



**Brottsoffermyndigheten**

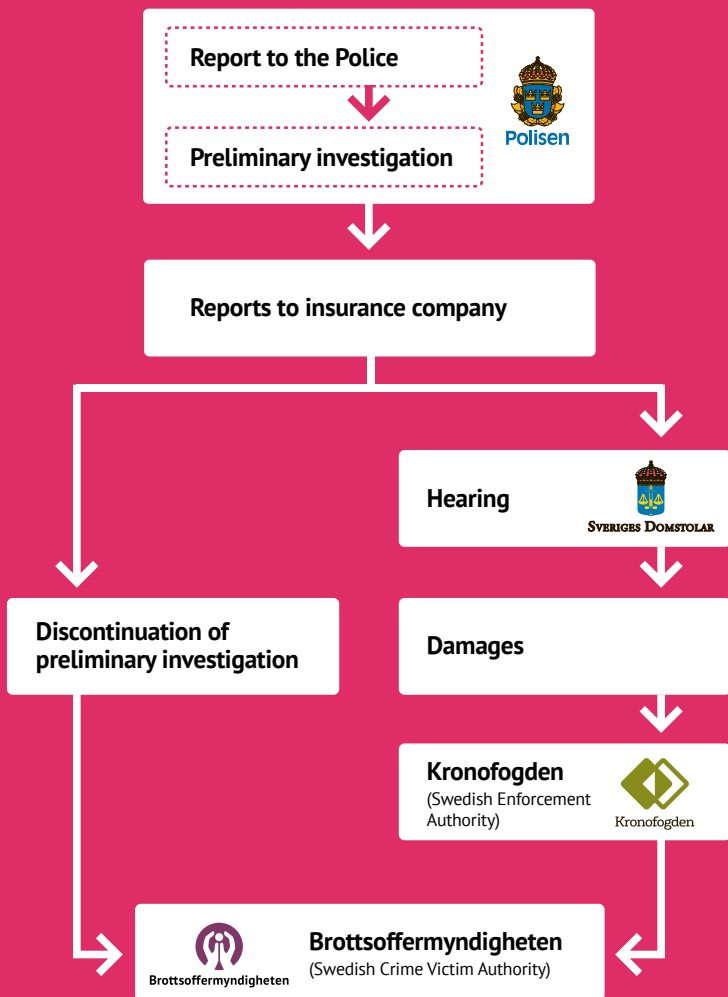
# **Information to crime victims**



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# Quick guide



# Introduction

If you have been subjected to a crime, you will probably find yourself in an unfamiliar situation which may well make you feel confused and anxious. If the crime has been reported to the police, a process will be initiated involving a number of different authorities. It may be difficult for you to know where to go for support and to get answers to all your questions. After you have read this booklet, hopefully most of these will be answered and you will know where you get any remaining questions answered.

We begin by describing how you report a crime to the police, what happens after the crime has been reported, and what support and assistance is available to you.

The next part describes the legal proceedings, your possibilities of claiming financial compensation for injury or damage caused by the crime, and which measures can be taken to make you feel more secure.

The last part describes the common reactions to crime. There is also a glossary and contact details for non-profit organisations and authorities.

Your rights as a crime victim are based on both Swedish law and international law. The EU directive establishing standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crimes and the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims by the United Nations are particularly important. These documents state that victims of crime have the right to protection, reconciliation and redress of injustice.

# Acute measures

**If you have been subjected to a crime – seek help! In an emergency, call 112 or visit your nearest accident and emergency department.**

**If the crime is still taking place – call 112!**

**Report the crime at your nearest police station, or by calling 114 14, or by visiting the Police website, [www.polisen.se](http://www.polisen.se)**

**If you need protection or support – contact the Police, social services, a women's shelter or victim support centre.**

# Report to the police



Many people wonder what happens after a crime has been reported to the police. It may be equally important to know what happens if the crime is not reported to the police by you or by someone else.

A report to the police is often necessary in order for you to safeguard your rights and receive protection. Both insurance companies and Brottsoffermyndigheten (Swedish Crime Victim Authority) generally require a police report when investigating whether compensation can be paid for damage or injury resulting from a crime.

Therefore, if you have been subjected to a crime, you should report it as soon as possible to the police. You can do this at the nearest police station, by calling 114 14 or via the Swedish Police website, [www.polisen.se](http://www.polisen.se). If the crime is still taking place, you should call 112.

The police or a prosecutor will use the report to determine whether a preliminary investigation should be launched.

The police and prosecutor are usually able to give you the information you need. You will find more information further on in this booklet, but in brief the police and the prosecutor are obligated to inform you about the following:

- your possibilities of receiving damages and criminal injuries compensation
- that the prosecutor, if you so request, is usually obligated to prepare and present your claim for damages in court
- the regulations governing visiting bans, legal counsel for the injured party, and a support person
- how to apply for legal aid and legal advice
- which authorities and organizations can offer support and assistance
- if the preliminary investigation is not being initiated or is being discontinued
- whether a legal action is being brought or not.

The website [www.jagvillveta.se](http://www.jagvillveta.se) provides information in Swedish for children and young persons on crime, support and how to receive help. Information brochures in English and other languages are available at [www.jagvillveta.se/sprakversioner](http://www.jagvillveta.se/sprakversioner).

**I WANT TO KNOW**  
EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS IN THE EVENT OF A CRIME



# Preliminary investigation



When there are grounds for the police or prosecutor to believe that a crime has been committed, a preliminary investigation will be initiated. In the course of the preliminary investigation, the police may question suspects and other people who may have information, such as you yourself as the victim of the crime and any witnesses. The information gathered during the preliminary investigation is often compiled in a preliminary investigation report.

The police do not have enough resources to investigate all crimes straight away. If you ask the police, they should be able to tell you approximately when your case will be dealt with.

As you are the victim of a crime, you will now be called the injured party. As the injured party, you may be questioned and then you will be able to tell a police officer or a prosecutor what you know about the crime. Sometimes it is enough that you give your

statement over the telephone, but if you are asked to go in for questioning, you are legally required to attend.

If you fail to appear and do not have a valid reason, the police may come to take you in for questioning. You are entitled to have a support person with you; read more about this under “Support and assistance”.

If you are summoned to the police or the public prosecutor, you are entitled to compensation for expenses incurred in connection with the questioning. These expenses may be for travel and accommodation, compensation for loss of income or other kinds of financial loss. However, there is a maximum limit for compensation for loss of income. Ask the police how you apply for this kind of compensation.

If you want to claim damages for injury incurred as a result of the crime, you must notify the police officer or the prosecutor heading the preliminary investigation. See under “Damages, insurance and criminal injuries compensation” for more information.

### **Discontinuation of the preliminary investigation**

If there are no grounds for pursuing the preliminary investigation, it must be discontinued. This may happen if it has been established that the act in question did not constitute a crime or because no suspect can be identified. Another reason might be that there is no line of inquiry to pursue; that is to say, there are no leads. A discontinued preliminary investigation may be started up again if new evidence is found.

If the decision is made by the public prosecutor or the police to discontinue the preliminary investigation,

you will, as the injured party, normally be notified. The same applies if the prosecutor has decided not to initiate a preliminary investigation or to waive prosecution.

If you are not satisfied with a decision made by the police, you may request that it be reviewed by the public prosecutor. If you are not satisfied with a decision made by the prosecutor, you may request that it be reviewed by a senior public prosecutor. Even if the preliminary investigation is discontinued, you may be entitled to damages via an insurance policy or to criminal injuries compensation.

### **Prosecution**

If the prosecutor thinks that there is sufficient evidence for the court to convict the suspect, a prosecution will be brought. The court will then issue a summons to a hearing at which the prosecution will be heard. It is the court's task to decide, on the basis of what emerges during the hearing, whether the suspect should be sentenced for the crime in question. The court will also decide the amount of damages the suspect is to pay to you, if you have requested this.

### **Waiver of prosecution**

In certain cases, even though there is probably enough evidence for a conviction, the prosecutor has the right not to prosecute but to decide instead to waive prosecution. This could be the case, for instance, if the offender is young and has no previous convictions, and the offence in question is of a less serious nature. This could also be the case if a person has just been convicted of another crime, and the crime in question would not increase the sentence.

Waiver of prosecution means that there will be no hearing. You may still be entitled to damages for injury via an insurance policy or to criminal injuries compensation.

### **Summary imposition of a fine**

If the offender has confessed to a crime which is of a less serious nature, the prosecutor may personally impose a pecuniary penalty; that is to say, a summary fine. In that case, there will be no hearing, but the summary imposition of a fine has the same force as a court sentence. The imposition may also include the requirement that the offender pays damages.

### **If the suspect is under 15 years of age**

A person under 15 years of age is not of criminally responsible age and cannot be prosecuted. In such cases, a report to the police will not lead to legal proceedings, but social services will be notified and may take measures. The police may also investigate the crime, either on their own initiative or on the request of social services, and this may mean questioning the persons involved.

An investigation that shows a crime has been committed is essential in order for the crime victim to be entitled to criminal injuries compensation. It is also possible to receive damages since persons under the age of 15 years may also be liable to pay such.

### **Mediation after a crime**

Mediation involves the victim of the crime meeting the offender, together with an impartial mediator, to discuss the event and its consequences. If the offender is under the age of 21 years, the municipality is obligated to provide mediation.

Mediation can only take place if the offender has admitted the crime. In addition, both parties must want to take part. Mediation may lead to an agreement being drawn up to determine, for instance, how the parties are to act towards each other in the event of future contact, and this may offer the crime victim a sense of security.

Agreements about financial compensation for damage or injury are also possible but may lead to problems, especially if the case involves several offenders, large amounts of money or personal injury. Contact the Swedish Crime Victim Authority if you have any questions concerning such agreements. If you reach agreement on financial compensation, you may not receive criminal injuries compensation.

# Support and assistance

## Legal support



### **Counsel for the injured party**

For certain types of crimes, you are entitled as a crime victim to personal legal support, known as a counsel for the injured party. This applies first and foremost to sexual offences and violence in close relationships, but it also applies to other crimes where there is a particular need. A counsel for the injured party can be appointed as soon as the preliminary investigation has been initiated and the help is free of charge.

If you feel you need a counsel, you should bring up this matter as soon as possible with the prosecutor or police officer in charge of the preliminary investigation. You can also direct this request to the district court.

The district court will decide whether you are entitled to a counsel, and will appoint the appropriate person.

You are allowed to make suggestions as to whom you would like. The counsel has an obligation of professional secrecy and can assist you in the prosecution process and present your case regarding damages.

The counsel's mandate ceases after the hearing and does not include help in ensuring receipt of damages or other compensation.

### **Special children's representative**

If a legal guardian (usually the parent) is suspected of a crime against his or her child, the child may be assigned a special legal representative. This is also the case if the person suspected of committing the crime has a close relationship with the legal guardian. The intention is that the special legal representative will safeguard the child's rights during the preliminary investigation and hearing.

The special representative appointed may be a lawyer, a legal associate at a law firm or another person. Moreover, it is essential that this person has the knowledge, experience and personal qualities that are particularly suited to this role.

### **Legal cover**

Home insurance policies include a legal expenses clause. This means that your insurance company may reimburse you for the cost of employing a counsel etc. if the issue of damages is not raised during the criminal case hearing. Insurance policies usually contain a clause requiring you to pay part of the cost as excess. Ask your insurance company for more information.

## **Legal advice**

Under the Legal Aid Act, you are entitled to legal advice concerning all kinds of cases and legal matters. This may apply in the case of action for damages, for instance, if the prosecutor does not provide assistance or if you need help in negotiating with an insurance company.

You can contact a law firm which will provide you with legal advice under the Legal Aid Act. You will be given advice over a maximum of two hours in return for a fixed fee. The fee is approximately 1,500 SEK per hour. It may be a lower amount depending on your financial circumstances.

## **Legal aid**

If you do not have an insurance policy that includes a legal expenses clause and if your case cannot be pursued by receiving legal advice, you may be granted legal aid on the basis of an assessment of your needs. In that case, part of the legal aid costs will be met by the state. You may also receive help with the costs of provision of evidence, travel, accommodation and other expenses.

Information about how to apply for legal aid is available from a law firm, court of law or the National Legal Aid Authority (Rättshjälpsmyndigheten).

## **Other forms of support**

### **Social services**

Social services in each municipality are responsible for providing help and support to crime victims and relatives of crime victims. This responsibility is stated in the Social Services Act.



Social services must pay particular attention to the fact that women who are being or have been subjected to violence by a person close to them may be in need of support and assistance in order to change their situation. Social services must also prioritise children who have witnessed violence or other abuse by or towards persons close to them. These children are victims of crime, and the social services must ensure that they receive the support and assistance they need.

This could mean various forms of psychological and social support and also financial and practical assistance.

Some areas also provide other forms of support, such as conversational support for victims of crime, support centres for young victims of crime, and children's houses (barnahus). Contact your municipality for more information.

### **Support person**

If you wish, you may take with you a support person when being questioned during the preliminary investigation and hearing. You may choose someone you already know or you can ask social services or one of the victim support centres or women's shelters described further on in this booklet.

A support person may help make you feel more comfortable and give you a greater sense of security. You may also appreciate discussing what was said during the questioning and the hearing with someone who was there, and also discussing the wording of the decision or sentence. You can have both a counsel for the injured party and a support person. A support person does not receive any payment from the judiciary.

## Interpreter

If you do not speak Swedish, or if you have a speech impediment or seriously impaired hearing, you are entitled to the services of an interpreter free of charge during the police investigation and the hearing. The same applies for any contact you have with other authorities, such as social services.

## Witness support

The task of the witness support person is to help witnesses and injured parties and to offer personal support before and after the hearing. The aim is to make people feel more comfortable in the public areas of the court, such as the waiting room, and to explain where necessary what happens at a hearing. The witness support person must neither take sides in nor discuss the crime being addressed by the court case.

The witness support service at most courts can make available a separate room where the witness or crime victim may wait undisturbed. A witness support



service is available today at all the district courts and courts in appeal in Sweden.

The Swedish Crime Victim Authority and the National Courts Administration are jointly tasked with ensuring the provision of a witness support service. This is a voluntary service, usually provided by crime victim support centres and administered at local level by the witness support service coordinator who can be contacted via the court.

## **Support from non-profit organisations**

A number of associations work on a voluntary basis to provide crime victims with help and support. The most well-established ones, located in many parts of the country, are women's shelters and crime victim support centres. In addition, there is a number of more specialised crime victim support organisations. The larger centres may have salaried staff, but most of those working in this field do so on an entirely voluntary basis. All are bound by professional secrecy.

A list of these non-profit organisations is provided in the section entitled "Contact information". The national organisations can help put you in touch with their local branch.

### **Victim support centres**

Victim support centres provide help to victims of all kinds of crimes, such as assault, burglary, bag-snatching, molestation, personal theft and unlawful threat. When a crime is reported to the police, the crime victim should be informed that there are victim support centres and other support services available. The police will also ask the crime victim whether he or she would like to be contacted by a support centre.

The victim support centres can offer help in the form of a support person, and many also run a witness support service. The national organisation for these centres is called the Victim Support Sweden.

### **Women's shelters**

Women's shelters offer practical as well as psychological support to women who have been subjected to assault. Probably the most important kind of support that these shelters offer battered and threatened women is a refuge. Many women's shelters also offer legal advice.

There are two national organisations: Women's and Young Women's Shelters in Sweden (Roks) and Unizon. Both Roks and Unizon provide shelters for young women.

Terrafem is a support service for women and girls with a foreign background, and it runs a national helpline, providing support and advice in more than 40 languages.

### **Men's shelters**

Men's shelters provide support to men who have been subjected to abuse as well as to men who have committed violent acts against women. The latter can receive help in controlling their aggression and ending their violent behaviour.

# Hearing

If the prosecutor decides to bring an action, the prosecution will be heard by a court of law at a meeting known as a trial or main hearing. If you have requested damages, this will be considered at the same hearing.

## **The summons to court**

As a crime victim and injured party, you will always be informed about when the hearing will take place. If the prosecutor has requested that you be heard regarding the case, or if you have requested damages, you will receive a summons to court. If you have been summoned to the main hearing, you must come.

Read the summons carefully. If you should fall ill or if you think you have another acceptable reason for not appearing in court, you must notify the court as soon as possible before the hearing. The court will then tell you whether or not your presence is required. The summons therefore remains in force until you are informed otherwise.

If you fail to appear and do not have a valid reason for this, you may be liable to pay a sum of money known as a fine, which will be specified in the summons. You may even be fetched and taken to the hearing by the police.

## **The hearing**

The judges, the prosecutor and the suspect – now known as the defendant – will be present at the hearing. The court is usually made up of four judges: a judge who is a qualified lawyer and who chairs the proceedings, and three lay judges. There is also a recording clerk who is employed by the court.

Other persons normally present in the court room are the defence lawyer, the injured party and witnesses. In addition, you are entitled as a crime victim and injured party to have a counsel. This will be a lawyer who will help you before and during the hearing. If required, an interpreter will be present, and you also have the right to bring a support person with you.

Because court hearings are usually open to members of the public, other people may also be present in the court room. Support persons and members of the public are not allowed to say anything during the



hearing. If the case in question is of a very sensitive nature – addressing a sexual offence, for example – the court may decide that only certain persons may stay in the court room. This is commonly known as a hearing behind closed doors.

The main hearing examines everything of significance to the case. The prosecutor presents his or her account of the crime committed. This is known as the statement of facts. Thereafter you as the injured party will be heard, then the defendant, and finally any witnesses.



**The judge's table**  
(left to right):  
Lay judge  
Lay judge  
Presiding judge  
Recording clerk  
Lay judge

**Defence table**  
(left to right):  
Defence lawyer  
Defendant

As the injured party, you will sit next to the prosecutor. Any questions you may have during the hearing can be put to the prosecutor or to your counsel if you have one. If you have made a request for damages, this will also be assessed (see under “Damages”).

When you are questioned, you will be asked to tell the court in your own words about what happened. Then the prosecutor and the defendant’s defence lawyer will ask you questions. The judges may ask additional questions.

The questioning of an injured party tends to go into detail, which is often necessary in order for the prosecutor to be able to prove that a crime has been committed. It is therefore essential that you tell the court as much as you can about what you remember and have gone through, even though you may find it distressing. An audiovisual recording is made of the questioning in all cases.

It may also be difficult to face the defendant, and sometimes crime victims can be frightened. If you think that you cannot cope with telling everything you know in the presence of the defendant, you should notify the court, the prosecutor or your counsel, preferably well in advance of the hearing. The court may then decide, for instance, that the defendant must sit in another room while you are being questioned. The defendant will then listen to the questioning via a loudspeaker.

If you are afraid of a person sitting in the public gallery, the court can rule that that person must go out while you are being questioned.

### **The sentence**

Once the hearing is over, the court will pass sentence on the case. Sometimes the sentence is



announced orally as soon as the court has finished its deliberation, which takes place immediately after the hearing. It may often take up to two weeks, and occasionally even longer, before the sentence is announced.

The court will inform you when the sentence will be announced. On that day, you can phone the secretary's office to learn the decision of the court. If you have requested damages, you will automatically receive a copy of the court's sentence by post and free of charge. Otherwise you may ask the prosecutor or the court to have a copy of the sentence sent to you.

## **Appeal**

Any party that is not satisfied with the district court's decision may take the case to the court of appeal. The sentence includes instructions on how to do this. In certain circumstances a review permit will be required for the case to be heard by the court of appeal. If the decision has been appealed against, a new hearing will usually be required at the court of appeal. In most cases, the injured party and any witnesses need not attend this hearing. Instead, the recordings made of the original hearing at the district court will be played. In certain simple cases, however, the court of appeal may decide the case without holding a main hearing.

A decision by a court of appeal can usually be taken to appeal at the Supreme Court. However, the Supreme Court will only review cases where a decision may be useful as a guide to future action – known as a 'precedent' – or where there are special reasons for a review, such as when a district court or a court of appeal has made a serious error. Consequently, the court of appeal is normally the court of last instance.

## Expenses and loss of income in conjunction with the hearing

If you have been summoned to appear in court at the prosecutor's request, you have the right to be reimbursed for expenses you have incurred in order to attend. Sometimes, the presiding judge will ask whether you have any claims for reimbursement directly after your questioning. However, it is more common that the matter of reimbursement is dealt with at the court's reception desk after the hearing. You can then request reimbursement and also be told how much you can receive.

The amount will be paid out to you straight away at the court's reception desk. If you have incurred high costs, you may be able to receive advance payment. Contact the court for more information.

## Other legal expenses

If the prosecutor does not help you with your claim for damages and if you do not have a counsel, you may yourself bring action for damages. If you incur expenses in this connection, such as those for having a personal legal representative or for the provision of evidence, you have the right to claim compensation from the defendant.

If the defendant is sentenced to pay the damages, then as a rule he or she will also have to pay your legal expenses.



### Court Introduction

For more information on how a hearing works, what a court room looks like, and much more, you can see the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority's web-based Court Introduction on [www.rattengangskolan.se](http://www.rattengangskolan.se). The Court Introduction is available in Swedish and English.

# Damages, insurance and criminal injuries compensation

A person who commits a crime is in principle obligated to pay for the damage or injury caused by the crime. This is known as damages. If you have insurance, some of the damages or injuries you have suffered may be covered. If the offender cannot pay the damages and if you do not have insurance that fully covers the damage or injury sustained, you may in certain cases be able to receive financial compensation from the state, known as criminal injuries compensation. Even if the offender is unknown, you may be entitled to insurance and criminal injuries compensation.

## Damages

### Claiming damages

You can in principle claim damages for all damage or injuries sustained in connection with the crime. A claim for damages is usually assessed by the court at the same time that it assesses whether or not the defendant is guilty of the crime.

It is the crime victim who must claim damages from the person who has committed the crime and caused the damage or injury. To facilitate this, the prosecutor must prepare and present your claim for damages at the hearing if you so request. Exceptions will only be made if the question of damages requires extensive investigation or if the claim is seen as clearly unjustified; that is to say, either it has no connection

with the crime or it is much higher than is normal in similar circumstances.

If you wish to claim compensation for damage or injury sustained by you as a result of a crime, you should inform the police of this when they question you. At the same time, you should also say that you would like the prosecutor to help you with your claim for damages.

### **The legal guardian's indemnity liability**

Parents who have custody of a child are liable to pay damages sustained by the child as a result of a crime. This liability applies to personal injury, damage to property and insulting behaviour. The legal guardian's liability is limited to a maximum of one fifth of the price base amount of each instance of damage or injury.

Therefore, if you have been subjected to a crime committed by a person under 18 years of age, you should claim damages from both the child and his or her legal guardian(s). Contact the prosecutor or the Swedish Crime Victim Authority for more information.

### **Collection of damages**

If the court has sentenced the defendant to pay damages, this does not mean that the money will be paid to you automatically. In many cases, the offender cannot or may not voluntarily pay damages. If this happens, Kronofogden (the Swedish Enforcement Authority) will help to ensure that the money is paid to you.

The court will send a copy of the sentence to the Swedish Enforcement Authority who will, some time after the hearing, contact you by letter asking whether you would like help in collecting the damages. If you

would like such help, you must fill in the form sent to you and return it to the Swedish Enforcement Authority who will then investigate the offender's financial situation. If he or she is found to have executable assets or income, the Authority will ensure that you receive your damages.

Help from the Authority is free of charge, except in very special cases. If you are not contacted by the Authority, you should call them yourself on 0771-73 73 00.

## **Insurance**

Even if the offender is unknown or if a convicted offender cannot pay the awarded damages, you may still be entitled to compensation.

Many people have an insurance policy that covers loss, damage or injury resulting from a crime. Your home insurance policy may compensate you in cases such as theft or physical or sexual abuse. Furthermore, many people have accident insurance, such as that provided by their trade union, which may also compensate them for personal injury sustained by a crime. Most employees are covered by a labour market insurance scheme which may offer compensation for loss, damage or injury incurred at the workplace.

Almost all insurance policies have an excess clause, stipulating that you must personally bear a certain cost. There may be other terms limiting your right to compensation. Your insurance company will tell you what kind of cover your policy provides. It is essential that you report any loss, damage or injury to your insurance company as soon as possible after the crime.

## Criminal injuries compensation

If the convicted offender is unable to pay the damages and you do not have insurance that fully covers the amount, you may be entitled to compensation from the state. This is known as criminal injuries compensation, and it is dealt with by the Swedish Crime Victim Authority.

In order for you to be able to receive criminal injuries compensation in cases where the offender is unknown, there needs to be an inquiry, such as a preliminary investigation, which shows that you have been the victim of crime and have not just suffered an accident.

The crime must always have been reported to the police. If the suspect has been identified, a conviction or the summary imposition of a fine is required in principle.

Criminal injuries compensation covers crimes committed in Sweden, and you may be entitled to compensation regardless of whether you are a resident of Sweden or are here temporarily as, say, a tourist or a student.

If you are a resident of Sweden, you may also be entitled to criminal injuries compensation for a crime committed abroad.

### Personal injury

Personal injury is a physical or psychological injury inflicted on an individual. If you have suffered personal injury, you may receive compensation for:

- expenses for medical treatment, counselling and other costs related to the injury
- loss of income

- pain and suffering, such as pain or discomfort during the period of illness
- permanent injuries, such as scars, loss of healthy teeth, impaired vision or hearing.

If you have suffered personal injury, you may also receive compensation for damaged clothing, spectacles, dentures or similar objects worn by you at the time of the crime. However, compensation will not be paid out for lost or destroyed money, jewellery, a mobile phone, or a wallet or purse.

### **Violation of personal integrity**

A number of crimes also entitle the victim to compensation for violation of personal integrity. This entitlement applies if the crime is considered to have been a serious violation of your personal integrity, private life and human dignity. Almost all cases of sexual assault entitle the victim to such compensation. Likewise, this is often the case with assault, such as violation of the privacy of the home, unlawful threat, robbery, and the breach of a visiting ban.

### **Damage to property and pure financial loss**

The chances of receiving criminal injuries compensation for damage to property, such as theft, or for pure financial loss, such as fraud, are very limited. Such compensation will normally only be paid if the offender, at the time of committing the crime, was an inmate of a prison, a certain kind of care institution for young people or substance abusers, or a police cell. The crime may have been committed when, for instance, the offender had escaped or had been granted leave.

If the offender does not fall into one of the above categories or is unknown, compensation for damage

to property and financial loss will only be paid in cases of particularly distressing circumstances, such as when the damage inflicted has severely limited your chances of providing for yourself or your family.

### **Children who have witnessed violence**

Children who have witnessed violence in one or more relationships close to them may be entitled to criminal injuries compensation. To qualify for this, the crime must typically be assumed to have damaged the child's feeling of security and trust in a person close to him or her. The state is thus liable to pay compensation to children who have witnessed a crime against a person close to them, even though the child cannot receive damages from the perpetrator.

The child must have been under the age of 18 years when the crime was committed. The term 'witnessed' means that the child has seen or heard the criminal act. This may involve the child having witnessed one parent being assaulted or threatened by the other parent or someone else close to the child. Another example is a child having witnessed an assault on one or more siblings.





## **Application**

In order to receive criminal injuries compensation, you must submit a special application form. This can be ordered from the Swedish Crime Victim Authority. The application can also be made on the Authority's website: [www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se](http://www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se). The general rule is that an application must have been received by the Authority no later than three years after the conclusion of legal proceedings. This means, for instance, three years after the date the court decision gained legal force – that is to say, the case can no longer be taken to appeal – or after the date the preliminary investigation was discontinued. If no preliminary investigation was initiated, the application must have been submitted no later than three years after the date the crime was committed.

In some cases, however, an application may be looked at even if it has been received too late. Children who have been subjected to or have witnessed a crime are entitled at all times to apply for criminal injuries compensation up to the day they turn 21 years of age.

Contact the Swedish Crime Victim Authority or the prosecutor for more information about damages and criminal injuries compensation. You can turn to the Swedish Crime Victim Authority or your local victim support centre or women's shelter for help in filling in the application form. The application form is available in Swedish and English.

The Swedish Crime Victim Authority provides information on crime victims in a wide range of languages.

## **Recovery of payment**

The aim is for the offender in all cases to pay damages. The Swedish Crime Victim Authority therefore tries subsequently to claim from the offender the crime injuries compensation already paid out.

# Your personal protection

If you are threatened you have legal rights to protection. The police will assess what kind of protection you need and inform you about what measures are available in order to increase your security.

There are a number of measures intended to increase the safety of individuals who have received threats. In order for these measures to have an effect, it may be essential that these are planned in consultation with the police first and foremost, and ideally also with representatives from bodies such as social services and schools. The police and the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket) can also give practical advice on how you yourself can make your everyday life more safe.

## **Visiting ban**

The purpose of a visiting ban is to avoid situations that are potentially dangerous for the crime victim. Visiting bans have been issued and used primarily to protect women from being threatened and harassed by an ex-husband or partner, but such bans may also be issued to protect children and other vulnerable persons. A visiting ban means that the person who is threatening and harassing you is forbidden to visit or pursue you or to contact you in any other way, such as by letter, text message or telephone or through friends. Such a ban may also be extended to ban the person from being in the vicinity of your home, place of work or any other place where you normally happen to be.

A visiting ban can also be imposed on a person who cohabits with the person being threatened. This kind of ban, which is intended to bar the person making the threats from the joint home, can only be imposed if there is a serious risk of a crime being committed that would endanger the cohabitor's life, health or liberty or would be a breach of the peace.

It is the prosecutor who decides whether to impose a visiting ban. If the prosecutor decides not to impose such a ban, you may request the district court to review the decision. A person who violates a visiting ban may be sentenced to payment of a fine or imprisonment for up to one year.

### **Duty to inform you about penal care**

If you have been subjected to a crime and the offender is as a result serving imprisonment or has been admitted for institutional psychiatric care, the penal institution has a duty to inform you if the convict is granted leave, escapes, is transferred to another institution, or is released. You will as the injured party be asked whether you want this kind of information.

### **Refuges**

Women and children who have been subjected to violence by someone close to them may need to be moved temporarily away from their home. Refuges are offered by both municipalities and women's shelters. Contact the social services in your municipality or your local women's shelter for more information.

### **Protected personal data**

If you need to keep your address secret to avoid being subjected to threats or other kinds of harassment, you

may be granted confidentiality; i.e. restricted access to the personal data on you which is stored in the National Population Register. Restricted access will also apply to other public registers such as the Motor Vehicle Register or the Driving Licence Register.

Another way of protecting personal data is to register a person subjected to threats who has moved or intends to move under his or her old address.

An application to protect your personal data in the form of restricted access and being registered under your old address should be addressed to your local tax office in the municipality where you are registered. It is important that you yourself inform the authorities you come into contact about the restricted access to your personal data. Moreover, you must exercise great caution in all your contacts with organisations, companies and others.

### **Change of name**

Another way of increasing your personal protection may be to change your name. Changing to a parent's surname can be made by applying to the Swedish Tax Agency. Changing to another surname requires the permission of the Swedish Patent and Registration Office (Patent- och registreringsverket).

### **Security package**

In some cases, a person faces such a severe threat that it may sometimes be necessary to issue him or her with a security package. This package contains a mobile telephone and an alarm system, and can be borrowed from the local police authority once there has been a special review of the case.

## **Fictitious personal data**

If there is the risk of you being subjected to a very serious crime against your life, health or freedom, and if none of the other protection measures are deemed adequate, you may be granted permission to use an assumed – that is to say, fictitious – identity. An application to be given an assumed identity is made via the Swedish Police.

# Reactions of crime victims

Being the victim of a crime often has a number of negative after-effects. These may be financial loss, physical injury, psychological reactions or a social impact. Often the crime will also give rise to many practical problems.

How and to what extent a person reacts is an individual matter, and it depends on several factors. The crime itself, your relationship to the offender, your social situation and your personality are some of the factors that influence your reactions.

Regardless of the crime committed, it is almost always the psychological effects of knowing that one has been intentionally violated or hurt that is the most difficult aspect for the victim to deal with. Generally speaking, sexual offences evoke more serious psychological reactions than does violent crime, which in turn evokes more serious reactions than does crime against property.

Feelings of guilt and shame about what has happened are very common, even though it is the offender who is responsible for what took place. Other common reactions are feelings of anger and hate towards the offender and the desire for revenge.

It can be a good idea to give expression to these feelings by, say, talking to someone. It can help you provide some structure to your thoughts and make more sense of what has happened.

Every person reacts differently. Similar kinds of crime can affect people in different ways, depending on their personal situation as well as any previous

experiences of being violated or subjected to violence. A repeated experience often makes it harder for the victim to work through his or her distress. For instance, a person subjected to robbery for a second time risks suffering a more severe crisis than someone who has not been subjected to that before, especially if he or she has not got over the first robbery.

Abuse within close relationships, such as the gross violation of a woman's integrity or the sexual abuse of a child, is especially serious since these acts are often carried out repeatedly. Moreover, the fact that these crimes usually take place in the victim's own home means that the victim has no safe place to retreat to. The case may be made even more difficult where the offender is a person on whom the victim relies emotionally and socially as well as financially.

The fluctuations between violent behaviour and feelings of warmth in close relationships often create strong but damaging emotional ties. There is also a real risk that both victim and perpetrator play down the crime. Another common pattern is the perpetrator putting increasing blame on the victim for provoking the abuse.

Victims subjected to violence by a person close to them usually need the opportunity to gather their thoughts by distancing themselves from the perpetrator, so as to be able both to describe the abuse and to change the situation. Refuges are available in many areas. If you are subjected to violence and threat you are obligated to protection.

The need for support and assistance from other people varies. As well as legal assistance, personal support in one form or another is needed in many cases. If you need protection, help and support you can contact the social services in your



municipality or one of the non-profit organisations listed in this booklet.

### **Relatives of crime victims**

As a relative to someone who has been subjected to a crime you may also be in the need of help and support. You may need information about how you can help and support the person who is or has been subjected to a crime. Such help is available through social services in your municipality or through a non-profit organisation. If your family member has died as a result of a crime you can contact RAV, National organisation for relatives of victims of deadly violence.

# Contact information

## Non-profit organisations

### **Barnens Rätt i Samhället, BRIS (Children's Rights in Society)**

BRIS helpline: 116 111

BRIS adult helpline: +46 (0)77-150 50 50

info@bris.se

www.bris.se, www.barnperspektivet.se

### **Brottsofferjouren Sverige (Victim Support Sweden)**

Helpline: 116 006

info@brottsofferjouren.se

www.brottsofferjouren.se

### **Föreningen Anhöriga Till Sexuellt Utnyttjade Barn, ATSUB (Swedish Association for Relatives of Sexually Abused Children)**

Helpline: +46 (0)8-644 21 12

info@atsub.se

www.atsub.se

### **National organisation for relatives of victims of deadly violence**

www.rav.se

### **RFSL – Riksförbundet för homosexuellas, bis sexuellas och transpersoners rättigheter (The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights), RFSL Stödmottagning (RFSL Victim Support Centre)**

Helpline: +46 (0)20-34 13 16

stod@rfsl.se

www.rfsl.se

### **Riksorganisationen för kvinnojourer och tjejjourer i Sverige, Roks (National Organisation for Women's Shelters and Young Women's Shelters in Sweden)**

info@roks.se

www.roks.se, www.tjejjourer.se

### **Riksföreningen stödcentrum mot incest, Rise (National Association for the Prevention of Incest)**

Helpline: +46 (0)8-696 00 95

jour@rsci.nu

www.rsci.nu

**Rädda Barnen (Save the Children Sweden)**

kundservice@rb.se  
www.raddabarnen.se

**Svenska Röda Korset (Swedish Red Cross)**

info@redcross.se  
www.redcross.se

**Unizon (women's shelters, young women's empowerment centres and other support services)**

info@unizon.se  
www.unizon.se, www.tjejjouren.se

**Terrafem****(multilingual helpline for immigrant women and girls)**

Helpline: +46 (0)20-52 10 10  
info@terrafem.org  
www.terrafem.org

**Unizon (women's shelters, young women's empowerment centres and other support services)**

info@unizon.se  
www.unizon.se, www.tjejjouren.se

## Authorities and other bodies

**Domstolsverket (Swedish National Courts Administration)**

Phone: +46 (0)36-15 53 00  
domstolsverket@domstol.se  
www.domstol.se

**Kronofogden (Swedish Enforcement Authority)**

Customer centre, Phone: +46 (0)771-73 73 00  
kronofogdemyndigheten@kronofogden.se  
www.kronofogden.se

**Nationellt centrum för kvinnofrid, NCK (National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women)**

www.nck.uu.se  
NCK operates a helpline called Kvinnofridslinjen  
Helpline: +46 (0)20-50 50 50  
www.kvinnofridslinjen.se

**Polismyndigheten (Swedish Police)**

Phone: 114 14

In an emergency, call: 112

[www.polisen.se](http://www.polisen.se)

**Rättshjälpsmyndigheten (Swedish Legal Aid Authority)**

Phone: +46 (0)60-13 46 00

[rattshjalpsmyndigheten@dom.se](mailto:rattshjalpsmyndigheten@dom.se)

[www.rattshjalp.se](http://www.rattshjalp.se)

**Skatteverket (Swedish Tax Agency)**

Phone: +46 (0)771-567 567

[www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se) (use the link Kontakta oss

(Contact us to find contact information for your local tax office

**Socialstyrelsen****(Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare)**

Phone: +46 (0)75-247 30 00

[socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:socialstyrelsen@socialstyrelsen.se)

[www.socialstyrelsen.se](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se)

**Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR****(Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)**

Phone: +46 (0)8-452 70 00

[info@skr.se](mailto:info@skr.se)

[www.skr.se](http://www.skr.se) (Search for "Kommuner, lista" for links to all municipalities in the country. You will find contact information to the social services at the websites of the municipalities.)

**Åklagarmyndigheten (Swedish Prosecution Authority)**

Phone: +46 (0)20-562 50 00

[registrator.riksaklagaren@aklagare.se](mailto:registrator.riksaklagaren@aklagare.se)

[registrator@aklagare.se](mailto:registrator@aklagare.se)

There are also other support services available, such as support centres for young victims of crime, children's houses (barnahus) and refuges. Please contact the social services in your municipality for more information; see Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions).

# Glossary

## **Appeal**

A request to have the case tried in a higher court (see Court above) if a person is not happy with the sentence.

## **Court**

An authority that passes judgement in criminal cases, etc. The general courts: the district court (first instance), the court of appeal (second instance), the Supreme Court (final instance).

## **Crime**

An act that is punishable by law.

## **Criminal case**

A suspected crime that is dealt with by a court.

## **Defendant**

The person who is accused of a crime is called the defendant.

## **Injured party**

The person who has been subjected to or suffered injury from a crime is called the injured party during the legal process.

## **Injured party's legal counsel**

A person with legal qualifications, usually a lawyer, who provides support to victims of more serious crimes. The injured party's legal counsel is paid for by the state.

## **Main hearing**

An oral meeting in court to decide a case; also called a hearing.

## **Mediation**

A meeting of the victim of the crime and the offender, together with an impartial mediator, to discuss the event and its consequences. Mediation is voluntary for both the victim and the offender.

## **Preliminary investigation**

An investigation conducted by the police or a prosecutor into a crime.

## **Prosecution**

A request by the prosecutor, or a private person, that the court try a certain person for one or more crimes.

## **Prosecutor**

A lawyer who leads preliminary investigations and represents the state during the legal process.

## **Sanction**

The punishment imposed by the state for a crime. Examples of sanctions are fines, prison, conditional sentences, probation and commitment for special care.

## **Summary imposition of a fine**

In the case of more straightforward crimes or a confession, the prosecutor can impose a punishment and damages.

## **Waiver of prosecution**

The decision of the prosecutor not to prosecute for reasons such as the young age of the offender.



# **Brottsoffermyndigheten**

## **– The Swedish Crime Victim Authority**

The overall aim of the Swedish Crime Victim Authority is to look after the rights of crime victims and to draw public attention to their needs and interests. The authority is working to improve the situation for crime victims by:

- **granting criminal injuries compensation to crime victims**
- **claiming reimbursed criminal injuries compensation from offenders**
- **funding research and other crime victim oriented projects through the Crime Victim Fund**
- **being a centre of competence for crime victim issues.**

Information is available in a number of languages on **[www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se](http://www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se)** or call our service line on +46 (0)90-70 82 00, option 4.



## **Brottsoffermyndigheten**

Box 470, SE-901 09 Umeå, Sweden  
Tel.: +46 (0)90-70 82 00  
[registrator@brottsoffermyndigheten.se](mailto:registrator@brottsoffermyndigheten.se)  
[www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se](http://www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se)  
[www.courtintroduction.se](http://www.courtintroduction.se)  
[www.jagvillveta.se](http://www.jagvillveta.se)  
[www.brottsofferguiden.se](http://www.brottsofferguiden.se)  
[www.frivilligtsex.se](http://www.frivilligtsex.se)  
[www.tystnainte.se](http://www.tystnainte.se)