

**Where should I return my Victim
Impact Statement?**

Unless otherwise indicated, your statement should
be returned to the office that asked you to submit it.

Please note: This brochure is intended for general
information only. It is not a statement of the law. It
is provided as a service by the North Dakota Victim
Assistance Association.

Ward County State's Attorney's Office
Ward County Courthouse
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(701) 857-6480

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE

What is a Victim Impact Statement?

A Victim Impact Statement is an opportunity for you to explain in your own words, how being a victim of crime has affected you and the people close to you. The statement may include an explanation by the victim of the nature and extent of any physical, psychological, or emotional harm or trauma suffered by the victim; an explanation of the extent of any economic loss or property damage suffered by the victim; an opinion of the need for and extent of restitution; and the victim's recommendation for an appropriate sentence.

Who may complete a Victim Impact Statement?

A Victim Impact Statement may be submitted by the victim, family members of a deceased victim or parents of a victim who is a child. Sometimes the Court will allow statements from other family and friends of the victim.

How will my Victim Impact Statement be used?

The information that you give in your statement is helpful to the Court in understanding the full effects of the crime on you. It will be submitted to the Judge at the time of sentencing. This statement may also be shared with the State's Attorney, defense attorney and the defendant and possibly with a probation or parole officer. If an oral impact statement is given it will be under oath and subject to cross examination by the defense.

Remember that your Victim Impact Statement is about you, not the accused.

How do I complete the Victim Impact Statement?

The Victim Impact Statement is to be written in your own words and not too lengthy. Describe the emotional and physical effects the crime has had on you and your family.

Emotional: At first it may be difficult to try to explain the emotional impact of the crime. When completing your statement consider:

- Do you feel fearful, vulnerable, helpless, violated, angry?
- Do you feel uncomfortable or frightened in your own home?
- Have you changed your lifestyle? Do you restrict your activities? Do you avoid going out at certain times?
- Has the crime affected your relationship with your partner, spouse, friends, family or colleagues?
- Has the crime affected your ability to work or study?

Physical: Describe how the crime has physically changed your life:

- Do you have any physical discomfort or illnesses because of this crime?
- What treatment have you received or be required to receive in the future?
- Do you have a permanent or long term disability or injury as a result of the crime?

It is not necessary to include a description of the crime or how the crime occurred. You may wish to express your concerns about probation, for example, if you would like a No Contact Order.

Do I have to complete a Victim Impact Statement?

No. Submitting a Victim Impact Statement is completely voluntary.

Can someone help me with my Victim Impact Statement?

Yes. But it is important to remember that the Victim Impact Statement should be in your own words.

Will I receive compensation for the financial impacts I describe in my Victim Impact Statement?

The Court must consider ordering the offender to make restitution, which is reimbursement for losses incurred as a result of the crime. An order does not guarantee restitution will be paid and many times it is not possible. However, the State's Attorney's Office will make every effort to see that restitution is paid if ordered.

North Dakota law (Crime Victims Reparation Act) provides monetary compensation to victims of criminal attacks who suffer bodily injury. Victims may be eligible for payments of medical expenses, lost wages and mental health counseling. Dependents of deceased victims may also be eligible for certain benefits, including funeral expenses. Contact your county State's Attorney's Office for an application for Crime Victims Compensation.