

## Reporting

There are many reasons to report a sexual assault:

- Many attackers are repeat offenders and reporting the crime may help prevent future assaults
- Reporting a crime may help lessen the sense of victimization and bringing an attacker to justice can be empowering
- Reporting a crime may make a victim eligible for free counseling from the California Victim Compensation Program

## Police report and medical exam

When law enforcement is called, an officer will take a crime report, and, if appropriate, arrange for a free forensic medical examination by a medical professional. A victim may ask that a friend or support person and a victim services representative be present when the report is taken. It is best to report a sexual assault as soon as possible because an early report will allow for the preservation of valuable evidence. However a victim should report an assault even if there's been a delay. One victims' report may help corroborate another person's report against the same suspect.

## Prosecution and testifying

Once a case is investigated and a suspect is identified, the case will be sent to the District Attorney's Office for review. If there is sufficient evidence to prove the case, criminal charges will be filed. Sexual assault cases are prosecuted by specialized deputy district attorneys who interview the victim, explain the process, and stay with the case until it is over.

## Victim services

The District Attorney's Bureau of Victim Services is available at courthouses and police stations throughout San Diego County. Representatives provide assistance and resources to help address the trauma of sexual assault. Representatives provide criminal justice system orientation, court support, protective order assistance, emergency shelter, food and clothing, help with restitution and assistance in filing for compensation through the California Victim Compensation Board.

[www.sdcda.org/helping/victims/victim-services.html](http://www.sdcda.org/helping/victims/victim-services.html)



## district attorney office locations

San Diego – Hall of Justice  
330 W. Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 531-4040

North County Branch – Vista Courthouse  
325 S. Melrose Dr., Ste. 5000  
Vista, CA 92083  
(760) 806-4004

East County Branch – El Cajon Courthouse  
250 Main St., 5th Floor, El Cajon, CA 92020  
(619) 441-4588

South Bay Branch  
333 H St., Ste. 4000, Chula Vista, CA 91910  
(619) 498-5650

Juvenile Division – Juvenile Courthouse  
2851 Meadowlark Dr., San Diego, CA 92123

Sexual assault hotlines and resources:

Center for Community Solutions:  
(888) 385-4657

Women's Resource Center: (760) 757-3500

Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program: (619) 692-5909

MCAS Miramar: (858) 864-2815

Seek Then Speak: [seekthenspeak.org](http://seekthenspeak.org)

[www.sandiegoda.com](http://www.sandiegoda.com)

## SEXUAL ASSAULT



## know your rights



**San Diego County  
District Attorney**

*A Message from your District Attorney:*

*If you've been sexually assaulted, you may be in distress and unsure of what to do. There are many reasons to report it and we hope this information will help.*

*Our office is dedicated to holding perpetrators of sexual assault and human trafficking responsible for their crimes.*

*And we are just as committed to providing support and justice for survivors of these crimes. We recognize that victims and witnesses must be treated with dignity, respect, courtesy and sensitivity.*

*Navigating a challenging criminal justice system can be overwhelming for victims. That's why we are here to help victims endure the process and become survivors.*

*I hope the information in this brochure will help turn victims into survivors and send a clear message that we're here to help.*



**Summer Stephan**  
District Attorney,  
San Diego County

**Victims' Rights**

You have the right to have a victim advocate and a support person of your own choosing present at any interview by law enforcement, the district attorney's office, or by any defense attorney. You also have the right for the support person to be of either gender, unless no such person is reasonably available. You are not required to have an advocate present and can give up that right. You can also change your mind, and ask for a victim advocate in later interviews if you want.

You have the right to request that your name be kept confidential from the public, both in court records and during testimony.

A police officer may not discourage you from receiving a medical or evidentiary exam. You are not required to take part in the criminal justice process or be medically or forensically examined in order to retain your legal rights. The purpose of such an exam is the collection of evidence, including DNA evidence, which may be used to prosecute an offender. A forensic medical examination by a medical professional is a standard process that involves inspection of the body, documentation of injuries and the collection of potential physical evidence such as DNA. If a timely evidentiary examination is declined, the evidence may be lost over time. The ability to successfully prosecute an offender may depend upon timely cooperation with evidence-gathering.

If a forensic medical examination is declined, you may still seek treatment for injuries,

possible pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases if you wish. If you are a minor over the age of 12, you may consent to treatment related to a sexual assault without the consent of a parent or guardian.

If you choose to move forward with a forensic medical examination for the purpose of collection of evidence, you have additional rights throughout that process. **You have a right to a sexual assault counselor and at least one other support person** of your choosing to be present before the medical examination begins. However, the support person may be excluded from the examination if it is determined that the presence of that person would be unhelpful. **You must be informed of your rights in writing in a language you understand.** If the assault against you included intercourse, you may request and receive free contraception.

**Every victim shall be able to shower or bathe after the examination** is finished for free, unless no shower or bathing facility is reasonably available. **You have the right to follow up in writing and receive information** about the results of testing of the Sexual Assault Kit that was created from the examination.

**If you want a trusted friend to communicate with law enforcement on your behalf, you have the right to choose somebody who is able to do that.** Also, it is very important to make sure the agency investigating your case has good contact information for you. Please notify your agency of any change in address, phone number or email.

**The Sexual Assault Kit should be transported to the crime laboratory and tested within statutory time limits.** Either the law enforcement agency or the crime laboratory will retain the Sexual Assault Kit for at least 20 years. If you were under 18 at the time of the crime, the Sexual Assault Kit will be retained until your 40th birthday.

**Upon written request, a copy of the initial crime report related to the assault must be given to you.**

**Upon written request, you have the right to certain information about the suspect's status on any sex offender registry, if it can lawfully be disclosed.**

**Restraining Orders**

**If the suspect is identifiable, a victim may be able to obtain a Civil Harassment Restraining Order.** For information, visit the San Diego Court's website by typing this link into your web browser: [goo.gl/kKf3jh](http://goo.gl/kKf3jh)

**Restitution**

**California victims have a constitutional right to restitution.** The District Attorney's Office's prosecutors and Criminal Restitution Compact Unit staff assists victims in obtaining restitution from convicted defendants when appropriate.

If you have been a crime victim and need assistance, please call (619) 531-4041. Program services are provided free of charge and there is no legal citizenship requirement to receive assistance.