

What to Expect

A Safe Place

Defendants are **NOT ALLOWED** in the Victim Witness Center. Alert staff immediately if the defendant is in or near the center. Also, let staff know if you have a problem with intimidation by a defendant or his/her family.

How Long Will Court Take?

You may be excused after only a few minutes or you might be needed most of the day. When you are called may depend upon:

- Whether all witnesses are present
- How many cases are assigned to a judge
- The availability of the defense attorney

Case Status

Your advocate will keep you advised of case status. If you are not called by noon, you will be excused for lunch and asked to return by 1:30 p.m. There is a snack bar on the first floor of the courthouse and restaurants within a few blocks.

Parking Meters

If you are parked at a meter, you must keep money in it to avoid a ticket. Sorry, but we do not have the authority to “fix” a parking ticket.

Tell Us Where You Are

If you leave to put money in a meter or any reason, please advise the receptionist.

Witness Fee

If you are a subpoenaed witness, you are entitled to a witness fee to help cover parking and travel expenses. When you check in, sign for the fee and a check will be mailed. The fee is determined by the Oklahoma Legislature.

Your Comments

Let us know about your experience in the Victim Witness Center and the DA’s office.

Email: DistrictAttorney@tulsacounty.org

Phone: 918-596-4977

Victim Compensation

Victims and dependents may be eligible for compensation for physical or psychological harm as a result of a violent crime. Eligible expenses include medical, counseling, rehabilitation, work loss or loss of support, future loss, homicide crime scene cleanup, and funeral expenses. Advocates help you send claims to the Crime Victims Compensation Board.

Children

The Victim Witness Center offers a play area for children, but they cannot be left unattended.

Coffee, Sodas and Snacks

Complimentary coffee is provided in the Victim Witness Center and soda and snack vending machines are located in our kitchen area. A snack bar is available on the first floor of the courthouse.

Verification Letters

If you need a letter for your employer or school to verify your appearance in court, please notify staff before you leave the courthouse.

Court School

Child victims may enroll in a program designed to help him/her understand the court process. Your advocate can enroll a child in court school.

Restitution

If you have monetary or property loss due to the crime, alert your advocate and request restitution. Keep copies of bills, estimates and documents so that we may secure reimbursement from the defendant if he/she is convicted.

Property Release

Your advocate can assist with recovering property after it is no longer needed as evidence.

Referrals

Your advocate can refer you to agencies and support groups to help you heal from the impact of crime.

Protective Orders

The Family Safety Center will assist you in obtaining a protective order.

Phone: 918-742-7480 Email: info@fsctulsa.org

THANK YOU

For Your Assistance in Criminal Prosecution

We know that court can be intimidating for victims and witnesses. Our goal is to make the encounter as comfortable and positive as possible. This guide will answer some of your questions. If you have others, don't hesitate to ask them.



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HELPFUL HINTS

As a witness, you have an important job to do. In order for a jury or judge to make a correct and wise decision, all of the evidence must be presented in a truthful manner.



WE WANT YOU TO TELL THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

Witnesses are asked to take an oath to tell But there are different ways to tell

the truth. If one is halting, stumbling, hesitant, arrogant, or inaccurate, the judge and jury may doubt that you are telling all the facts in a truthful way. A witness who is confident and straightforward will make the judge and jury have more faith in what he is saying.

- Before you testify, try to picture the scene, the objects there, the distances and what happened so that you can recall more accurately when asked. If the question is about distances or time, and if you give an estimate, be sure you say it is an estimate.

- Speak clearly and loudly enough so that the farthest juror can hear you easily.
- Listen carefully to the questions. No matter how nice the defense attorney may seem, he may be trying to discredit you. Understand the question, have it repeated if necessary, then give a thoughtful, considered answer. **Do not give a snap answer without thinking.**
- Explain the answer, **if necessary.** If a question can't be truthfully answered with a yes or no, you have the right to explain.
- Answer only the question asked you. Do not volunteer information.
- If your answer was not correctly stated, correct it immediately. If your answer was not clear, clarify it immediately.
- Always be courteous, even if the lawyer questioning you is not. **Keep your cool.**
- Stop instantly when the judge interrupts you or if an attorney objects to a question.
- Give positive, definite answers when possible. Avoid saying "I think," or "I believe." if you are positive. If you do know, say so. Don't make up an answer.
- Do not nod your head for an answer. Speak so that the court reporter can hear you and properly record what you say.



While taking the oath, stand upright, pay attention, and say "I do" clearly.

Dealing With Anxiety

It is not unusual to feel nervous when you testify. Acknowledging nervousness is the first step in relaxing. Close your eyes for a moment. Imagine yourself in a peaceful setting, inhale deeply and slowly let your breath out. When you are called to the stand, others will be watching you. You are a new face to the proceedings and their observations of you are natural. Do not feel uncomfortable. If you were in their place, you would be curious about who the witness was and what he or she had to say.

Nervousness may cause you to:

- Speak rapidly
- Speak in a soft voice
- Slump in your chair
- Have an upset stomach
- Have difficulty catching breath
- Feel dizzy

Stress, over long periods of time, can show itself in many ways—even on strong individuals. If you are anxious and feel the need to discuss your feelings with someone, let your advocate know. We are here to assist you and make you more comfortable with the important role you are playing in the criminal justice system.