

Victim Impact Statement

A Victim Impact Statement (VIS) is a voluntary statement, prepared by a victim of an offence, which may be used for sentencing purposes in criminal matters. It can also be used by correctional authorities for case planning and release decision making regarding the offender.

Before sentencing the offender, the court shall inquire whether you, the victim, have been notified of the right to complete a Victim Impact Statement. You may be contacted by a Victim Services Coordinator who will inquire whether you wish to complete a VIS, or you may contact Victim Services directly for assistance.

As a victim, you have the right to:

- participate in the sentencing process by completing a Victim Impact Statement;
- (1) read the Victim Impact Statement in court or (2) ask the judge if you can read it in another room while being viewed by the court or ask the judge to allow you to read your statement behind a screen so you do not have to see the offender (3) or ask the judge that a person you feel safe with sit near you while you read your statement or (4) present the statement in any other manner the court deems appropriate;
- ask the court to adjourn or postpone the sentencing to allow you time to write your Victim Impact Statement; and
- have a photograph of yourself before the offence was committed if it would not disrupt the proceedings;

Your Victim Impact Statement may be written on the attached form and prepared in your, the victim's, own words describing the impact of a criminal offence on your life. You may complete the Victim Impact Statement on your own or seek the help of Victim Services in your area. The Victim Impact Statement is your statement and the content should be your true thoughts (not someone else's) about how the crime has affected you. Do not discuss the details of the crime such as time, date, location, sequence of events or refer to any other crime. Please do not include your opinion on the character of the offender or provide reasons for the offender's behaviour.

Copies of a Victim Impact Statement are given to the sentencing Judge, Crown Attorney and Defense Counsel only after there is a finding of guilt. Please note – the offender will have access to your statement. You could be cross-examined in court on the content of your Victim Impact Statement. If you are required to testify, you may be questioned by Defense Counsel and/or the offender (if he/she is unrepresented), on your Victim Impact Statement. When a Victim Impact Statement is submitted to the court it becomes public information. The media may include all or part of the statement in any news reports. If there is a publication ban, however, your identity and any content that may identify you would be protected.

Victim Services is responsible for preparing the Victim Impact Statement for submission to the court. Once you have written the statement, provide it to Victim Services who will advise

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the court that a statement has been prepared. Victim Services may discuss the content of your statement with you to ensure it meets the provisions of the Criminal Code.

For information and assistance with your Victim Impact Statement, you can contact a Victim Services Coordinator at the following locations:

St. John's	709-729-0900
Carbonear	709-945-3019 or 709-945-3046
Clarenville	709-466-5808
Marystow	709-279-3216
Gander	709-256-1028 or 709-256-1070
Grand Falls-Windsor	709-292-4544 or 709-292-4548
Corner Brook	709-637-2603 or 709-637-2465
Stephenville	709-643-6588 or 709-643-6618
Port Saunders	709-861-2147
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	709-896-0446 or 709-896-3251
Nain	709-922-2360