

Judicial System

For many, this may be the first involvement with law enforcement or the judicial system. It's very common for people to expect what they have seen on television or movies to apply to their current circumstances. Unfortunately, these expectations are often unrealistic or a distorted snapshot of how things truly operate.

Texas has laws and regulations in place aimed at protecting victims. For cases involving prosecution, court advocates can provide you with information, education, and support that will help reduce fears and uncertainties.

Criminal case resolution by plea agreement is a practice that is often utilized. Through both negotiation and agreement, this approach to resolution can prevent the need for testifying in court. Education and information regarding how the judicial system operates can assist victims and their families in the reduction of trauma.

Benefits of Counseling

Some of the benefits of seeking counseling are:

- Reviewing the incident and processing the event can help you clarify what actually happened.
- Legal and judicial decisions can be discussed and utilized as part of the promotion of healing and resolution.
- Counseling can help develop coping skills and strategies—allowing for the continuance of school, work or relationships.
- Establishment of a support network can help to decrease the negative physical, psychological and emotional effects that often result from grief.

You can utilize your grief as an opportunity to build confidence, reduce isolation, and develop protective instinct skills.

Who can help?

The Victim Services Unit within the Travis County Sheriff's Office can assist with information regarding Victims' Rights, Victim Compensation, case status, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to appropriate helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.



Resources

Texas Department of Public Safety
(512) 424-2000
www.txdps.state.tx.us

**Office of the Attorney General
Crime Victims' Compensation**
1 (800) 983-9933
<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/crime-victims-compensation>

**MADD – Mothers Against Drunk Driving,
Texas Chapter**
(512) 512-445-4976
www.madd.org

Vehicular Crimes

Victim Services Unit
5555 Airport Blvd
Austin, TX 78751
512-854-9709



Name/ID Number:

Direct Number:

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1748
Austin, TX 78767

Incident Reports

If you have been involved in a vehicular incident, you may need a copy of the incident report for insurance purposes. Requests must be made in writing and should include your name, address, case number and a detailed description of the records you are requesting.

Requests must be made by either:

Email:

Electronic requests will be accepted ONLY if they are sent to the designated email of tcsor@traviscountytx.gov

Fax:

Fax record requests to: 512-854-7270

In Person:

Hand deliver record requests to:
5555 Airport Blvd. Austin, TX
Available in person Monday - Friday from
8:00am - 4:00pm

Mail:

Travis County Sheriff's Office
Attn: Shelly Eaton
P.O. Box 1748, Austin, TX, 78767

Auto Theft

If your car has been stolen, you need to file a police report. You will need information about your car such as the make, model, color, year, license plate number and VIN number (if you have it) when filing the police report. After the police report is made, if the reported information indicates that the vehicle has been stolen, your vehicle may be entered into a state and national system as stolen. At that point, if any law enforcement officer runs the license plate, it will show as stolen. This may assist in the recovery of your vehicle. Be sure to let your insurance company know if your vehicle has been stolen.

Driving While Intoxicated/ Driving Under the Influence/ Intoxication Assault

DWI, DUI and Intoxication Assault are very serious offenses which cause thousands of injuries and fatalities every year in the US. In Texas, the legal limit for intoxication is .08 BAC (blood alcohol content). If an officer thinks a person's driving is impaired, the person can still be stopped and arrested for DWI regardless of BAC.

Incidents involving the presence of any minor 15 years or younger while the driver is determined to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs may be considered to be state jail felonies. These incidents may also be reported to Child Protective Services, especially if the driver is a caregiver of the child/children.

Leaving the Scene of a Collision

Sometimes referred to as "hit and run" incidents, these cases usually involve a driver hitting a pedestrian or another motorist, with the suspect then fleeing the scene. These incidents could have a serious impact on your life. If you are the victim of a collision and the person who hit you leaves the scene, call 911 to make a report as soon as possible. If you sustain injuries and are unable to pay your medical bills, Crime Victims' Compensation may be able to help cover those costs. Contact the Office of the Attorney General or the Victim Services Unit for more information.

Common Reactions

A major traumatic incident can cause feelings of grief. Grief is a normal response, yet it sometimes produces emotional and physical reactions which can be alarming. Not all of these reactions are healthy and some may need to be changed, but they are all understandable and do not mean the person experiencing them is "crazy" or that their feelings are "wrong." No two people grieve the same.

Emotional Reactions

- Anger
- Fear
- Extreme sadness
- Loneliness
- Detachment/Lack of emotional response

Physical Reactions

- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Unintentional changes in eating habits
- Significant and unintentional weight loss or weight gain
- Increased susceptibility to illness

Behavioral Reactions

- Lack of motivation for daily activities
- Lack of concentration or memory
- Increased irritability
- Unpredictable bouts of crying or screaming
- Panic/anxiety attacks
- Wanting to talk about the incident
- Worrying about talking about the incident too much
- Increased use of alcohol, prescription drugs, or street drugs to help you cope

These responses will likely diminish with time. However, if your reactions are especially long lasting or troubling, you may need to consult with a helping professional for assistance.