

Office of the State Attorney  
Fifth Judicial Circuit



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State Attorney

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BROCHURE**

**YOUR RIGHTS AS A VICTIM OR WITNESS:**

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This brochure is designed to give you basic information about Domestic Violence. Please read the entire brochure carefully. You will learn what Domestic Violence is, how it affects you and your children and what you can do to help increase your safety.

**OFFICER'S NAME & AGENCY NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COURT CASE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VICTIM ADVOCATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

*This brochure is dedicated  
To victims and survivors of domestic violence*

**INTRODUCTION**

Domestic Violence can happen to anyone, regardless of religious, social, economic, ethnic, gender or educational background. Domestic violence happens to people of all ages and in every community. Domestic Violence is a pattern of controlling behavior by one person who has or has had a personal, intimate or family relationship with another person. This may be a spouse, an ex-spouse, a live-in partner, or someone with whom you have had a child.

Domestic Violence may include making threats to you, slapping, choking or pushing, holding you down, kicking, forcing or pressuring you to have sex when you don't want to, or any other types of unwanted touching. Rape is often a form of violence used in intimate relationships. If any of these things have happened to you, you may have feelings of helplessness, fear, shame, guilt and anger. You may blame yourself for the things that are happening and feel responsible for what happens to your abuser. There may be other problems in your home such as lack of resources and concern for children or other family members that make it hard to leave an abusive relationship.

**Please remember that domestic violence is a crime, and you are not alone!** There are people and agencies willing and able to help you. For more information, contact your local domestic violence center or the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

**Florida Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-500-1119**  
[www.fcadv.org](http://www.fcadv.org)

## **WARNING SIGNS**

There are things that your partner may do that are considered "**RED FLAGS.**" They can help you decide if you are in a potentially dangerous relationship.

- Does your partner tease you in hurtful ways or call you names in public or in private?
- Does your partner act jealous in front of your friends, family or co-workers?
- Does your partner get angry about your clothes or how you wear your hair?
- Does your partner insist on knowing who you talk to on the phone, through social media, mail or go through your accounts or personal things?
- Does your partner check up on you by calling, driving by or getting someone else to check on you?
- Does your partner make important family decisions without you because they are the "head of the household"?
- Does your partner keep money from you, keep you in debt, or have "money secrets"?
- Has your partner kept you from getting a job or caused you to lose your job?
- Has your partner made you sell your car; made you give up your license or not repaired your car?
- Have you lost friends, or do you no longer see some of your family because of your partner?
- Does your partner accept no blame for their problems, failures at work or with money?
- Does your partner get mad so easily that you feel like you are "walking on eggshells"?
- Does your partner blame you for their abusive behaviors, deny hurting you or "make light" of hurting you?
- Does your partner blame you for their problems, their moods, or their abusive behavior?
- Does your partner accuse you of seeing someone else?
- Does your partner often drink?
- Does your partner often use illegal drugs or abuse prescription drugs?
- Does your partner insist that you drink or do drugs with them?
- Is your partner like a "Jekyll and Hyde"; acting one way in front of people and another way when you are alone?
- Does your partner hit walls, drive dangerously or do other things to scare you?
- Does your partner threaten to hurt you, your children, your pets or other family members?
- Does your partner have access to firearms or other weapons?
- Does your partner force you to have sex when you do not want to?
- Does your partner force you to have sex in ways you do not want to or have makeup sex after a fight or hurting you?
- Has your partner ever violated an injunction for protection?
- Does your partner have a history of violence that has become worse over time?
- Has your partner threatened to kill you or commit suicide if you ever leave them?

**If you recognize any of these "red flags" as things happening in your relationship, please call 1(800) 500-1119 to talk to a counselor.**

## SAFETY PLANNING

Abusers are not predictable, and every case of domestic violence is different. Planning may help keep you and your children safe. Contact your local domestic violence center or call 1-800-500-5119 to speak to an advocate to help you prepare your safety plan. Here are some things to consider:

Decide where you can go for help.

Tell someone what is happening and make sure to have their contact information on you.

Have an electronic device that can contact 911.

Make a "**getaway bag**" in case you need to leave quickly. Your "getaway bag" should include things for you and your children that you must have or that would be hard to replace like:

- **Driver's license or any form of ID**
- **Birth Certificates/Social Security Cards**
- **Medications/Copies of Prescriptions**
- **Pictures of abuser and your children**
- **Cash, debit/credit card(s)**
- **Extra set of house keys and car keys**
- **Clothes and Small Toys for children**
- **Divorce/Custody/Injunction paperwork**
- **Extra Electronic device to contact 911**

Teach your children emergency action:

- How to call 911
- Not to get in the middle of violence and how to escape the house during violence; it is not their job to protect you
- Safe places to go (like a neighbor's or friend's house)

**Leaving an abusive relationship can be dangerous. These are things to think about if you plan to leave or have already left.**

Get an Injunction for Protection, and always keep it with you

Change/block social media accounts

Keep record of any contact (i.e. texts, calls, emails, social media messages etc.) and promptly report violations to law enforcement.

Notify children's school, daycare or babysitter of the situation and give them copies of any court orders related to custody. Have them report any unusual contact from the abuser

Do not meet or contact the abuser alone under **any** circumstances. Have another person pick up and deliver children for visitation.

If you **must** meet the abuser, choose a safe, public location and take another person with you.

Change your routine and the routes you travel to work and school.

Do not go to places that you and the abuser went to together, or places where they are known to spend time.

## EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Domestic Violence is a learned behavior. As children grow up and learn about right and wrong, they learn the most from the people who are closest to them, usually their parents. Children need to understand that violent behavior is **NOT** okay, and that it is **NOT** a way to deal with frustration and anger.

Not all children react the same way to violence in their home, but these are some of the harmful effects that domestic violence can have on your child:

#### **MENTAL**

depression  
fearful of being left alone  
angers/upsets easily  
“stores up” anger  
feels guilty about abuse  
problem trusting others

#### **PHYSICAL**

tired, difficulty sleeping  
headaches, stomachaches  
bad dreams  
alcohol/drug use  
difficulty concentrating  
doesn’t eat or overeats  
is violent towards others

#### **SOCIAL**

does negative things to get attention  
Overreacts to little things  
“don’t care” attitude  
trouble making/keeping friends,  
problems at school, stays away from home or runs away

Children who grow up seeing abuse may have a higher risk of becoming an abuser or a victim of abuse, but it does not mean that this *must* happen. Children who have seen or experienced violence can be helped if they are given a safe place to talk about their feelings and tell their stories. However, it is important to discuss these issues with children in a safe place, such as a shelter or with a counselor. Reassure your children that you love them and that the abuse is **NOT** their fault.

### **INJUNCTIONS FOR PROTECTION**

An Injunction for Protection is a court order by which an individual is required to perform, or is restrained from performing, a particular act for a period of time. Failure to comply with the injunction can result in criminal or civil penalties.

### **TYPES OF INJUNCTIONS**

**Domestic Violence Injunctions** Requires the petitioner and respondent to be family or household members who are or were living together in the same single dwelling unit, **unless** they have a child together. Parents of a child in common are not required to have been married or have lived together. The petitioner must show that they are a victim of domestic violence or reasonably believe that they are in immediate danger of becoming a victim.

**Repeat Violence Injunctions** Requires at least 2 or more incidents of violence or stalking by the respondent on the petitioner or an immediate family member; one must be within the past 6 months. The petitioner must fear repeat violence by the respondent.

**Dating Violence Injunctions** Requires a dating relationship within the past 6 months. The relationship must have an expectation of affection; not a causal relationship. The petitioner must show that they are a victim of dating violence and have reasonable fear that they are in immediate danger of becoming a victim of dating violence.

**Sexual Violence Injunctions** Requires the charges of sexual battery; a lewd or lascivious act upon or in presence of a person younger than 16; luring or enticing a child; and sexual performance by a child. May protect petitioner from the respondent who was jailed for the sexual violence against petitioner, and whose prison term has expired, or is due to expire within 90 days.

**Stalking Injunctions** Requires at least two incidents of stalking or cyber stalking.

### **PROCESS FOR OBTAINING AN INJUNCTION**

A petition (application) for an injunction for protection is available through the Clerk of Court. You can call the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 800-500-1119 or your local domestic violence center for more information on how to proceed.

Florida Law Requires that you **NOT** be charged for an injunction.

The petition allows you to ask the judge to order:

- the abuser to STOP all acts of violence toward you
- the abuser to leave the home that you share
- the abuser to have NO CONTACT with you at all unless ordered by the judge
- the abuser to have NO CONTACT with you at your work, school or places that you spend time (like a family member's house)
- custody and child support for minor children.

If you have other requests for the judge, you should state them clearly in writing in the petition. It is important for you to state clearly what your relationship is to the abuser. You should also be prepared to explain in detail the latest violent event, any other violent events towards you or another household member and why you think violence is likely to happen again. When applying for an Injunction for Protection, you **must** provide the Clerk of the Court with a photo ID of yourself, directions to where the abuser can be found and names and ages of children under 18.

Upon completing the petition, the Clerk will immediately give it to the judge. The judge may or may not grant you a temporary Injunction and will decide what parts of the petition will be temporarily ordered. The temporary order will be valid for **no more than 15 days**. Sometime within the 15 days, the judge will hold a hearing for a **PERMANENT** Injunction. At this hearing, you will have the opportunity to tell the judge, in your own words, about the abuse and what kind of protection you are asking the court to give you. The abuser (respondent) may be present at the hearing. At this hearing, the judge may change the temporary court order or leave it as originally ordered. If the judge fails to issue an Injunction, you have the right to request an explanation in writing and receive a copy of it.

If you are afraid of seeing the abuser at the hearing, let the Clerk or court security know that you would like protection. You may ask a security person to walk with you to your car! You have the right to have a victim advocate present with you at the hearing. Contact the local domestic violence center or call **1-800-500-1119** to have an advocate attend the hearing with you. **You must attend the hearing date to obtain a permanent Injunction. If you miss the hearing, the Injunction will be dismissed.**

Always keep one copy of your Injunction with you and another copy in a safe place. Remember **an Injunction does not guarantee your safety and does not take the place of your safety plan**. It will permit the police to respond to violations.

Any violation of the conditions of the Injunction should be reported to law enforcement and you should ask for a copy of the report. If it is an emergency, call 911. In some cases, an arrest can be made, and criminal charges can be filed. Violations should also be reported to the Clerk of the Court. The clerk can help you fill out the paperwork to report the violation to the Judge and to the State Attorney's Office.

An Injunction for Protection issued anywhere in Florida is valid in all of Florida's 67 counties. Injunctions for protection issued in other states or countries are also enforceable. However, anytime you relocate to another state or country, it's a good idea to file a copy of your Injunction with the local sheriff's office.

## **AS A CRIME VICTIM, THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES YOU THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS**

*Article 1, Section 16(b), Florida Constitution*

**The right to** due process and to be treated with fairness and respect for your dignity.

**The right to** be free from intimidation, harassment, and abuse.

**The right**, within the judicial process, to be reasonably protected from the accused and any person acting on behalf of the accused. However, this is not intended to create a special relationship between the crime victim and any law enforcement agency or office absent a special relationship or duty as defined by Florida law.

**The right to** have your safety and welfare as well as your families considered when setting bail, including setting pretrial release conditions that could affect you or your family's safety and welfare.

**The right to** prevent the disclosure of information or records that could be used to locate or harass you or your family, or which could disclose your confidential or privileged information.

**The right to** the prompt return of your property when no longer needed as evidence in the case.

**The right to** full and timely restitution in every case and from each convicted offender for all losses you suffered, both directly and indirectly, because of the criminal conduct.

**The right to** proceedings free from unreasonable delay, and to a prompt and final conclusion of the case and any related post judgment proceedings. (In appropriate cases, the prosecutor may file a good faith demand for a speedy trial. In non-capital

cases, all state-level appeals and post-conviction proceedings must be complete within two years and five years for capital cases, unless the court enters an order with specific findings concerning why the court was unable to do so and the circumstances causing the delay.)

**The right to** be informed of your state constitutional rights, and to be informed that you can seek the advice of an attorney with respect to your rights.

### **AS A CRIME VICTIM, YOU ARE AFFORDED THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS UPON REQUEST**

**The right to** reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of, and to be present at, all public proceedings involving the criminal conduct, including, but not limited to, trial, plea, sentencing, or adjudication, even if you will be a witness at the proceeding, notwithstanding any rule to the contrary. **(For this purpose, consider providing the prosecutor an address, an email address, or a telephone number at which you can be reached quickly, and update this information during the pendency of your case.)** You shall also be provided reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any release or escape of the defendant or delinquent, and any proceeding during which a right of yours is implicated.

**The right to** be heard in any public proceeding involving pretrial or other release from any form of legal constraint, plea, sentencing, adjudication, or parole, and any proceeding during which a right of yours is implicated.

**The right to** confer with the prosecuting attorney concerning any plea agreements, participation in pretrial diversion programs, release, restitution, sentencing, or any other disposition of the case.

**The right to** provide information regarding the impact of the offender's conduct on you and your family to the individual responsible for conducting any presentence investigation or compiling any presentence investigation report, and to have any such information considered in any sentencing recommendations submitted to the court.

**The right to** receive a copy of any presentence report, and any other report or record relevant to the exercise of a victim's right, except for such portions made confidential or exempt by law.

**The right to** be informed of the conviction, sentence, adjudication, place and time of incarceration, or other disposition of the convicted offender, any scheduled release date of the offender, and the release of or the escape of the offender from custody.

**The right to** be informed of all postconviction processes and procedures, to participate in such processes and procedures, to provide information to the release authority to be considered before any release decision is made, and to be notified of any release decision regarding the offender.

**The right to** be informed of clemency and expungement procedures, to provide information to the governor, the court, any clemency board, and other authority in these procedures, and to have that information considered before a clemency or expungement decision is made; and to be notified of such decision in advance of any release of the offender.

#### **ALL RIGHTS AFFORDED BY THE CONSTITUTION ARE ENFORCEABLE**

##### *Article 1, section 16(c), Florida Constitution*

The victim, the retained attorney of the victim, a lawful representative of the victim, or the office of the state attorney upon request of the victim, may assert and seek enforcement of these rights and any other right afforded to a victim by law in any trial or appellate court, or before any other authority with jurisdiction over the case, as a matter of right. The court or other authority with jurisdiction shall act promptly on such a request, affording a remedy by due course of law for the violation of any right. The reasons for any decision regarding the disposition of your right shall be clearly stated on the record.

#### **ADDITIONAL VICTIMS RIGHTS UNDER FLORIDA STATUTES**

In some cases, you (or relatives where the victim is deceased) may be eligible for financial compensation from the State of Florida. Information regarding eligibility may be obtained from the State Attorney's Office, law enforcement agency or from the Bureau of Crimes Compensation, Office of the Attorney General at **1-800-226-6667**, website: [www.myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf](http://www.myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf).

**The right to** receive information on available crisis intervention services and local community services to include counseling, shelter, legal assistance, or other types of help, depending on the particular circumstances. Telephone numbers of these services are provided at the end of this brochure. (*sec. 960.001(1)(a)1, Florida Statutes*)

**The right to** receive information regarding the stages of the criminal justice or juvenile justice processes and the way information about such stages may be obtained. (*sec. 960.001(1)(a)4, Florida Statutes*)

A victim who is incarcerated has the right to be informed and submit written statements at all crucial stages of the criminal and juvenile proceedings. (*sec. 960.001(1)(a)6, Florida Statutes*)

**The right to** receive information on the steps available to law enforcement and the State Attorney's Office to protect you from intimidation and/or harassment.

It is a third-degree felony to knowingly use intimidation or physical force; threaten another person or attempt to do so; engage in misleading conduct toward another person; or offer pecuniary benefit or gain to another person. If you are being threatened or intimidated, please contact the State Attorney's Office or any law enforcement officer. *(sec. 960.001(1)(c), Florida Statutes)*

**The right of** the victim of domestic violence to be informed of the address confidentiality program administered through the Attorney General's Office. You may contact the Attorney General's Office at **1-800-226-6667**. The State Attorney's Office may assist with this paperwork if necessary. *(sec. 960.001(1)(c), Florida Statutes)*

**The right of** each victim, or witness, who has been scheduled to attend a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding to be notified as soon as possible by the agency or person scheduling his/her appearance of any change in scheduling which will affect the victim's or witness's appearance. *(sec. 960.001(1)(d), Florida Statutes)*

**The right to** receive advance notification of judicial and post judicial proceedings relating to the case, including all proceedings or hearings relating to:

- The arrest of the accused.
- The release of the accused pending judicial proceedings, and any modification of release condition to include release to community control or work release.
- Proceedings in the prosecution or petition for delinquency of the accused, including the filing of the accusatory instrument; the arraignment; disposition of the accusatory instrument; trial or adjudicatory hearing, sentencing or disposition hearing; appellate review; subsequent modification of sentence; collateral attack of a judgment; and when a term of imprisonment, detention, or involuntary commitment is imposed, the release of the defendant or juvenile offender from such imprisonment, detention or juvenile offender from such imprisonment; detention or commitment by expiration of sentence or parole and any meeting held to consider such release. *(sec. 960.001(1)(e), Florida Statutes)*

In addition to the provisions of sec. 921.143, Florida Statutes, the rights of the victim of a felony involving physical or emotional injury or trauma, or in a case in which the victim is a minor child or in a case involving a homicide, the guardian or family of the victim shall be consulted by the State Attorney in order to obtain the views of the victim or family about the disposition of any criminal or juvenile case brought about as a result of such crime, including their views about:

- The release of the accused pending judicial proceedings.
- Plea Agreements.
- Participation in pretrial diversion programs.
- Sentencing of the accused.

**The right to** request that the State Attorney or law enforcement agency help you explain to employers and creditors that you may face additional burdens by taking time off from work to assist law enforcement and you may undergo serious financial strain either because of the crime or by cooperating with authorities. *(sec. 960.001(1)(i), Florida Statutes)*

Law Enforcement agencies and the State Attorney shall inform you of **your right to** request and receive restitution and of your rights of enforcement in the event an offender does not pay. The State Attorney shall seek your assistance in the documentation of your losses for the purpose of requesting and receiving restitution. If an order of restitution is converted to a civil lien or civil judgment against the defendant, the Clerk of Court's office shall make available at their office, as well as on their website, information provided by the Secretary of State, the Court, or The Florida Bar on enforcing the civil lien or judgment. The State Attorney shall inform you if and when restitution is ordered. *(sec. 960.001(1)(j), Florida Statutes)*

**The right to** receive reasonable consideration and assistance from employees of the State Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, or Police Department. When requested, you will be assisted in locating accessible transportation and parking and shall be directed to separate pretrial waiting areas when such facilities are available. When requested, you shall receive assistance in attempting to locate translators when practicable. *(sec. 960.001(1)(n), Florida Statutes)*

**The right of** the victim of a sexual offense to have the courtroom cleared, with certain exceptions during his or her testimony, regardless of the victim's age or mental capacity. *(sec. 960.001(q), Florida Statutes)*



**The right to** request, in certain circumstances that the offender be required to attend a different school than the victim or siblings of the victim. If the victim of an offense committed by a juvenile is a minor, the victim or any sibling of the victim attends or is eligible to attend the same school as that of the offender, the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections shall notify the victim's parent or legal guardian of the right to attend the sentencing or disposition of the offender and request that the offender be required to attend a different school. (*sec. 960.001(1)(s), Florida Statutes*)

**The right of** the victim who is not incarcerated to not be required to attend discovery depositions in any correctional facility. (*sec. 960.001(6), Florida Statutes*)

The statutory obligation of the victim, parent/guardian of a minor victim, or next of kin of a homicide victim, that any information gained pursuant to Chapter 960, Florida Statutes, regarding any case handled in juvenile court, **must not** be revealed to any outside party, except as reasonably necessary in pursuit of legal remedies. (*sec. 960.001(8), Florida Statutes*)

**The right to** know in certain cases and at the earliest possible opportunity, if the person charged with an offense has tested positive for hepatitis and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. In such cases, upon request of the victim or the victim's legal guardian, or the parent or legal guardian of the victim if the victim is a minor, the court shall order such person to undergo hepatitis and HIV testing within 48 hours after the charging document is filed or 48 hours from the date of request. (*Section 960.003, Florida Statutes*)

**The right of** a victim of a sexual offense to request the presence of a victim advocate during the forensic medical examination. An advocate from a certified rape crisis center shall be permitted to attend any forensic medical examination. (*sec. 960.001(1)(u), Florida Statutes*)

If a victim has been diagnosed with autism or an autism spectrum disorder, he or she or the parent or guardian, has the right to request that a public safety official make a good faith effort to ensure that a related professional, such as a mental health counselor, special education instructor or clinical social worker be present for all interviews of the individual. All expenses related to the attendance of the professional at the interviews are the responsibility of the requesting victim, parent or guardian; however, the defendant shall reimburse the victim for all expenses related to the attendance of the professional at the interviews, in addition to restitution and penalties provided by law. (*sec. 943.0439, Florida Statutes*)

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE**

**THE POLICE** - The criminal justice system starts with a call for help. Once the police respond to a call, they must decide if a crime was committed and who committed it. This is done by interviewing victims and witnesses and gathering evidence. If the police decide that a crime has been committed, they should make an arrest. In domestic violence cases, the police make the decision about who and when to arrest, NOT the victim. A domestic violence suspect can be arrested by the police or after a warrant is issued by a judge.

**FIRST APPEARANCE HEARING / PRE-TRIAL RELEASE** - Florida Law says that a person arrested for a crime involving domestic violence is not entitled to bond until he/she appears before a judge at a first appearance hearing (within 24 hours of arrest). The judge will either deny bond or set conditions for release of the defendant from jail. The victim has a right to be present at this hearing and make a statement to the judge in person or through the prosecutor. At this hearing, the judge may issue a "no contact" or "stay away" order, telling the defendant that he is to have absolutely **NO CONTACT** (physical or otherwise) with the victim of the crime. This will remain in effect until the person is sentenced or until the judge changes it. By staying in contact with the State Attorney's Office, you will be notified if there are any changes in the status of the no contact order or other bond conditions. A violation of the "no contact" order is a crime and should be immediately reported to the police and the State Attorney's Office. A "no contact" order **does not** take the place of an Injunction for Protection, which is a civil procedure.

**ARRAIGNMENT HEARING** - When someone (a defendant) is charged with a crime, he will be scheduled to appear at an arraignment hearing. At that time, the judge will inform the defendant of the charges against him. Next, the judge will tell the defendant his rights and appoint an attorney for the defendant, if necessary. If the defendant enters a plea of not guilty, the case may be set for trial. If the defendant enters a plea of guilty or no contest, the judge may sentence the defendant or set a sentencing date. The victim has the right to be present at this hearing but is not required to attend.



**SUBPOENAS** - A subpoena is a court order to appear at a specific time and place. After criminal charges have been filed, victims and other witnesses may expect to be ordered to appear for certain hearings and for a trial. Failing to appear could result in your being charged with contempt of court and being punished by jail and/or a fine. After receiving a subpoena, victims should contact the State Attorney's Office before the scheduled appearance date to make sure that it has not been re-scheduled.

If you have re-located and wish to keep your new address confidential, notify the State Attorney's Office.

**CRIMINAL DEPOSITIONS** - A deposition is a process in which victims are required to appear and answer questions under oath about their knowledge of a criminal offense. After criminal charges are filed, victims might be subpoenaed for a deposition by the defendant's attorney. The defendant does not have a right to be present at the deposition.

Victims are not required to talk to the defendant, his attorney, or a representative of the defendant regarding the case **without a subpoena**. Any questions about the deposition process should be directed to the Assistant State Attorney or the Victim/Witness Specialist handling the case, who may be present at the deposition. The victim has a right to have a victim advocate/Specialist of their choice at the deposition.

**CONTINUANCES** - After a case is set for trial, either the State or the defense may request a delay for a variety of reasons. The State Attorney's Office will make every effort to keep victims informed in advance of hearing and trial dates. It is important that victims contact the State Attorney's Office the day prior to their scheduled court appearance to make sure that it has not been continued.

**PLEA NEGOTIATIONS** - Rather than go to trial, a defendant may enter a plea of guilty or no contest. Sometimes the defense and the prosecution agree to a particular sentence or the defendant may plead guilty without any agreement and accept the judge's sentence. In any case, the victim has a right to be heard and speak to the judge at the sentencing.

**TRIAL** - There are two types of trials, jury and non-jury. If the defendant chooses a non-jury trial, the judge will decide the guilt or innocence of the defendant. If there is a jury trial, the issue of guilt will be decided by a jury. In the trial, the prosecutor will present witnesses and give evidence. Attorneys for both sides will be given a chance to ask questions of every witness. During the trial, witnesses are not allowed to discuss their testimony with other witnesses. The prosecution must prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

**SENTENCE** - A sentence is the punishment that a defendant receives after he has admitted his guilt, pled no contest or been found guilty at trial. He may be sentenced immediately or at a hearing that the judge may schedule for a later date. Victims have a right to appear before the judge to personally state their feelings and recommendations about an appropriate sentence. Victims can make their feelings known to the judge in person, by submitting a written Victim Impact Statement or both.

The judge makes the final sentencing decision. The sentence may include prison, jail, probation, or a combination of those. Victims of crime also have a right to ask for the defendant to pay restitution, which may be for lost wages, medical and counseling bills, or damaged/stolen property related to the crime for which he is being sentenced. As a special condition of probation, the judge may also order the defendant to attend a counseling program and to have no contact with the victim.

***NOTE: Victims of certain crimes (including Domestic Violence) may be eligible to apply to the Crimes Compensation Trust Fund for assistance with medical bills, lost wages and counseling costs for you and your children. An advocate from a domestic violence center or the State Attorney's Office will be able to help you. You may also call the Attorney General's Office at (800) 226-6667 for more information.***

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Office of the State Attorney, Victim Witness Services

*Provides information, referral, and support to victims of crime throughout the judicial process*

<b>Citrus County State Attorney's Office</b>	<b>352-344-8111</b>
<b>Hernando County State Attorney's Office</b>	<b>352-754-4255</b>
<b>Lake County State Attorney's Office</b>	<b>352-742-4236</b>
<b>Marion County State Attorney's Office</b>	<b>352-671-5800</b>
<b>Sumter County State Attorney's Office</b>	<b>352-569-6650</b>

### Clerk of Courts

*Provides assistance in seeking an Injunction for Protection*

<b>Citrus County Clerk of Court</b>	<b>352-341-6417</b>
<b>Hernando County Clerk of Court</b>	<b>352-754-4201</b>
<b>Lake County Clerk of Court</b>	<b>352-742-4319</b>
<b>Marion County Clerk of Court</b>	<b>352-671-5544</b>
<b>Sumter County Clerk of Court</b>	<b>352-569-6600</b>

### Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis Centers

*Provides safe housing and counseling to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.*

<b>Citrus County – Citrus Abuse Shelter Association (CASA)</b>	
<b>24-hour hotline</b>	<b>352-344-8111</b>
<b>Hernando County – Dawn Center</b>	<b>352-799-0657</b>
<b>Lake County – Haven Inc.</b>	<b>352-753-5800</b>
<b>24-hour hotline</b>	<b>800-330-2700</b>
<b>Marion County – Domestic Violence Center</b>	
<b>24-hour hotline</b>	<b>352-622-8495</b>
<b>Sumter County – Haven Inc.</b>	<b>352-748-5069</b>
<b>24-hour hotline</b>	<b>800-330-2700</b>

### Law Enforcement

**911**

*Any law-enforcement agency can be reached through the 911 emergency response system.*

<b>Citrus County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>352-726-4488</b>
<b>Hernando County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>352-754-4252</b>
<b>Lake County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>352-343-2101</b>
<b>Marion County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>352-732-8181</b>
<b>Sumter County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>352-569-1600</b>
<b>Astatula Police Department</b>	<b>352-742-2422</b>
<b>Belleview Police Department</b>	<b>352-245-7044</b>
<b>Center Hill Police Department</b>	<b>352-793-4609</b>
<b>Clermont Police Department</b>	<b>352-394-5588</b>
<b>Dunnellon Police Department</b>	<b>352-465-8510</b>
<b>Eustis Police Department</b>	<b>352-357-4121</b>
<b>Fruitland Park Police Department</b>	<b>352-360-6727</b>
<b>Groveland Police Department</b>	<b>352-429-4166</b>
<b>Howey-in-the-Hills Police Department</b>	<b>352-324-2030</b>
<b>Lady Lake Police Department</b>	<b>352-751-1560</b>
<b>Leesburg Police Department</b>	<b>352-787-2121</b>
<b>Mascotte Police Department</b>	<b>352-429-3393</b>
<b>Mount Dora Police Department</b>	<b>352-735-7130</b>
<b>Ocala Police Department</b>	<b>352-369-7000</b>
<b>Tavares Police Department</b>	<b>352-343-2101</b>
<b>Wildwood Police Department</b>	<b>352-330-1355</b>
<b>Florida Highway Patrol</b>	<b>352-251-4020</b>

**Abuse Registry (Elderly and Children)** 1-800-962-2873  
<https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>

**Crimes Compensation (Attorney General)** 1-800-226-6667  
[www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com)

**Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service** 1-800-342-8060

**VINE** 1-877-846-3435  
[www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com)

*VINE provides custody status and criminal case information. Registration is required for this service*