

City of Clemson, South Carolina Police Department



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Jimmy Dixon, Chief of Police



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How to report a sexual assault

****New Anonymous Reporting Protocol for Sexual Assault Victims****

Victims now have an option to go to the hospital to have a Rape Kit done and receive medical attention without involving Law Enforcement. They will have one year to decide if they want to report the incident.

Here are some of the basic details of the program:

- 1. If a victim has called 911, they are already in the system and do not have the option to remain anonymous.
- 2. If an adult client (age 18 and above) shows up at the hospital and states they have been assaulted, they have two options:
 - a) File a police Report
 - b) Anonymous Sexual Assault Kit
 - (I) Same kit is performed
 - (II) SOVA will still pay for the kit
 - (III) Only underwear will be collected
 - (IV) Same questions will be asked ? including a statement of what took place.
 - (V) Instead of a police report number, the hospital patient number will be used.
 - (VI) Contact information will be sealed in an envelope and will be kept in evidence the victim will be contacted on the 11th month to see if they would like to file a police report.
 - (VII) After the one year, unless otherwise specified by the victim, the evidence collected will be destroyed.

Anonymous reporting vs. Filing a Police Report

Anonymous Reporting

Pros:

- Victim has a year to decide if they want to press charges.
- Victim has time to become emotionally/physically stable before dealing with law enforcement.

Cons:

- It is difficult to start an investigation one year after the incident occurred (evidence will be lost at the crime scene).
- How the case may be perceived if the case goes to trial in court one year after it occurred.

Filing a Police Report

Pros:

- Investigation can begin immediately
- Statements can be given while details are still fresh

Cons:

- Victim is re-traumatized by having to tell the story several times, may not make a good witness if they are unstable.
- Victims may choose not to get necessary medical treatment for fear of dealing with the police.

As far as law enforcement is concerned, NO crime has occurred and there is NO investigation until the victim chooses to make a full statement.

An initial report will be made with as much information as the victim is willing and able to give, the same questions will be asked, and statements will be taken.

Victims will be asked to indicate with their signature what reporting option he/she has chosen.

Victim's Advocate will address any concerns the victim may have during this process.

Victim's Advocate will contact the Rape Crisis Center counselors and transport the victim to the ER, if needed.

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1. Do report the crime as quickly as possible. You may either call us or come to the police department.
 2. Do bring your friend or family member with you for moral support. Law enforcement personnel will provide you with professional support and advocacy but having someone with you to provide personal support can be very beneficial.
 3. Do be prepared for the sexual assault examination process. When you call or come to Clemson Police Department, a uniformed patrol officer will ask you some very fundamental questions (who, what, when, where, how) and then will call an investigator and the victim advocate to respond to your location. The investigator will ask you some more questions and the victim advocate will drive you (and your friend/family member) to the hospital for the sexual assault examination. While en route to the hospital, the victim advocate will explain in more detail what to expect during the examination. The hospital is notified in advance so that they are prepared for your arrival. Pickens County Rape Crisis is also notified and is typically at the hospital when you arrive. The South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division recommends that a sexual assault examination be done within 72 hours of the commission of the crime even if the victim has showered, bathed, or brushed their teeth. Clemson Police Department utilizes the Palmetto Baptist Medical Center in Easley for several reasons. PBMC has a team of highly skilled Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) who are on call 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and are specially trained in conducting a thorough examination. A few years ago PBMC received federal funding which was used to designate and equip a separate area of the hospital to be used solely for sexual assault exams. A portion of the funds were used to purchase equipment that allows the nurse to detect miniscule forensic evidence that may assist in prosecuting the crime. This program provides the best possible examination in a compassionate manner and in a relatively short time frame.
 4. Do bring clothing to change into following the sexual assault examination. The purpose of the sexual assault exam is two-fold; to see to your medical needs and to collect evidence. In the interest of collecting evidence, some of your clothes may be kept for forensic testing. Pickens County Rape Crisis Council does provide clothing for victims to wear following the examination but most women are more comfortable wearing their own clothes.
 5. Do come to the police department first (if at all possible) unless you are physically injured.

REMEMBER:

- 1) That reporting a sexual assault is a stressful process. When the initial interview is completed, statements have been taken, and the examination is over, the sexual assault victim typically experiences emotional and physical exhaustion. In addition, some common reactions to sexual assault are self-blame, intrusive thoughts, difficulty sleeping, shame, and an inability to concentrate. We recommend that you not be alone for at least a few nights following a sexual assault but that you stay with someone who will understand if you are having trouble sleeping and will listen to you during this difficult time without repeating what you say to others. Avoid the use of alcohol, surround yourself with people who are supportive, and seek professional help.
- 2) In sexual assault cases, the decision to prosecute is ultimately that of the victim. At Clemson Police Department we know that the decision to prosecute is a difficult one that is dependant upon many factors. We have found that within a week or so of an assault, the victim typically experiences a period of indecisiveness that compels them to call one day expressing a desire to prosecute and the next day with a desire to drop charges. It is not necessary to make an immediate decision regarding your case and we discourage you from doing so. Ask questions, know your rights as a crime victim, and make informed decisions.
- 3) Some of your questions cannot be answered right away but require the gathering of further investigative information.
- 4) Law enforcement agencies can only investigate crimes which occur in their jurisdiction. If you are unsure of which law enforcement agency to report to, simply call or go to the nearest police department and they will direct you to the appropriate agency.
- 5) The Clemson Police Department has a victim advocate who will provide you with transportation to and from the hospital, emotional and practical support, case status, court transportation and accompaniment, information and referral, assistance in filing for compensation, case status, and much more.

6) Probable Cause cannot always be established and, without it, law enforcement cannot make an arrest. However there may be other options for you, including civil action, which may help you in the pursuit of justice. Please contact the victim advocate for more information.

For more information please contact:

Victim Services Coordinator
Clemson Police Department
864-624-2012

Pickens County Rape Crisis Council
864-868-7599

Visit these websites:

[Office of the Governor, State Office for Victim Assistance](#)

[The South Carolina Victim Assistance Network](#)

[The South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault](#)

[The National Organization for Victim Assistance](#)