



Sexual Assault Investigations

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy statement is to establish guidelines to govern the conduct of sexual assault investigations and to emphasize a compassionate and supportive approach on the part of the investigating deputy toward the victim.

II. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department that the health and safety of a sexual assault victim is of paramount importance. The victim's physical condition and mental state should be immediately assessed and appropriate medical attention provided if required.
- B. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department that the first Officer to respond to a sexual assault has three primary responsibilities:
 - 1. Physically protect and emotionally support the victim.
 - 2. Identify, isolate and protect the crime scene.
 - 3. Conduct a quality preliminary investigation.
- C. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department that the investigating Officer shall candidly inform the victim what will be expected of him/her in the ensuing criminal investigation and any possible court appearance.
- D. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department to respect and protect the identity and confidentiality of the sexual assault victim.
- E. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department to deal with all sexual assault victims in a totally considerate and sensitive manner and to conduct the investigation objectively and professionally, without any preconceived or biased judgments relating to the victim's background, personal circumstances or perceived motivation.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Officers investigating sexual assaults will not, at the onset of a sexual assault investigation, routinely request victims to undergo a polygraph examination merely to pre-assess the credibility of their account. The use of a polygraph examination of the victim shall only be sought after the completion of a thorough investigation of all the available evidence relating to the reported incident.

General Order No. 6-3 (Cont.)

B. Polygraph examinations of sexual assault victims shall only be considered when the investigating Officer has reasonable and articulable suspicion that a relevant and important part of the victim's report or testimony is false.

C. The principal investigating Officer shall keep the sexual assault victim informed of the progress of the investigation.

D. The investigating Officers will clearly and patiently explain to the sexual assault victims the availability of appropriate victim assistance programs and services in the area.

E. The investigating Officers will explain to the sexual assault victims the purpose and availability of judicial Peace Orders and Protective Orders.

F. The investigating Officer that receives a sexual assault report shall offer the victim the opportunity to be taken immediately to the nearest designated health facility, regardless of the type or degree of sexual assault reported. See: Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 27, 790.

G. On first contact with a sexual assault victim, the investigating Officer shall give the victim a copy of the Crime Victims and Witness pamphlet describing the victims rights, services and procedures, before and after the filing of a charging document other than an indictment or information in Circuit Court.