

Sixth District Department of Correctional Services POLICY	Issue Date 12/06/10	Effective Date 04/20/17	Policy Number 171-17
Subject VICTIM REGISTRATION, NOTIFICATION, AND SUPPORT		Review Month September	Author 0511 (SMI)
Rescinds 2100-08; 2101-11; 2102-13	References IDOC IS-CL-06; 6 th DCS Policy 918-16; Sec. 3; DCS Policy 102-10; IA Code 915;		

PURPOSE:

To ensure that the rights and needs of crime victims are an integral component of offender management and supervision.

POLICY:

Staff are committed to meeting the needs of crime victims through awareness, respect and sensitivity, effective and appropriate communication and referral to support services as needed.

DEFINITION:

1. Victim: A person who has suffered physical, emotional, or financial harm as the result of a public offense or delinquent act committed in this state. Victim may also include the immediate family members of a victim, members of a victim's household, and/or witnesses.
2. Victim/Survivor: Some victims of crime choose to be called "survivor" as it more accurately reflects a healing process they have gone through in the aftermath of the crime perpetrated upon them. The term "victim" is used throughout this policy for readability.
3. Registered: Any person having provided the County Attorney with the victim's written request for registration and current mailing address and telephone number.
4. Notification: Communication by regular mail or telephone of appropriate information or papers.
5. IAVINE: (Iowa Victim Information and Notification Everyday) IAVINE allows crime victims and other concerned parties to access timely and reliable information about the custody of an offender 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through automated notification via telephone, the internet, or email.

POLICY NUMBER 0171-17

PAGE 2 OF 4

PROCEDURE:

1. Principles for Working With Victims:

- A. Victim safety is a priority and is considered in any and all decisions related to all offenders. Staff respect each victim's individual response to crime and encourages offenders to take action to repair the harm done to their victims, to the extent possible.
- B. Staff advocate a quality of justice that is focused on repairing the harm done to victims based upon evidence based principles of restorative justice and prevention. The following goals guide our efforts to develop victim sensitive practices:
 - 1) While it is the victim's choice to participate, staff who come in contact with victims advise them of victim support services available in the community.
 - 2) A victim's safety is a fundamental element of supervision.
 - 3) Confidentiality is maintained per Iowa Code and District policy. Victims have as much information as legally possible about the case, the offense and the offender, per Confidential Offender Information policy (102).
 - 4) Staff members receive the training that is necessary to support and respond to the rights and needs of the victim/survivor of a crime.

2. Victim Registration:

- A. Victims become officially registered according to Iowa Code Chapter 915 upon official request of the County Attorney's Office. Effective July 1, 1989, the County Attorney is the Primary Registrar of victims for the Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) and Department of Correctional Services (DCS). All victim registrations are processed and approved through the IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs.
- B. In the event that the victim is not officially registered with the County Attorney as per Iowa Code Chapter 915, staff direct the victim to contact the IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs so they can facilitate official registration.

3. Victim Notification:

- A. When assigned a new offender, the Agent refers to ICON (under Records Alert in the Victim tab) to determine if the offender has a registered victim. The registered victim (s) contact information is visible, but cannot be edited. If there is a registered victim, the Agent keeps the victim informed of any safety concerns and other relevant information while maintaining State and District confidentiality parameters per DCS policy (102).

PROCEDURE: (continued)

- B. If the Agent is contacted by a victim who needs assistance with official registration, needs to update contact information or has other needs the Agent cannot meet, the Agent refers the victim to the IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs at 1-800-778-1182.
 - C. If the victim indicates they would like to be informed of changes in offender status, the Agent encourages the victim to register for VINE (Iowa Victim Information and Notification Everyday) by calling 1-888-7-IAVINE, or go to www.vinelink.com.
 - D. The offender's supervising Agent will only inform victims who have contacted the department and have requested in writing to be notified prior to the discharge of an offender/expiration of sentence.
4. Residential Offender-Escape Victim Notification:
- A. Any registered victim(s) (listed in the ICON Victims tab) of an absconded offender is notified immediately by phone of the offender's escape. This is done in as uniform a manner as possible and includes staff preparing for the contact by reviewing the particular situation and acquainting themselves with the applicable victim support community resources prior to the call. Staff are sensitive to the victim and how they may be affected by this information.
 - B. If attempts to reach the victim are unsuccessful, the County Sheriff's office is contacted to attempt to notify the victim(s).
 - C. A victim is contacted upon apprehension of the offender if requested.
5. Documentation of victim contact and information:
- A. Department staff documents contact with a victim whether registered or not. This is documented into ICON under Records/Alerts - Victim Confidential Comments.
 - B. Specific situations that are documented under Records/Alerts - Victim Confidential Comments include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Contact with a victim regarding safety concerns.
 - 2) Visitation issues related to family members who are victims of an offender.
 - 3) Contact with family members of an offender when safety and confidentiality are indicated.

POLICY NUMBER 0171-17
PAGE 4 OF 4

PROCEDURE: (continued)

- C. Identifying and confidential information about a victim is not to be noted in Generic Notes. No notation that indicates an entry was made in Victim Confidential Comments is made.
- D. Additional victim notification requirements and responsibilities of the 6th DCS can be found in SOP Electronic Monitoring policy (918), Procedure 3 relating to EM/GPS Notification.

BY ORDER OF:

Bruce Vander Sanden, Director