



Victim Impact Statement Guide

If you are a victim of crime in Maryland, you have the right to be heard before the judge sentences the defendant by writing a **victim impact statement**. This guide can help you prepare your statement. Once you finish the statement, send a copy to the State's Attorney prosecuting your case.

Your Name: _____

Defendant's Name: _____ Case Number: _____

1. How has the crime affected you and those close to you? Please feel free to discuss your feelings about what has happened and how it has affected your general well-being. Has this crime affected your relationship with other people? If, as a result of this crime, you have used any type of services, such as counseling or a support group, you may wish to mention this. This information may be read in court, so please do not include any personal information such as the name of your counselor.
2. What physical injuries or symptoms have you suffered as a result of this crime? You may want to write about how long the injuries lasted, or how long they are expected to last, and if you needed medical treatment. How has your life changed as a result of these injuries?
3. Has this crime affected your ability to perform daily activities you previously performed or enjoyed? If so, please explain how these activities have been affected by this crime.
4. List any property damage, personal property loss, medical expenses (current and future), counseling expenses, lost wages/income loss, and any other expenses you had as a result of this crime.
5. Discuss what sentence you would like to see the judge give the defendant—jail time, community service, counseling, no contact order—and any other information you want the judge to know. Make a request to be paid (restitution) in this section.
6. Include any other information you would like to share about the impact this crime has had on you, your routines, or your loved ones.

If you want help writing your statement, you can call House of Ruth Maryland's hotline at **410-889-7884** and someone will be happy to assist you.

2201 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, MD 21218 • **24 Hour Hotline:** 410-889-RUTH (7884)

Administrative Office: 410-889-0840 • **Linea en Español:** 410-889-7889 Oprima 8

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If you are the victim of a crime in Maryland, you have the following rights:

- **To Be Treated with Dignity, Respect, and Sensitivity** during all phases of the process and by all professionals working in the criminal system.
- **To Be Notified of Court Events Related to Your Case** if you inform the State's Attorney's Office if you want to be notified by writing a letter. Be sure to include the defendant's name and case number. You can also receive notification through the VINE system by signing up at www.vinelink.com.
- **To Be Present at the Court Events Related to Your Case** if you notify the State's Attorney in the case and the District Court Clerk that you wish to be present. It is important that both the State's Attorney and the District Court Clerk have your most recent address. If you are a witness to the crime, you may need to testify for the State. You may not be able to sit in the courtroom until after you testify.
- **To Be Heard Before Sentencing is Imposed** by giving a written or oral victim impact statement to the Court before sentencing. Send a copy of your statement to the State's Attorney's Office. You also may have the right to speak at the sentencing. If you wish to do this, please notify the prosecuting State's Attorney as soon as possible.
- **To Request Restitution from Your Offender** for out-of-pocket costs that are a direct result of the crime. To request this, file a Request for Restitution with the State's Attorney prosecuting the case, the Clerk of the District Court Clerk, and the defense attorney. Your Request should detail all expenses and should include receipts and bills, if they are available.
- **To Be Informed of a Plea Agreement (in Circuit Court cases only)**, but you do not have the right to decide whether the plea is accepted by the Court. Only the judge has that right. You do have the right to express your opinion about the plea agreement through your victim impact statement. If you do not agree with the plea, you should tell the Court and the State's Attorney.

If you believe you have not been treated fairly, you can call the Victims' Rights Compliance Line: 410-697-9338. This number will connect you with the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. *This information was adapted from:* www.mdcrimevictims.org.

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