

YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED OF:

- Arrest of the accused
- Availability of victim service programs
- Availability of compensation of victims of violent crimes
- Any court hearings where release of accused will be considered
- Release of the accused
- Court proceedings during prosecution of the case
- Motion for new trial or appeal dates
- Parole or change in status of defendant if you request this in writing

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Express your opinion on the release of the accused pending court proceedings
- Express your views on the outcome of the case prior to plea negotiations or sentencing of the accused
- Complete a victim Impact Statement

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

In order for you to be notified of various proceedings, you must provide the police your address and home and work phone numbers (not pagers).

If there is an arrest and your phone number changes from the number you first gave police, you must notify the Jail and the victim-Witness Assistance Program in the district Attorney's Office to be informed of criminal proceedings.

If the defendant is convicted and sent to prison and you want to be notified of parole or express your opinions prior to a parole decision, you must write the Board of Pardons and Paroles in Atlanta. Also, if the defendant is sentenced to prison and you want to know of any change in his status while in prison (such as furlough, work release, or escape), send a letter to the Department of Corrections in Atlanta. The Victim-Witness Assistance Program can assist you with any of this communication.

DEFENDANT MAY BE RELEASED ON BOND PRIOR TO TRIAL

Most defendants are released on bond from jail before the disposition of the case. Bond is guaranteed by the U. S. and Georgia Constitutions, except in certain cases.

Bond is money or property put up to ensure the defendant's appearance in court. The Judge considers several issues in determining the bond amount for the accused: the possibility of

fleeing and failing to appear in court, the threat or danger to the community, the risk of committing another crime and the possibility of threatening witnesses.

Within 48 hours after accused persons are arrested, most will appear before a Judge. A bond may be set at that time or the defendants may be released on subpoena. Victims do not attend these first appearance hearings and will not be notified of them since they are routine in most cases. But victims are usually subpoenaed to a preliminary hearing, which is about one to four weeks after arrest.

There are certain serious crimes in which a bond can only be set by a Superior Court judge. These hearings are usually at a later time after notice to the District Attorney's Office. The Victim-Witness Program will attempt to notify you prior to these bond hearings.

Some defendants may be released under the Pretrial Release Program without a bond hearing. These are usually non-violent, first offenders who are released while awaiting trial. They are under supervision of the Court Administrator's office and are required to report regularly.

If accused is a juvenile (under 17), many proceedings are different. Call the Victim-Witness Program at Juvenile Court for information.

IF YOU ARE THREATENED:

If you are threatened or intimidated by the accused, call the police and ask that a police report be written.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION:

If you are a victim of a violent (not property) crime, you may be eligible for victim compensation. You must file a completed application within six months after the date of the crime. There does not have to be an arrest in order to apply.

Compensation can help with your out-of-pocket expenses not already covered by insurance, Medicaid, worker's compensation, etc. Eligible expenses include medical, counseling, funeral and lost wages. The Victim-Witness Program has compensation applications and can help you apply.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

To report a crime or for emergencies, dial 911

Victim-Witness Assistance Program (912) 652-7329 or 1-800-477-5959

Victim-Witness Assistance at Juvenile Court (912) 652-6735 (if crime committed by a juvenile)

SAFE Shelter for domestic violence victims (24-hours) 234-9999

Rape Crisis Center 24-hour Crisis Line 233-7272 or Office 354-6742

Coastal Children's Advocacy Center (Mon - Fri) 236-1401

Jail (Detention Center) (912) 652-7734 or 7700