



# Sylvan Lake & District Victim Services

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## Volunteer Advocate Job Description

### Position Summary

When RCMP members arrive at the scene of a crime, victims are there, waiting for reassurance, information, and support. Although victims are most certainly a priority, the officers must focus on investigating the crime. This is when Victim Services units step in.

The objectives of the RCMP Victim Services Program are to:

- Lessen the impact of crime and trauma on victims and their families and to assist them in their recovery;
- Enhance victim safety and help reduce the risk of further victimization;
- Increase victims' level of participation in the criminal justice system;
- Prepare victims acting as witnesses for court proceedings.

Victim advocates have three main goals: to provide support, information and referral to victims of crime or tragedy through crisis intervention and timely follow up. Advocates do not provide counselling. Advocates are trained for crises support and intervention in situations of assault, hate crimes, property crimes, robbery, sexual assault, stalking and harassment, family violence, bereavement and sudden death. Our unit provides invaluable assistance to victims that are often confused, overwhelmed and unsure of how to react after a crime. Without Victim Services, many victims would be unsure of what to do, where to go, and how to deal with the emotional trauma surrounding a crime or tragedy.

On average it takes approximately one year for an Advocate to get their security clearance and complete their Basic on line Training. Once the security clearance comes through, an office orientation at the RCMP Detachment will take place with our staff and the new advocate will be paired up with a senior Advocate to train with.

### Role of an Advocate

- To provide practical assistance and non-judgmental emotional support to victims of crime or tragedy. This service can be provided through follow up or immediate crisis intervention at the request of the RCMP.
- To be part of a crisis intervention team that is available to assist victims after hours and on weekends, on a rotating schedule.
- To provide appropriate support to victims, as well as assistance in the delivery, explanation and follow-up of victim impact statements, applications for financial benefits and claims for restitution.
- To keep victims informed of proceedings with the criminal justice system.

- To provide information on and referrals to, other community agencies who act as useful resources for the victim.
- Self-scheduled follow-up with victims as required, including follow up phone calls and updating the victim file either by writing these by hand, calling or emailing information into the office staff.
- To provide victims with appropriate educational and preventive information.
- Maintenance of confidentiality at all times.

### **Additional Responsibilities:**

- Familiarization with the victim advocates manual and all related Alberta Police Based Victim Services Association (APBVSA) operational policies.
- Assistance with the configuration of a month schedule for assigned on-call team.
- The use of discretion and common sense to determine what immediate assistance might be useful to a victim.
- To provide “face to face” contact with the victim wherever possible.
- The collection and return of any pager/phone used while on-call.
- Fundraising by means of the Annual Golf Tournament, Charity Check Stop, and any other fundraiser opportunities throughout the year.
- Assist to decorate floats for the Summer and Winter parade & participate if needed.
- Advocates will maintain detailed records of volunteer hours and submit them quarterly: on call hours, call outs (direct assistance to victims), training, fundraising, public awareness, court preparation and accompaniment and administrative duties.

### **Requirements**

- Must be over the age of 18
- Successfully pass the online E-Learning advocacy course as required by the Solicitor General
- Ongoing training provided and funded by the program
- The signing of an oath of confidentiality
- The accurate completion of all security clearance forms for the RCMP
- Must have a valid drivers’ license and access to a vehicle
- Commitment of two years following the completion of training
- Commitment of minimum one week per month on-call shift
- Commitment of 10 meetings per year (we do not meet in July/Aug)
- Commitment to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Strong communication skills and the ability to provide non-judgmental support
- The ability to work in stressful situations
- The maintenance of a high degree of professionalism, including dressing in a business-like fashion, punctuality and the positive promotion of the victim services.
- Have a belief in the value and support for victims of crime and tragedy