

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS

A Victim Impact Statement is usually the only opportunity crime victims have to address a judge and describe the impact a crime has had on their lives. We hope these guidelines will help you to prepare a statement. Before you write your statement, ask yourself:

- "What was life like before the crime?" This gives the court an opportunity to see what life was like for you on a daily basis and how it has changed. Include work life, family life and social life.
- "How has my life been impacted by this crime? How have the people I love been impacted by this crime?" If you or your family have been physically injured, describe the treatment and its length, the recovery process and any rehabilitation programs. If you live with physical limitations, describe them. Also describe the emotional aftermath of the crime and any financial losses.
- "What kind of punishment would I like to see the offender receive? How long do I want the offender to go to prison?" Include any requests that you would like the judge to consider, for example, ordering the offender to participate in drug and alcohol counseling or other counseling, to have no contact with certain people, such as minors, to pay restitution or to participate in community service.

The Victim Impact Statement can be read to the judge or handed to the judge before sentencing. If you are not comfortable reading the statement, you can ask someone to read it for you. You can write as much or as little as you want. The offender will be present in the courtroom.