special responsibility of candor and respect. While Crown prosecutors are both advocates for the prosecution and the Minister of Justice, prosecutors should ensure that the interests of victims, including harm suffered by them and their privacy interests, are considered at every stage in the prosecution. Prosecutors should always display sensitivity, fairness and compassion in their dealings with victims and families of victims.

Victims should have access to the following information:

1. General information about the structure and operation of the criminal justice system

Most victims have had little or no involvement with the criminal justice system so they may want more information about the court process. Crown prosecutors must endeavour to provide such to victims or their families. Victim Services should be engaged early on during the process so they can assist prosecutors in this regard.

2. Specific information about the case

In cases where serious emotional, physical or psychological harm has occurred to the victim, the Crown prosecutor should ensure victims are informed in a timely manner of any development that affects their security or of any significant changes in the status of the case. This includes, but is not limited to the following situations:

- a) bail proceedings;
- b) the scheduling or re-scheduling of hearings;
- c) unanticipated developments that have been raised that affect the victim;
- d) plea resolutions; and
- e) changes in and disposition of charges including appeals.