

Sexual Assault Pocket Guide

2025 SETX

Introduction

- **Release Shame/Blame:** Work to alleviate any feelings of shame or self-blame the victim may experience.
- **Ensure Professionalism:** Treat all victims professionally and with dignity to help them provide clear, complete information.
- **Known Perpetrator:** Remember, most sexual assaults (80%) are committed by someone known to the victim.
- **Universal Impact:** Sexual assault is a terrifying, humiliating, and life-threatening crime for anyone, regardless of their background.

General Investigation Information

- **Case Types:** Offender Known or Offender Unknown.
- **Key Issues:** Identify offender, element of force, issue of consent.
- **Hidden Injuries:** Injuries may not be immediately visible (e.g., PTSD, internal injuries, STDs, pregnancy).

Your Impact Matters

You have the power to help or to cause further harm. Choose to serve, protect, and care for our community. They need your support.

Rape is not about sex, it is about power.

Victims may react in a variety of ways.

The **Crisis Center** is here for you and the victims you serve.

Call us
409-832-6530

Primary Responsibility for 1st Responding Officer

- **Prioritize Victim:** Attend to the victim's immediate needs.
- **Avoid Stigma:** Be careful not to stigmatize the victim in any way.
- **Preserve Evidence:** Instruct the victim not to shower, drink, brush teeth, or change clothes.
- **Secure Scene:** Secure and protect the crime scene immediately.
- **Notify Support:** Contact your local Rape Crisis Center.
- **Apprehend Offender:** Apprehend the offender if they're still present.

Interviewing

- **Build Trust:** Your attitude and conduct are key to gaining victim trust.
- **Trauma Impact:** Assault can impede a victim's clarity and articulation.
- **Staggered Disclosure:** Trauma often leads to information being recalled and disclosed over time.
- **Expect Incomplete Initial Statements:** Do not expect a full statement during initial contact, especially if details are unclear.
- **Postpone/Minimize Interviews:** If needed, postpone the interview. Make every effort to minimize the number of interviews.

Contacting a Rape Crisis Center

Rape Crisis Center advocates are available 24/7/365. They can meet victims at the hospital, police station, or District Attorney's office to provide immediate support. Advocates respond as soon as possible to speak with victims and serve all clients regardless of age, race, ability, gender, or orientation. They can explain legal and medical options and procedures, as well as the details of making a police report. Call an advocate anytime sexual assault is involved: 1-800-793-2273.

Additional Response to Victim

CONTACTS: Ask victim if they wish to contact anyone else.

NEEDS: Assess victim's special needs (e.g., mobility, interpreter).

WITNESSES: Document identity of anyone victim informed, or who saw/heard anything before, during, or after the assault.

PROCESS: Explain local investigation process, what to expect, and who is involved.

ACCURACY: Be factual. Avoid predictions or promises.