

## Judicial System

For many, this may be their first involvement with law enforcement or the judicial system. It is very common for people to expect what they have seen on television or movies to apply to their current circumstances. Unfortunately, these expectations are often a distorted and unrealistic snapshot of how things truly operate.

Arizona has laws and regulations in place to protect victims. For cases involving prosecution, a court advocate can provide information, education, and support that will help reduce fears and uncertainties.

Another consideration that is often practiced is that of resolution by plea agreement. By negotiation and agreement, this approach to resolution can prevent the need for testifying in court.

As with any situation, education and information about how the judicial system operates, can assist the victim and their family in the reduction of trauma.

Remember, involvement in a traumatic event can produce upsetting responses such as disturbed sleep, diminished appetite, and difficulty concentrating. These responses will likely subside with time. However, if reactions are especially long lasting or troubling, you may need to turn to a professional for assistance.

## Benefits of Counseling

Some of the benefits of seeking counseling are:

- Reviewing the incident and processing the event can help victims clarify what actually occurred and that the terms sexual assault do apply.
- Legal and judicial decisions can be discussed and utilized as part of the promotion of healing and resolution.
- The disruption due to trauma can make daily functioning difficult. Counseling can help develop coping skills and strategies, allowing for the continuance of school, work or relationships.
- Establishment of a support network helps to decrease the negative physical, psychological and emotional effects that often result from the traumatic experience.

Survivors can utilize the experience as an opportunity to build and practice assertiveness, confidence, and protective instinct skills.

## Who can help?

**Traffic Injuries: Hospital...** A medical social worker (a hospital employee) can assist your family in a variety of ways.

**Traffic Fatalities: Funeral Home...**The mortuary handling the funeral arrangements is a source for assistance. They can provide copies of the death certificate, literature on bereavement, and may even have support groups and grief counseling available. They may also assist with identifying "business" tasks that you may need to address during the upcoming weeks and months.

The Mesa Police Department Victim Services Unit can assist with information regarding Victims' Rights, Victim Compensation, case status, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to appropriate helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.

## Resources

**Mothers Against Drunk Drivers** ..... (602) 279-2043

**AZ Students Against Destructive Decisions**.....  
..... 1-800-996-7233

**Community Information and Referral** .....  
..... (602) 263-8856

**EMPACT Crisis Hotline** ..... (480) 784-1500

**Arizona Criminal Justice Commission**  
1110 W Washington Ste#230, Phoenix, AZ 85007  
acjc@azcjc.gov  
..... (602) 364-1146

**National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)**  
P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
..... 1-800-851-3420

**Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice**  
810 Seventh Street NW., Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20531  
www.ovc.gov  
..... (202) 307-5983

**Compassionate Friends**..... (480) 752-1832

**New Song, Center for Grieving Children  
& Those Who Love Them** ..... (480) 951-8985

# Victim Services Unit

## Vehicular Collision Investigation Information



Mesa Police Department  
Victim Services Unit  
130 N Robson  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
(480) 644-4075

**This pamphlet is intended to provide information for those who have had a loved one seriously injured or killed in a traffic collision.**

This pamphlet has been organized in a question-and-answer format. Some of this information may provide more detail than you are comfortable with at this time. If so, we suggest you ask a trusted friend or family member to read this for you so the immediate decisions you need to make will be informed ones. This pamphlet can then be put away until such time as you feel ready to review it.

## **What Do I Need to Do immediately?**

**Get Support...**If you have not already done so, contact a support person to be with you immediately. The emotional and physical assistance of family members, trusted friends, and/or clergy is crucial during this painful time.

**Contact the Office of the Medical Examiner (OME)...**Your loved one will be (or has been) transported to the OME. If you wish to have a specific mortuary handle the funeral arrangements, the OME must be notified of your preference. Due to space limitations, you (or the funeral home you have selected) must call the **OME at (602) 506-1138** by 5PM on the day of (or in some cases, the day following) your loved one's arrival at the OME. If timely contact (within 24 to 48 hours) with the OME is not made, your loved one will be released to the next available mortuary on the OME rotation list.

**Consider organ donation...**When a death occurs in the jurisdiction of Maricopa County OME, any organ donation must be authorized by a Medical Examiner. If your loved one is an organ donor (or if organ donation is something you or a lawful representative would consider), and organ donation is possible, contact Donor Network of Arizona at (602) 222-2200. The Network will then contact the OME for authorization if your loved one is a viable donor.

## **Where is My Loved One Now?**

**Traffic Injuries...** Injured parties in a collision are transported to local hospitals. The selection is based on several factors such as location of the collision, treatment needs of the injured person, immediate availability of specialized equipment and hospital personnel.

You will be provided with the name and address of the hospital to which your loved one has been transported. For your safety, please consider having a friend or family member drive you to the hospital.

**Traffic Fatalities...** In the following, your loved one is referred to as the "deceased". This terminology is not intended to reflect any insensitivity to your grief or loss.

Upon being removed from the site where death occurred, the deceased is transported to the Maricopa OME by the OME transportation service. It is not the policy of the OME to request or allow visual identification of the deceased by anyone once the deceased arrives at their facility. As required by law, a Medical Examiner will perform an examination (which may include an autopsy), usually within 24 hours.

You have the right to select the mortuary of your choice to handle all funeral arrangements. The funeral home will provide transportation of the deceased from the OME.

## **What is the Mesa Police Department Doing?**

The Mesa Police Department (MPD) Traffic Section investigates serious traffic collisions and all traffic fatalities that occur on Mesa city streets. Traffic incidents that occur on highways and freeways are investigated by the Arizona Department of Public Safety—(602) 223-2000.

The Traffic Section's involvement in this investigation, in and of itself, should not be construed as an indication that a criminal action has occurred. Any criminal responsibility will be determined based upon the police investigation and appropriate review by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for felony matters or the Mesa City Prosecutor's Office for misdemeanor matters.

It is important to keep in mind the first priority, as mandated by state law, is to determine what occurred and, when appropriate, to identify and cite or apprehend the individual(s) responsible. According to AZ Revised Statutes, not every collision that causes a death or serious injury is a criminal action. It is possible the person(s) responsible for a traffic fatality or serious traffic injury may only receive a traffic citation.

Understandably, this can be very difficult for those whose loved one is injured or deceased. Discussing your feelings with the Victim Services Unit or the Assigned Detective may help you.

## **How Do I Obtain Copies of the Police Report?**

A copy of the police report can be picked up at the Public Records Counter located on the first floor of the Police Headquarters Building, 130 N. Robson Street. Report requests can also be handled via mail. Please call 480-644-2310 for complete information on how to obtain report copies (e.g., cost, hours of operation, written requests, etc.) and to make certain the report is available.

## **What About My Loved Ones Belongings?**

MPD will make every effort to promptly return your loved one's personal effects, provided these items are not considered evidence.

**Impounded Property...**All evidence, will be impounded by the MPD. Once a non-criminal investigation is completed, all impounded items may be returned or, if you prefer, destroyed. Evidence in criminal investigations will remain impounded until the final disposition of the case.

The Assigned Detective or the Victim Services Unit can provide you with the specific details on the condition of property that is available for release and how to obtain this property or authorize its destruction.

## **What About Automobile Insurance?**

If a vehicle involved in the collision belongs to your loved one, contact the insurance company that insures that vehicle as soon as possible.

If the assigned Detective is unable to provide insurance information, on a vehicle, contact the AZ Department of Motor Vehicles located at 1840 South Mesa Drive, Mesa, Arizona 85210.

Uninsured vehicles can be reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles—(602) 255-0072.