

[Home](#) > ... > [Your Rights](#) > [Victims of Crime](#) > [Victims' Rights - By Country](#) > 1 - My rights as a victim of crime

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?

The police and the public prosecutor are required to inform you of:

- your entitlement to damages from the suspect or compensation from the State;
- the fact that, if you request this, the public prosecutor is usually required to prepare and present your claim for damages in court;
- the provisions on restraining orders, counsel for the injured party and personal assistance;
- how to apply for legal aid and advice;
- the options and conditions for mediation;
- authorities and organisations offering support and assistance;
- the contact details needed to obtain information on your own case;
- the continued proceedings and the role you will play in them;
- your right to interpreting and translation;
- your right to reimbursement of costs;
- the fact that the preliminary investigation has not been initiated or has been dropped;
- where to address any complaints concerning the handling of your case;
- whether or not legal proceedings have been initiated;
- whether a detained or arrested person has absconded.

Note that the above information will be provided following a police report. But you can of course refer to the information on, for example, the website of the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (Brottsoffermyndighet) before you file a police report.

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

If you are a foreign national and have been the victim of a crime in Sweden, you are entitled to the same information as a Swedish citizen (see above). You are also entitled to interpreting and translation services if you do not speak Swedish.

If you have been the victim of a crime in another country, the authorities in that country are responsible for informing you of your rights. View more information on rights in other EU Member States [here](#).

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

The police and the public prosecutor are required to inform you of:

- your entitlement to damages from the suspect or compensation from the State;
- the fact that, if you request this, the public prosecutor is usually required to prepare and present your claim for damages in court;
- the provisions on restraining orders, counsel for the injured party and personal assistance;
- how to apply for legal aid and advice;
- the options and conditions for mediation;
- authorities and organisations offering support and assistance;

- the contact details needed to obtain information on your own case;
- the continued proceedings and the role you will play in them;
- your right to interpreting and translation;
- your right to reimbursement of costs;
- the fact that the preliminary investigation has not been initiated or has been dropped;
- where to address any complaints concerning the handling of your case;
- whether or not legal proceedings have been initiated;
- whether a detained or arrested person has absconded.

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

You are also entitled to interpreting and translation services if you do not speak Swedish.

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

You are entitled to an interpreter if you have a disability which means you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impediment.

The Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (Brottsoffermyndigheten) has produced information material specially designed for children. Visit <https://www.jagvillveta.se/> for details of your rights in the event of a crime.

The police also provide information specially for children: <https://polisen.se/Utsatt-for-brott/Olika-typer-av-brott/Barn-och-ungdomar/>

Victim support services

Who provides victim support?

As the victim of a crime, you can obtain support from many non-profit associations and organisations. The social services in your municipality are also required by law to ensure that victims of crime and their families receive support and assistance.

Will the police automatically refer me to victim support?

When you report a crime, the police will inform you of authorities and organisations that offer support and assistance. With your consent, the police will also, in some cases, pass your contact details to e.g. a victim support helpline which will then contact you. You can also make contact yourself with an organisation which provides support.

How is my privacy protected?

If you request support from social services, your case will be handled in confidence. People working in their own time for a voluntary organisation supporting victims of crime are sworn to secrecy. You can also remain anonymous when you contact such an organisation.

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

No, you do not have to.

Personal protection if I'm in danger

What types of protection are available?

There are many types of protection available to victims of crime:

- Restraining order

A restraining order (kontaktförbud) is designed to avert situations that could be dangerous for the victims. Restraining orders have emerged and been used mainly to protect women against threats and harassment from a former spouse or partner, but they can also be issued to protect children and other vulnerable persons. A restraining order means the person who is threatening and harassing you is forbidden to visit you or contact you in any other way, e.g. by letter, text or telephone or through friends. It can also be extended into an order not to approach your home, workplace or other place that you frequent.

A restraining order can also cover someone who lives with the person being threatened. For such an order to be issued, with the aim of barring the source of the threats from the joint home, there must be a high risk of crime against the partner's life, health, freedom or safety.

The public prosecutor decides on restraining orders. If the prosecutor does not issue such an order, you can ask for the matter to be brought before the district court (tingsrätt). Anyone who disobeys such an order may be sentenced to a fine or up to one year's imprisonment.

- Sheltered housing

Women and their children who have been subjected to domestic violence may need to move out of their home for a while. Sheltered housing is provided by both municipalities and women's refuges. Contact social services in your municipality or a local women's centre for more information.

- Protected personal data

If you need to keep your address secret because of threats or other forms of harassment, you can have a code entered in the population register for a special secrecy check (sekretessmarkering). The code will also be entered in other public registers, such as the register of vehicles and driving licences. The classification is generally reviewed each year.

Another way of protecting personal data is for a threatened person who has moved or intends to do so to remain in the population register at their old address (kvarskrivning). You can remain registered at your old address for up to three years after moving.

Requests for protected personal data in the form of secrecy coding and use of old addresses should be submitted to the local tax office where you are registered. It is important to state that you have protected personal data when you talk to authorities. You must also be very careful when dealing with organisations, companies and others.

- Change of name

Another way of enhancing protection could be to change your name. You can switch to a parent's surname by notifying the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). A change to any other surname requires authorisation from the Swedish Patent and Registration Office (Patent- och registreringsverket).

- Security pack

For some people, the threat is so serious that it may be necessary to use a 'security pack'. The pack contains a mobile phone and alarm system and can be borrowed from the local police authority subject to a specific review.

- Fictitious personal data

Where there is a threat of serious crime against your life, health or freedom, or where other safety measures are not felt to provide sufficient protection, you may be allowed to use fictitious (i.e. invented) personal details. Requests to use fictitious personal data should be made to the police.

- Witness protection programme

In exceptional cases, when other measures are not working, threatened persons who could influence the outcome of a court case can enter the special witness protection programme run by the police.

Who can offer me protection?

Depending on the type of protection, different organisations may make decisions on protection. See section above.

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

In order to determine your need for special protective measures during the police enquiries and court proceedings, the police should make an individual safety assessment as soon as possible. This will take account of the severity of the crime and your personal circumstances. If you are under 18, you will always be considered to need special protection.

The social services also tend to use special assessment methods to examine the risk of renewed exposure to violence from an offender you are living with.

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

In order to determine your need for special protective measures during the police enquiries and court proceedings, the police should make an individual safety assessment as soon as possible. This will take account of the severity of the crime and your personal circumstances. If you are under 18, you will always be considered to need special protection.

What protection is available for very vulnerable victims?

The most far-reaching protective measures in the case of serious crime are fictitious personal details and the witness protection programme (see above).

I am a minor – do I have special rights?

The social services are responsible for ensuring that a child who has been the victim of a crime, and its relatives, receive the help and support that they need. The social services should also remember that a child who has witnessed violence or other abuse against a relative is also the victim of a crime, and ensure that the child receives the help and support that it needs.

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

The social services are also responsible for providing support to relatives when a family member is the victim of a crime. There are also non-profit associations dedicated to supporting relatives when a family member has died because of a crime.

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

The social services are also responsible for providing support to relatives when a family member is the victim of a crime. Many of the protective measures described above may also apply to you if you have a relative who has been the victim of a crime. Many non-profit organisations also offer support to relatives.

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

Mediation means that the victim and the perpetrator meet to discuss what has happened with an impartial mediator. When the perpetrator is under 21, the municipality is required to offer mediation.

A condition for mediation is that the crime must be acknowledged. Both parties must also want to participate. Mediation may lead to agreement, e.g. on how the parties should behave in future meetings with each other, which can give the victim some reassurance.

Agreements on financial compensation for damages are also possible, but can lead to problems, particularly where

there are several perpetrators, large sums or personal injuries involved. Contact the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (Brottsoffermyndigheten) if you have any questions on such agreements. If you enter into an agreement on financial compensation, you may lose the right to claim crime victim compensation.

The appointed mediator (who must be competent, honest and impartial) is responsible for ensuring that the mediation proceeds in a safe manner for you.

Where can I find the law stating my rights?

A list of important acts and regulations can be found on the [web site of the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority \(Brottsoffermyndigheten\)](#).

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