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1 - My rights as a victim of crime

What information will I get from the authority after the crime occurred (e.g. police, public prosecutor) but before I even report the crime?

When contacting the authority, you will get information on:

- how to report the crime; and
- any victim support services that are available without reporting the crime.

Guidance is also available on the website of the [Police and Border Guard Board](#).

I don't live in the EU country where the crime took place (EU and non-EU citizens). How are my rights protected?

Your rights will be protected regardless of the EU country where you fell victim to the crime. You can report the crime and, if necessary, receive victim support services both in the country where the crime took place and in the country where you live.

If I report a crime, what information will I receive?

When you report a crime, you are entitled to receive the following information:

- at your request, a written acknowledgement that you have reported a crime;
- a notification, within ten days, on the decision to commence or not commence criminal proceedings;
- if criminal proceedings are commenced, you will be questioned as a victim and asked whether you wish to receive information on the arrest and release of the suspect, and the time and place of the trial; furthermore,
- when the preliminary investigation of the case is completed, the public prosecutor will notify you that you are entitled to examine the contents of the criminal file.

Am I entitled to free interpreting or translation services (when I contact the police or other authorities, or during the investigation and trial)?

Anyone who does not understand or speak Estonian is entitled to interpretation during the proceedings. You are entitled, on request, to receive a translation of any text that is essential for understanding the ruling on the termination of criminal proceedings or the court judgment or for ensuring the fairness of the proceedings.

How does the authority ensure that I understand and that I am understood (if I am a child; if I have a disability)?

The authorities must ensure that you understand what is explained to you and are understood. For this purpose, information sheets in easy-to-understand language and trained specialists are available at the police station or prosecutor's office. You are also always entitled to a sign language interpreter.

Victim support services

Who provides victim support?

Victim support services are provided by the [Estonian National Social Insurance Board](#).

If you are a victim of violence against women, you may also turn to [women's refuges](#) for help.

Will the police automatically refer me to victim support?

The police will inform you about victim support services and refer you to a victim support worker if necessary. Many police stations have a victim support worker present at all times.

How is my privacy protected?

All information gathered in the course of criminal proceedings is confidential and will not be shared with the public before the public trial. The court may also declare that your trial will be held in camera, in which case the information discussed during the trial will also not be accessible to the public.

Do I have to report a crime before I can access victim support?

No, everyone has access to general victim support, whether or not they have reported a crime. However, there are specific victim support services, such as compensation to victims of violence or allowance for psychological support, which you can only access after you have reported a crime.

Personal protection if I'm in danger

What types of protection are available?

You can ask the prosecutor to request that the court issue a temporary restraining order against the suspect. A temporary restraining order instructs the suspect to stay away from places specified by the court and not to approach or communicate with persons specified by the court.

You may also be protected by witness protection measures applied by the police at the request of the prosecutor's office.

Who can offer me protection?

If you are in danger, contact the police and they will ensure your safety.

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the offender?

The police must assess every case, ensuring that any harm is prevented.

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the criminal justice system (during investigation and trial)?

All the authorities conducting the proceedings are always required to consider your interests and prevent you from undergoing secondary victimisation during the criminal proceedings.

What protection is available for very vulnerable victims?

If you are a victim of a serious crime, you may be allowed not to be questioned in court; alternatively, a telehearing may be allowed or a partition used to hide you from the view of the accused during your questioning in court.

I am a minor – do I have special rights?

The authority conducting the proceedings may involve a child protection official, social worker or psychologist in the questioning of a victim who is a minor. This is mandatory in serious cases if the person conducting the

proceedings has not received appropriate training.

If you are a victim who is a minor and your interests are in conflict with those of your legal representative or your parents, the authority conducting the proceedings may appoint an advocate for you free of charge as legal aid.

Minors with mental disorders and all children under 10 years of age, or children under 14 years of age in cases of domestic or sexual violence, will not be questioned in court. Instead, the police interview with the minor will be recorded on video and may be used as evidence in court.

My family member died because of the crime – what are my rights?

If your family member died because of the crime, you have all the rights of a victim during the proceedings.

My family member was a victim of crime – what are my rights?

If your family member was a victim of crime, you are entitled to receive victim support services similarly to the victim if necessary.

Can I access mediation services? What are the conditions? Will I be safe during mediation?

With your consent and that of the suspect, the prosecutor's office may decide to terminate the criminal proceedings by conciliation (mediation). The conciliation service is provided by a victim support worker.

You will have the right to opt out of the conciliation procedure at any point.

Where can I find the law stating my rights?

[Code of Criminal Procedure](#)

[Victim Support Act](#)

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