



Information to crime victims

The Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority
2007

THE CRIME VICTIM COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT AUTHORITY

is nationally responsible for three areas:

Criminal injuries compensation

Have you been the victim of a crime? You may be entitled to financial compensation from the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority, particularly if you have suffered personal injury. One condition is that the person who committed the crime is unable to pay damages for your injury; another is that your injuries are not covered by insurance. You may be entitled to compensation even if the offender is unknown.

As of 15 November 2006, there is a special kind of criminal injuries compensation for children who have witnessed violence towards a person near to them.

The Crime Victim Fund

The resources of the Fund are made available to both non-profit organisations and public bodies that provide help to the victims of crime, as well as for research in this sphere. The Fund is financed through a special fee of 500 SEK which everyone convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment must pay. The Fund also accepts gifts and donations. The Fund annually grants approx. 30 million SEK.

Application dates: 1 April and 1 October.

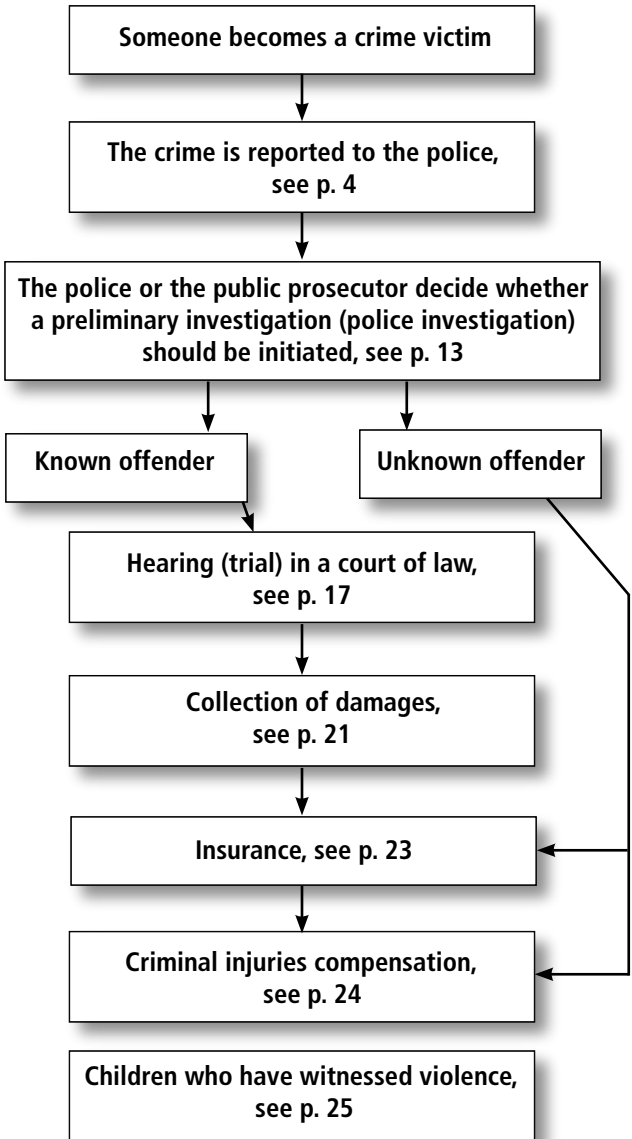
Centre of Competence

The Authority is responsible for gathering and distributing information concerning the rights of victims of crime and results of research with a view to improving the way in which victims of crime are cared for and treated. This is done, for example, by sending information to authorities, non-profit organisations and victims of crime. The Authority also organises courses and seminars in order to disseminate information and the findings of research about victims of crime.

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QUICK GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

If you have been subjected to a crime, you will probably find yourself in an unfamiliar position and you may well feel confused and anxious. If the crime has been reported to the police, a process will be initiated involving a number of different authorities. It may be difficult for you to know where to turn for support and answers to all your questions. This booklet will hopefully answer some of them and you will also find information about other organisations and authorities that may be able to help you with any questions that remain unanswered.

The first part of the booklet describes the support and assistance that is available to you from e.g. the police, the social services and non-governmental organisations, NGOs.

The next part describes the criminal justice process, your possibilities of claiming financial compensation for injury/damage caused by the crime, and special measures aimed at improving your safety and security. Here we also describe the new kind of compensation for criminal injuries for children who have witnessed violence.

The last part describes common psychological reactions to crime. It also has a glossary and contact details to NGOs and authorities.

The Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority's homepage is continually updated with new information: www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

The police and the public prosecution authorities

If you have been subjected to a crime, you should report the crime to the police as soon as possible. As a private person, you are not obligated to report a crime but often a report to the police by you or by someone else is necessary in order for you to safeguard your rights.

As a rule, insurance companies and the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority will not examine a claim for compensation for criminal injuries unless the crime has been reported to the police.

You should contact the nearest police station. Sometimes a crime can be reported over the telephone while in other cases the police may call on you at home or ask you to come to the police station.

The police have an absolute obligation to record in writing any reporting of crime, even if made by telephone.

On the basis of the crime report, the local public prosecution authority or the police will decide whether an investigation should be initiated.

The police and the public prosecutor will usually be able to give you the legal help you need (see below). In brief they are obliged to inform you about the following:

- your possibilities of claiming damages and compensation for criminal injuries,
- the prosecutor, if you so request, is usually obligated to prepare and present your claim for damages in court,
- the regulations governing visiting bans, legal coun-

- sel for the injured party, and support persons,
- how to apply for legal aid and advice,
 - authorities and organisations offering additional support and assistance,
 - the investigation not being initiated or being discontinued,
 - bringing a legal action or not.

If you need help from the prosecutor concerning claiming for damages, you should notify the prosecutor or the police officer who is in charge of your case.

Counsel for the injured party

If you have been sexually assaulted, you are entitled to your own legal counsel. Such a counsel may also be appointed in other cases involving crimes against the person. A counsel for the injured party may be appointed as soon as the preliminary investigation has been started.

If you feel that you need a counsel, bring up this matter with the police officer or the public prosecutor in charge of your case as soon as possible.

A request for a counsel can also be made direct to the District Court. It is up to the District Court to decide whether or not you are entitled to this help, and if so, the court will appoint the counsel. You are allowed to make a request regarding whom the court shall appoint.

The counsel (usually a lawyer) will look after your interests, give you guidance and support during the investigation and the trial, and will also help you with your claim for damages.

Furthermore, the counsel can be of assistance if you wish to support the prosecution. The counsel will entail no cost for you.

Special legal representation for children

When there are reasons to believe that an offence on which prison sentence may follow has been committed against someone under the age of 18, i.e. by law a child, and that there is a risk that the guardian - usually a parent - will not safeguard the child's rights, a special legal representative for the child will be appointed. The intention is that the special legal representative will safeguard the child's rights during the investigation and at the trial.

The prosecutor makes a request for such an appointment to the District Court. A lawyer or an assistant lawyer at a legal practice may be appointed or some other person with a sound knowledge of these matters and whose personal character makes him or her especially suitable to act as a special legal representative for children.

The social services

The social services now have a wider responsibility for crime victims. This was first noticeable for women who were subjected to violence and other abuse within their homes. Then the responsibility was expanded to include all crime victims and the relatives of the victim. Now the social services have special responsibility for children who have witnessed violence. This responsibility has been formulated in a particular paragraph regarding crime victims in the Social Services Act Chap. 5 Sect. 11 which has the following wording:

“The social welfare board should aim to provide support and assistance to those who have been subjected to crime as well as their relatives. The social welfare board should pay particular attention to the fact that women who are being or have been subjected to violence or other abuse within their homes may be in need of support and help in order to change their situation. The board should also pay special attention to the fact that children who have witnessed violence or other abuse by or towards adults near to them are victims of crime and may be in need of support and help.”

This could involve both financial, practical and psychological support.

Support person

If you feel that you need additional personal assistance during the investigation or the trial, you can be accompanied by a support person, even if a counsel has been appointed for you. You can have both a counsel and a support person if you like. You can choose someone you already know who would be suitable or you may receive help from the social services or one of the victim support centres or women’s shelters (see below). The role of the support person is to make you feel less anxious in a strange situation. You may also appreciate being able to discuss what went on during the court proceedings with someone who was there. Likewise you may want to discuss the wording of a decision or sentence. A support person does not receive any payment from the state for his or her services.

Assistance by an interpreter

If you have a poor knowledge of Swedish or a serious speech or hearing impediment, you are entitled to free assistance from an interpreter during the investigation and during the trial.

This service is also available for any other contacts you might need to make with other authorities, for example, the social services.

Legal advice

Regardless of the type of crime you have been subjected to, you always have the right to legal advice under the Legal Aid Act. This could be the case if, for example, the police and the public prosecution authorities cannot help you with your claim for damages, or if you need help in negotiations with an insurance company. If you wish to have this kind of assistance, you can contact a private lawyer's office which provides legal advice under the Legal Aid Act (see the Yellow Pages under Lawyer's Offices). Such a consultation must not exceed two hours and there is a fixed fee. The fee is currently (2007) 1 320 SEK per hour. If you are under the age of 18 and have a low income, the fee may be reduced or waived. If you are an adult, the fee may be reduced by half if you have a low income.

Legal expenses insurance

Your household insurance includes a legal expenses clause. This means that your insurance company may reimburse you for the cost of employing a lawyer etc. in connection with a civil action for damages. Insurance policies usually

contain a clause requiring that you pay part of the cost as excess. A new rule is that those who need help with legal expenses in a civil case must first turn to their insurance company. If you do not have insurance covering legal expenses, you may apply for legal aid.

Legal aid

If your case is so complex that one hour's consultation is not enough, you may be granted legal aid, provided that a means test shows that you are eligible for such aid.

If you are granted legal aid, part of your costs for legal assistance will be met by the state.

You may also be reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses and other expenses in connection with the provision of evidence etc. Since the legal aid scheme is based on the principle that people should pay their own legal expenses as far as possible, you will have to pay a fee determined on the basis of your financial situation. Information about how to apply for legal aid is available from any lawyer's office, court of law or the National Legal Aid Authority.

Witness support service

There is a witness support service established at almost all District Courts and Courts of Appeal in Sweden. The government has commissioned that the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority and the National Courts Administration are to ensure that there is a witness support service. This is a voluntary service and in most places it is carried out by the victim support centres.

The task of the witness support person is to help witnesses and injured parties and to offer support before and after the trial. The purpose is to make people feel more comfortable in the public areas of the court, e.g. in the waiting room, and describe, when necessary, what goes on in the court room. However, the witness support person must not take sides in, or even discuss, the court case itself. Most courts have a separate witness support service room where witnesses and crime victims can wait undisturbed. The witness support service is administered locally by the witness support service coordinator who can be contacted via the court.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS OFFERING SUPPORT TO CRIME VICTIMS

A number of associations work voluntarily to provide crime victims with help and support. Women's shelters were set up first, then crime victim support centres were established. Now, in addition to that, there are a growing number of crime victim support organisations which specialise in various areas. The larger centres have paid staff but the majority of the organisations use voluntary staff. All the people who work for such organisations are bound by professional secrecy. Victim support centres and women's shelters are particularly abundant throughout the country although they may not be represented in every municipality.

VICTIM SUPPORT CENTRES provide help primarily to victims of assault, burglary, bag-snatching, molesting, robbery and unlawful threatening. When a crime is reported to the police, the victim will be informed of the local crime victim support centre and other support activities. The police will also ask the victim whether he or she requests support from such a service. If so, the victim will be contacted by the victim support centre. Many victim support centres run a witness support service. The nationwide organisation for all victim support centres is called the Swedish Association for Victim Support (Brottsofferjourernas Riksförbund, BOJ).

WOMEN'S SHELTERS offer practical as well as psychological support to women who have been assaulted or abused by men. The most important kind of assistance provided by the shelters for battered and threatened women is probably sheltered accommodation. Many of the women's shelters also offer legal advice. There are now

two national organisations: Women's and Girls' Shelters in Sweden (ROKS), and the Swedish Association of Women's Shelters (SKR).

Within both ROKS and SKR there are a growing numbers of shelters for young women and girls. Terrafem is a helpline for women and girls with a foreign background and offers a helpline service with nationwide coverage. It offers support and advice in more than 40 languages.

MEN'S SHELTERS provide support to men who have been assaulted, as well as to men who have committed violent acts against women. The latter can receive help in controlling their aggression and finding alternatives to violent behaviour.

The voluntary organisations mentioned above are listed on p. 34-35. There are also some other national organisations in that list. These organisations can put you in touch with your local branch. You may also find these and other local crime victim organisations in the telephone directory.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

The police investigate

As soon as the police or the public prosecutor have reason to believe that a crime has been committed, a preliminary investigation will be initiated. In the course of this investigation, the police will interview suspects and other people who may have information about the crime, for example, the victim (now called the injured party) and any witnesses. The information thus gathered is usually compiled in a case file. Owing to lack of resources, the police may not be able to attend to your crime report at once and consequently it may be some time before an investigation is commenced. If you ask, the police will be able to tell you approximately when your case will be processed.

Questioning in the course of the preliminary investigation

As an injured party, you may be summoned to go to a police station to tell a police officer or a prosecutor about the crime. In some cases, a telephone interview may be sufficient but if you are asked to go to the police station for an interview, you are legally required to attend. Should you fail to appear without a valid reason, you may be taken in by the police. As mentioned above, you can bring a support person if you like.

If you are asked to go to the police station or to the public prosecutor, you are entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with the questioning, e.g. travel and accommodation expenses, loss of wages or other kinds of financial loss. However, there is a maximum limit for reimbursement for lost income.

Claim for damages

A person who has committed a crime is, in principle, obliged to pay for any injury or damage resulting from the crime. This is called damages. As a rule, a claim for damages is assessed by the court simultaneously with its assessment of whether or not the accused is guilty of the crime. It is the injured party who must claim damages from the person responsible for the injury/damage. To facilitate this, the prosecutor is under obligation to prepare and present the claim for damages if the injured party so requests. Exceptions will be made if the question of damages requires further investigation or if the claim is clearly unjustified i.e. either has no connection with the crime or is substantially higher than is normal in judicial custom.

If you wish to claim compensation for injury or damage arising from a crime, you should tell the police so when they question you.

You should also tell the police if you want the prosecutor to present your claim for damages. You can ask the police, the public prosecutor or the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority for information and help with your claim. Even if you are not entitled to legal counsel and if, for any of the reasons presented above, the prosecutor will not present the claim in court on your behalf, your claim may still be considered by the court at the same time as the criminal proceedings. This can be done by you yourself - or with the help of another counsel or representative (see p. 8-9 under “Legal expenses insurance” and “Legal aid”) presenting your claim for damages to the court, specifying your demands and the grounds on which your claim is based.

Sometimes the court decides that a claim for damages in a criminal case must be assessed separately in civil litigation. For instance the court may find that your claim is too complex to be assessed in the course of the criminal proceedings. The court can provide further information on this and the proceedings of a civil case trial.

The preliminary investigation is concluded

The preliminary investigation should be carried out as rapidly and efficiently as possible. If there are no grounds for pursuing the investigation, it will *be discontinued*. For example, an investigation may be discontinued because it has been established that the act in question did not constitute a crime, because no suspect can be found, or because there are no investigation leads. However, a discontinued preliminary investigation may be started up again if new evidence comes forth.

The injured person will normally be informed if the public prosecutor or the police decide to discontinue an investigation. You will also be notified if the prosecutor decides not to initiate an investigation or to waive prosecution.

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made by the police, you may request that it be reviewed by the public prosecutor. If dissatisfied with a decision made by the prosecutor, you can request that a senior public prosecutor reviews it.

On completion of the preliminary investigation, the prosecutor will decide whether or not the suspect should be prosecuted. This decision will be based partly on an assessment of whether there is sufficient evidence to

obtain a conviction and partly on whether the circumstances in the case are such that the public prosecution authority should refrain from prosecuting the suspect, for example, because he or she is very young, or some other circumstance.

If there are such extenuating circumstances, the prosecutor may decide to *waive prosecution*.

If an offender has confessed to a crime and the crime is of a less serious nature, the public prosecutor may decide to impose *a summary fine*. Such an imposition may also include a requirement that the offender pay damages to the victim.

If the preliminary investigation leads to *prosecution*, the injured party will be notified. The court will assess whether it is proven that the suspect has committed the crime in question. If the suspect is found guilty, the court will also decide on a sanction. If the prosecutor decides to prosecute in your case, you should be notified. As mentioned above, the court may also decide the amount of damages the offender should pay to the victim.

Summons to appear in court

The court will assess the case at oral proceedings known as a hearing. As an injured party, you may be summoned to appear in court if the prosecutor has requested that you should be heard or if you have lodged a claim for damages. If you have been summoned to appear, *it is very important that you appear at the hearing*.

Read the summons carefully. Please note that if you should fall ill, or if you think that you have some other acceptable reason for not appearing in court, you must

notify the court as soon as possible before the trial. The court will tell you whether or not your presence is required. The summons remains in force until you have been otherwise informed by the court. If you fail to appear you are liable to a fine, the size of which is stated in the summons, or you may be taken to the hearing by the police.

The court hearing

At a hearing the District Court is usually made up of a judge, who chairs the proceedings and three lay assessors. At complex and lengthy hearings, there may be another judge and lay assessor in the court. There is also a clerk who records the proceedings. Also present in the court room are the prosecutor, the accused who may have a defence counsel. The injured party is also often required to appear, and may be accompanied by his or her counsel and a support person. Witnesses may also have been summoned. During the hearing, the entire case is presented orally to the court.

The injured party, the accused and any witnesses will be heard and if you have filed a claim for damages, your claim will usually also be assessed (see under “Claim for damages” p. 14).

Court hearings are usually *open to the public*, which means that anyone has the right to be present in the court room. Sometimes however, the court may decide that a case, or part of it, is of such a private nature that only certain persons may stay in the court room. The legal term for this procedure is *hearing in camera*.

As the injured party, you will normally sit next to the

prosecutor in the court room. You will be heard after the prosecutor has presented his or her account of the case (the statement of the facts) and normally before the accused is heard. Any questions that you may have during the trial can be put to the prosecutor.

If you have a counsel, it is preferable that you put your questions to him or her. As mentioned above, you also have the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a support person. As long as the hearing is open to the public, your friends or family may be present although they have to sit at the back of the court room. However, neither they nor your support person may participate in the court proceedings.

You will usually be asked to tell the court in your own words about the crime you were subjected to. Then the prosecutor and the defence counsel of the accused will ask you questions. The judge may sometimes ask extra questions.

The hearing of the injured party is often intrusive and detailed which is necessary in order for the prosecutor to be able to prove the case. It is therefore very important that you give a statement which is as detailed and accurate as possible.

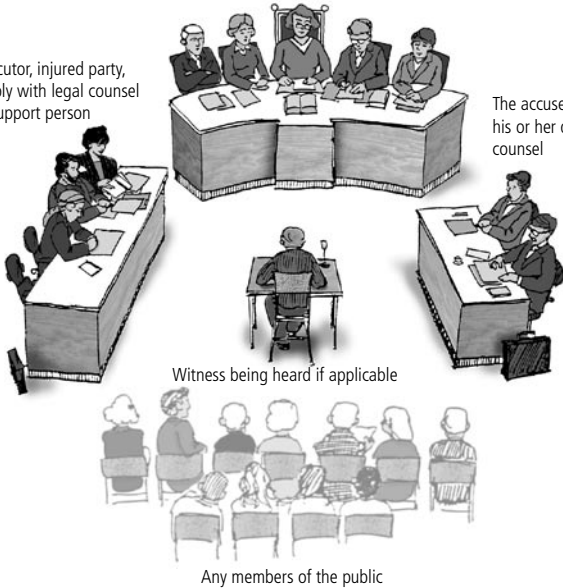
A crime victim may also find it difficult to face the accused and may feel frightened.

The court room

Judge, clerk and lay assessors

Prosecutor, injured party,
possibly with legal counsel
and support person

The accused and
his or her defence
counsel



If you are afraid to talk about the crime in the presence of the accused, you should notify the court, the prosecutor or your counsel well in advance of the hearing.

The court may then decide that the accused sit in another room while you are being heard. However, the accused has a right to listen to your statement via a loudspeaker or to be told about your account afterwards.

Similarly, if you are afraid of someone in the public gallery, the court may decide that he or she must leave the court room during your interview.

The judgment

When the hearing is over, the court will pass judgment. The judgment is often announced orally as soon as the court has finished its deliberation which takes place immediately after the hearing. In complex cases, however, it may take up to two weeks (and occasionally even longer) before the judgment is announced. In such cases, the court will inform the parties when it will give its decision. On that day, you can phone the court registry office to find out the outcome. The court will also inform the parties in writing about its decision. If you presented a claim for damages during the hearing, you are a party and accordingly you will automatically receive a copy of the court's decision free of charge. Otherwise you must inform the prosecutor or the court that you wish to have it sent to you.

Appeal

A party who is not satisfied with the decision of the District Court may appeal against it to the Court of Appeal. The District Court's judgment contains instructions on how to lodge such an appeal. It may also be stated in the decision that a review permit will be required for the case to be heard by the Court of Appeal. When a judgment has been appealed against, and if a review permit has been granted (if required), the case will usually be re-examined by the Court of Appeal. In minor cases a decision may be made without a re-hearing.

A judgment by a Court of Appeal can usually be appealed against to the Supreme Court. However, the Supreme Court will only review cases where a decision may be useful as a guide to future action (a so-called precedent) or where a review is deemed absolutely necessary, for

example, because a Court of Appeal has made a serious judicial error. Consequently, the Court of Appeal is normally the last court of appeal.

Reimbursement for legal expenses

If you are lodging a claim for damages yourself, you may demand compensation from the opposite party, i.e. the person accused and suspected of the crime, for any expenses incurred in this connection, for example, lawyer's fees or expenses relating to the provision of evidence. If you wish to receive such reimbursement, you must inform the court of this before the end of the court hearing.

If the accused is sentenced to pay you damages, he or she will normally also be ordered to pay your legal expenses.

Reimbursement for other costs and loss of income

If you have been summoned to appear in court at the request of a public prosecutor, you have the right to be reimbursed for expenses you may have incurred. After you have been heard, the court will usually ask you whether you have any such claims. You then request reimbursement and you will be informed about the amount of compensation you are entitled to.

Collection of damages

If the court orders the accused to pay you damages, this does *not* mean that you will automatically receive the money awarded to you. In many cases, offenders either cannot or will not pay voluntarily.

In such cases the Swedish Enforcement Authority can help you collect the damages.

The court always sends copies of its judgments to the Swedish Enforcement Authority, Kronofogdemyndigheten. Some time after the trial, you will be contacted by someone from this agency who will ask whether you would like them to collect the damages on your behalf. If you wish to have this kind of assistance, you should confirm this in writing to the Enforcement Authority. They will then investigate the offender's financial situation. If he or she is found to have executable assets or income, the agency will handle that the damages are paid. The service provided by the Enforcement Authority is free of charge.

INSURANCE

Even in the cases when the offender is unknown and your report to the police has not resulted in prosecution and a judgment, you may still be able to get compensation. The same applies if it proves the offender is unable to pay the damages.

Most people have an insurance policy that covers loss, damage or injury resulting from crime. Your household insurance policy, for example, covers theft and usually also personal injuries resulting from a criminal assault. Many people also have additional collective or individual accident insurance covering personal injuries. Moreover, most employees are covered by a labour market insurance scheme which offers compensation for loss, damage or injuries at the workplace. It is usually stipulated in the insurance terms that an excess will be deducted from the sum paid by the insurance company. There may be other terms too, limiting your right to compensation in various ways. Your insurance company will tell you what kind of coverage your policy provides.

It is essential that you report to your insurance company as soon as possible any loss, damage or injury sustained.

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION

If the offender is unable to pay the damages you have been awarded and you do not have an insurance that fully covers the damages, you may be entitled to compensation from the state. Such compensation is referred to as criminal injuries compensation.

A court judgment is not always required but the crime must have been reported to the police.

Criminal injuries compensation may be granted even in cases where the offender has not been identified and where, consequently, there has been no conviction, provided that an investigation has shown that the injury is actually the result of a criminal act, rather than, for example, an accident.

Compensation is primarily paid for personal injuries.

A victim may receive compensation for both physical and psychological injuries that are the result of a criminal act. Some examples are:

- the cost of medical treatment, counselling and other expenditures related to the injury,
- loss of income,
- pain and suffering, e.g. painful or unpleasant experiences during the period of illness,
- permanent injuries, e.g. scars, loss of healthy teeth, impaired vision or hearing.

A number of criminal acts give rise to a right to compensation for violation of personal integrity. This right applies if the crime is considered to be a serious *violation of a person's integrity*, private life and human dignity.

Most cases of sexual assault are considered such an offence but also, for example, robbery, assault and battery, unlawful threatening, violation of the privacy of the home, and a breach of a visiting ban.

The chances of receiving compensation for *loss of or damage to property*, for example through theft, or a *pure financial loss*, e.g. through fraud, are severely limited. Such compensation will normally only be paid if the offender, when he or she committed the crime, was an inmate of a prison, a certain type of institution for the care of young people or substance abusers, or a police arrest cell. The damage may have been caused when the offender was on leave or if he or she had escaped. If the offender does not fall into one of the above mentioned categories or if he or she is unknown, compensation for financial loss or damage to and loss of property will only be paid in cases where there are particularly distressing circumstances, e.g. if the damage severely curtails the victim's possibility of making a living or providing for his or her family.

Children who witness violence

A child who has witnessed a crime which is liable to harm the child's confidence and trust in an adult with whom he or she has a close relationship, is entitled to criminal injuries compensation according to new provisions in the Criminal Injuries Act. The government has thereby undertaken special responsibility for compensation to children who witness serious criminal acts towards persons near to them, even though the child can not claim damages from the offender.

The term "child" means a person who was under the age

of 18 years when the crime was committed. The term “witnessed crime” refers primarily to the child seeing or hearing the criminal act. The nature of all the circumstances surrounding each individual case will determine whether the crime can lead to compensation.

It is expected that these new provisions will mainly be applied to crimes of a violent or sexual nature, but, for instance, one parent threatening the other or damaging the family home in front of the child could possibly lead to compensation. The main factors to be considered are the damage, injury, violation of integrity and danger that it can be assumed the crime caused.

It is not necessary to establish in each individual case whether the child actually has been psychologically affected. In the event of psychological damage being proven, the child may be entitled to damages and criminal injuries compensation in addition to the new form of compensation. The deciding factor concerning the new form of compensation is whether one can assume that the crime would normally have such an effect on a child. The amount of compensation awarded will depend on how serious the criminal act or acts the child witnessed were.

Children have the right to be compensated if the crime was committed in Sweden, or if a child whose permanent residence is in Sweden witnessed violence abroad, for instance, during a holiday.

The new rules came into force on 15 November 2006 but children can receive this new form of criminal injuries compensation for crimes committed before that date. This is because the application time is at once the same as for other criminal injuries compensation (see below).

Application

In order to receive criminal injuries compensation, you must submit a written application, using the form provided by the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority. The application must normally be submitted to the Authority no later than two years after the conclusion of legal proceedings. This means two years after the day the court judgment gained legal force or after the day the preliminary investigation was discontinued.

If no preliminary investigation was ever initiated, you must apply at the latest two years after the crime was committed. In some cases, however, an application may be reviewed even if it was received later. This possibility is primarily intended for children who were not helped to look after their rights to compensation.

Further information about how and when to apply for criminal injuries compensation can be obtained from the police, the public prosecution authority, victim support centres, women's shelters or the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority.

The image shows two overlapping application forms. The top form is titled "APPLICATION" and is for the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority. It includes sections for: 1. APPLICANT (name, address, contact info), 2. THE CRIME (date, location, details), 3. POLICE REPORT (report number, date, police name), and 4. INFORMATION CONCERNING DETAIL (case number, date of application, etc.). There is a large dashed box for a photograph and a circular logo of the Authority. The bottom form is partially visible and shows a "SIGNATURE" section.

Application forms, also accessible in English, for criminal injuries compensation are available from the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority.

MEASURES TO PROTECT CRIME VICTIMS

There are a number of measures intended to improve the safety of threatened persons. In order for these measures to have an effect, it is advisable to plan them in consultation with the police and often with e.g. the social welfare services and schools.

The purpose of a *visiting ban* is to avoid potentially dangerous situations. Visiting bans have been introduced and used primarily to protect women from being threatened and harassed by an ex-husband or ex-partner but a visiting ban can also be imposed to stop someone threatening or seriously harassing another person or even a child. A visiting ban means that the person in question may not visit you, follow after you or contact you in any other way, such as letter, text message, by telephone or through friends. Such an order may also be extended so that the person in question is forbidden to come near your home or your place of work or any other place you normally visit. A visiting ban can also be imposed on a person who lives together with the threatened person. That kind of visiting ban, which is intended to shut out the harasser from the common home can only be imposed if there is a serious risk of crimes that threaten the partner's life, health, freedom or integrity. If there is a risk that you will be subjected to threats, harassment or criminal deeds by a certain person, you may request that a public prosecutor imposes a visiting ban on the person bothering you. Even in cases where you have not expressly requested such a measure, it may be suggested to you that a visiting ban be issued. If the prosecutor decides not to impose a visiting ban, you may request the District Court to review the decision.

A visiting ban can be imposed for a maximum period of one year, but can be extended. A person who violates a visiting ban may be sentenced to pay a fine or to imprisonment for up to one year.

If you have fallen victim to a crime and the offender has been sentenced to imprisonment or is undergoing institutional psychiatric care as a result, the prison management has *an obligation to inform you* if the convict is granted leave, if he or she escapes, is transferred to another prison or is released. As an injured party you will be asked whether you want this kind of information.

People subjected to severe threats may sometimes also be issued with *a security package*, comprising a mobile telephone and an alarm system. The package will be issued by the local police authority after special review. Sometimes, a threatened person may find him or herself in such a serious situation that a personal bodyguard is required. An application for a *personal bodyguard* should be submitted to the local police authority.

If you need to keep your address secret to avoid threats and other kinds of harassment you may request *restricted access to your personal data* stored in the National Population Register. Such a measure also involves all other official registers updated via the National Population Register, for example the Motor Vehicle Register or the Driving Licences Register. Another way of protecting personal data is to *register a person who has moved or who intends to move under his or her old address* in the National Population Register. Applications for these measures should be addressed to your local tax office.

Another way of increasing your protection against a threatening person is to *change your name*. A change of name to a parent's surname can be done through an application to the National Tax Board.

A change to any other surname requires permission from the Swedish Patent and Registration Office.

If you are being subjected to harassment of a particularly serious nature and if none of the above protective measures are deemed adequate, you may be granted *a new identity*. Applications are assessed by the Stockholm District Court and should be addressed to the National Police Board.

REACTIONS OF CRIME VICTIMS

Being the victim of a crime often might lead to some distressful psychological reactions. Although the crime may have led to physical injuries and financial loss, it is almost always the psychological effect of knowing that one has been intentionally hurt or violated by another person that is the most difficult aspect for the crime victim.

Generally speaking, sexual crimes evoke stronger psychological reactions than crimes of violence which in turn affect people more deeply than crimes against property.

Some crimes against property, such as car vandalism, may only result in aggravation on the part of the car owner while others, for example burglary, are usually felt to be more serious and invasive. The thought of someone rummaging through one's personal belongings can be very hard to bear. In a way, physical and sexual abuse is like having your own body broken into. Such crimes take a long time to get over.

Feelings of guilt and shame are also quite common in victims, even though they have no reason to be ashamed. Other common reactions are anger and hatred of the offender and a desire for revenge. It is very important that victims dare to give full expression to their feelings. Only when they have done so will they achieve a more balanced view of what they have been subjected to. Research shows that it is not unusual that a crime victim uses different kinds of defence mechanisms in order to handle their anxiety. For example, you may try to deny or suppress what has happened to you and such a defence mechanism could be psychologically demanding in itself.

Then, after a period of time, you will start to remember the event that you previously needed to forget. This is another demanding process which takes some time.

Every person reacts differently to a criminal act, depending on his or her own situation in life.

The same kind of crime can have a different impact on different people depending on their situation in life, as well as earlier experiences of violence and violation. If you have experienced robbery and not fully got over it and then become a victim once again, you will suffer a more severe crisis than a person who falls victim to a crime for the first time. The repeated action prevents the victim from properly working through the first crime and thus he or she sustains further personal damage.

Abuse within intimate relationships, such as the gross violation of a woman's integrity, or a child subjected to sexual abuse by a parent, is even more severe since the criminal acts are often carried out repeatedly. These crimes, where the offender is a person close to the victim and on whom he or she relies emotionally as well as socially and financially, often take place in the victim's home. As a result of this, the victim has no security or safe place to retreat to and the offender's mood swings between violence and warmth often create strong but detrimental emotional ties. There is a real risk that both victim and perpetrator minimize the crime through suppression. Another common occurrence is the offender putting more and more blame on the victim and accusing the victim of provoking the abuse to happen. Victims subjected to violence by a person close to them usually need the possibility to gather their thoughts in an isolated environment away from the offender so as to be able to

describe the abuse and to change his or her situation.

The need for support and help varies.

A victim's need for help from other people varies. Needless to say, a victim needs more than just legal assistance; personal support in one form or another is also very important. If you are in need of such help and support, you should contact your local social services or ask the police to refer you to one of the organisations mentioned previously who work voluntarily to help crime victims. You may also seek help from a therapist. Such treatment can be provided by the public health sector or by a therapist in private practice. A crime victim centre or a women's shelter can usually help you make the right contacts.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

BRIS (Children's Rights in Society)

info@bris.se

www.bris.se

Children's helpline: 0200-230 230

Adult's helpline: 077-150 50 50

BOJ (Swedish Association for Victim Support)

boj.riks@boj.se

www.boj.se

Helpline: 0200-21 20 19

ATSUB (Association for Relatives of Sexually Abused Children)

info@atsub.se

www.atsub.se

HOPP (Swedish Association for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse)

info@hopp.org

www.hopp.org

Men's Shelters

info@mansjouren.net

www.mansjouren.net

Helpline: 08-30 30 20

RFSL (Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights), Victim Support

boj@rfsl.se

www.rfsl.se

Helpline: 08-34 13 16

ROKS (Women's and Girls' Shelters in Sweden)

info@roks.se

www.roks.se

Rsci (National Association for the Prevention of Incest)

rsci@swipnet.se

www.rsci.nu

Helpline: 08-696 00 95

RAV (National forum for relatives of persons killed through an act of violence)

rav@rav.se

www.rav.se

Save the Children

info@rb.se

www.rb.se

Swedish Red Cross

www.redcross.se

SKR (Swedish Association of Women's Shelters)

info@kvinnojour.com

www.kvinnojour.com

Terrafem

(Multilingual helpline for immigrant women and girls)

info@terrafem.org

www.terrafem.org

Helpline: 020-52 10 10

In addition there is the government-initiated:

National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence against Women, NCK

Akademiska sjukhuset, 751 85 UPPSALA

E-mail: see homepage/staff

www.akademiska.se/nck

Helpline: 018-611 40 00

GLOSSARY

Accused The term given to a person on trial.

Appeal A request, in case of dissatisfaction with the judgment, to have the case tried in a higher court.

Courts General courts
District Court (court of the first instance)
Court of Appeal (court of the second instance)
Supreme Court (final court of appeal)

Crime Any act, or failure to act, punishable under Swedish law.

Hearing Trial. Oral session in court to decide a case.

Injured party The legal term for someone who has been subjected to or suffered injury from a crime.

Injured party's counsel Legal representative paid for by the state to support someone who has been subjected to a serious crime.

Legal custom The decisions taken by courts and authorities, in particular those of higher instances.

Preliminary investigation A crime investigation led by a police officer or a public prosecutor.

Prosecution The request submitted by a public prosecutor (or a private person) to a court of law that the court impose a punishment, for one or more crimes, stated in the charge.

Public prosecutor The lawyer who leads preliminary investigations and conducts criminal proceedings in a court of law on behalf of the state.

Sanction The punishment imposed by the state on someone who has committed a crime. Sanctions include fines, imprisonment, conditional sentence, probation, taking someone into special care etc.

Summary imposition of a fine Instead of prosecuting someone who has confessed to a less serious crime, a public prosecutor may impose a summary fine on the offender.

Waiver of prosecution A decision by a prosecutor not to prosecute, for example, because of the young age of the accused.

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

The Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority

Box 470, 901 09 UMEÅ

Tel: 090-70 82 00

Fax: 090-17 83 53

registrator@brottsoffermyndigheten.se

www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se

National Courts Administration

Kyrkogatan 34, 551 81 JÖNKÖPING

Tel: 036-15 53 00

Fax: 036-16 57 21

domstolsverket@dom.se

www.dom.se

National Police Board

Box 12256, 102 26 STOCKHOLM

Tel: 08-401 90 00

Fax: 08-401 99 90

rikspolisstyrelsen@rps.police.se

www.polisen.se

Swedish Prosecution Authority

Box 5553, 114 85 STOCKHOLM

Tel: 08-453 66 00

Fax: 08-453 66 99

registrator.riksaklagaren@aklagare.se

www.aklagare.se

National Legal Aid Authority

Box 853, 851 24 SUNDSVALL

Tel: 060-13 46 00

Fax: 060-13 46 40

registrator@rhm.dom.se

www.rattshjalp.se

National Board of Health and Welfare

106 30 STOCKHOLM

Tel: 08-555 530 00

Fax: 08-555 532 52

socialstyrelsen@sos.se

www.sos.se