

General Order

Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

May 7, 2013

NO.

600-13

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-13, dated January 1, 1987

SUBJECT: TEXAS CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION ACT

POLICY

Many innocent victims suffer personal injury or death as a result of criminal acts. Crime victims and persons who intervene in crimes on behalf of peace officers may suffer disabilities, incur financial burdens, or become dependent on public assistance. The Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act indemnifies victims of crime and citizens who suffer personal injury or death in the prevention of crime or the apprehension of criminals.

Officers are required to provide all victims of violent crime with information on the Crime Victims' Compensation Act by providing an *HPD Victims' Referral Card* (Blue Card) to all victims of violent crime or their dependents as soon as possible after the incident.

In addition to the victim themselves and their dependents, the Crime Victims' Compensation Act includes *close relatives of a deceased victim* and the *guardian* of a victim.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Close Relative of a Deceased Victim. A person who was the spouse of a deceased victim at the time of the victim's death or who is a parent or adult brother, sister, or child of the deceased victim.

Guardian. A person who is the legal guardian of the victim, whether or not the legal relationship between the guardian and the victim exists because of the age or physical or mental capacity of the victim.

Victim. A person who is the victim of the offense of sexual assault, kidnapping, aggravated robbery, trafficking of persons, or who has suffered personal injury or death as a result of the criminal conduct of another.

Violent Crime. Any conduct that poses a substantial threat of personal injury or death and is punishable by fine, imprisonment, or death.

1 PROCEDURES

The Crime Victim Services Division in the Texas Office of the Attorney General supplies the Houston Police Department with information outlining the provisions of the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act and an appropriate number of assistance applications.

Victim Services Unit Responsibilities

The Criminal Investigations Command's Victim Services Unit shall do the following:

- a. Provide various brochures and assistance applications to victims of violent crime via postal mail, Internet, or email.
- b. Assist any victim requesting an assistance application or assistance in completing the application.
- c. Refer any questions concerning a victim's eligibility to the Crime Victim Services Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General.
- d. Make an appropriate number of *Victim Services Information* brochures and assistance applications available to the various HPD divisions upon request.

Officers and Investigative Divisions Responsibilities

Officers and assigned investigators shall do the following:

- a. Provide *HPD Victims' Referral Card* (Blue Card) to victims of violent crime or to the dependents or guardians of the victims or to a *close relative of a deceased victim*.
- b. Include in the incident report that the *HPD Victims' Referral Card* (Blue Card) was given.
- c. Refer to the Victim Services Unit any victim requesting an assistance application or assistance in completing the application.

Officers may, but are not required to, help victims fill out the assistance applications. Officers shall refer all inquiries concerning the application itself or a victim's eligibility to

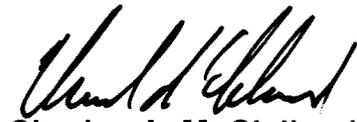
the department's Victim Services Unit and shall make no decisions about a victim's eligibility.

If an officer is unsure whether a victim should receive an *HPD Victims' Referral Card* (Blue Card) or a *Victim Services Information* brochure, the officer shall give the victim an *HPD Victims' Referral Card* (Blue Card) and instruct the victim to contact the Victim Services Unit for further information.

Victim Services Information brochures are available through Victim Services Unit. The brochure provides additional information regarding crime victim compensation and may be given to victims in addition to the *HPD Victims' Referral Card* (Blue Card).

2 RELATED GENERAL ORDERS

- 600-06, **Family Violence**
600-33, **Social Services Assistance and Referrals**



Charles A. McClelland, Jr.
Chief of Police