

**Palm Beach County
DUI Homicide Grant Project
IDEA Taskforce**

Best Practices for Victim Advocates

The mission of the DUI Homicide Project Impaired Driving Death Enhanced Assistance Taskforce (IDEA) is to provide a coordinated community response to ensure that every survivor or family members of an impaired driving death receives prompt, critical support in accessing available resources, services, and navigating the criminal justice system.

The primary objective of the Victim Advocate is to provide information and support to survivors of homicide in a compassionate and sensitive manner. The Victim Advocate will be present throughout each step of the criminal justice system.

A. Immediate Response of a Victim Advocate

1. Cases that require an immediate response include:

- a. Suspected or confirmed DUI crash resulting in death
- b. Suspected or confirmed DUI crash resulting in serious bodily injury with likelihood of death
- c. Death Notification
- d. Incident deemed necessary by Sergeant and PBCVS Duty Supervisor

2. When the Victim Advocate is called out, the Advocate must:

- a. Arrive at the primary or secondary scene within 1 hour of the call

3. During the response, the Victim Advocate will:

- a. Greet the survivors and briefly provide information about PBCVS
- b. If located at a hospital, assist in finding a comfortable waiting area
- c. If located at a home, enter the home with law enforcement if the homeowner permits and have the Next of Kin (NOK) be seated
- d. Be present alongside law enforcement, while law enforcement completes the Death Notification
- e. Provide crisis intervention
- f. Inquire if there are any immediate needs you can assist with
- g. Normalize the feelings of the survivor
- h. Inquire about a friend or family member that you can call to come to the location to provide additional support
- i. Educate the survivor about what may be experienced emotionally and/or physically
- j. *Complete the Survivor Resource Packet and Client Intake Sheet with the NOK*
- k. When leaving the NOK, advise them an advocate will be follow up the next business day

4. Follow up

- a. The next business day, the Victim Advocate will follow up with the NOK and assist with reviewing the Survivor Resource Packet
- b. Educate and inform the survivor about what procedural events may follow.
- c. Assist with Crime Victims Compensation application
- d. Assist with locating a funeral home and assistance with funeral expenses
- e. Provide assistance negotiating the complex web of social service and criminal justice systems

B. Delayed Response of a Victim Advocate

1. **Cases that do not require an immediate response include:**
 - a. Delayed fatality
 - b. Crime not yet determined
 - c. Hit and run
2. **Within 24 hours of the crash, law enforcement will call 561-833-7273 to have a Victim Advocate assigned.**
3. **Once assigned to the case, the Victim Advocate will:**
 - a. Make contact with the Investigator or Detective for additional case information
 - b. Make contact with the NOK and briefly provide information about PBCVS
 - c. Provide crisis intervention
 - d. Inquire if there are any immediate needs you can assist with
 - e. Normalize the feelings of the survivor
 - f. Inquire about a friend or family member that you can call to come to the location to provide additional support.
 - g. Educate the survivor about what may be experienced emotionally and/or physically.
 - h. Complete the Survivor Resource Packet and Client Intake Sheet with the NOK***
 - i. Educate and inform the survivor about what procedural events may follow.
 - j. Provide assistance negotiating the complex web of social service and criminal justice systems
 - k. Assist with Crime Victims Compensation application
 - l. Assist with locating a funeral home and assistance with burial expenses

C. Medical Examiner's Office/ Funeral Home Advocacy

1. When it has been determined that an autopsy will be completed, the NOK will be notified by an Investigator from the Medical Examiner's Office and the process will be explained.
2. Explain that the NOK or survivor will not be able to view their loved one at the ME's Office. However, the viewing will be completed at the funeral home.
3. Assist the NOK in collecting any belongings of the deceased victim from law enforcement.
4. Explain that PBC Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center is available for supportive services, including assistance with filing for Crime Victims Compensation that may assist with burial expenses.

D. Law Enforcement Advocacy

1. Request contact from law enforcement when and if they are following up with the NOK so you can be present.
2. Obtain updates on the progress of the investigation at the NOK's request.
3. In all phases of the investigation, provide accompaniment, emotional support, information and advocacy for the NOK.

E. Court Advocacy

1. Inquire as to which Assistant State Attorney (ASA) is handling the case.
2. Ask if the ASA has any requests.
3. Obtain updates on the progress of the case.
4. Be present during interviews per NOK's request.
5. Provide accompaniment to the NOK at all hearings.
6. In all phases of the case, provide accompaniment, emotional support, information and advocacy for the NOK.