



Victims of sexual assault are victims of a heinous crime, and they deserve justice. As chief prosecutor for Maricopa County, I believe public safety and justice for crime victims must be my top priority. Sex offenders who strike against adults and even young children must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

This guide is intended to help you understand why sex offenses must be reported and evidence obtained immediately in order to assure successful prosecution. Taking prompt action to report that a crime has been committed is often the first step toward healing for a crime victim. Counseling services, victim compensation, and prevention services are also available to continue the recovery process for victims of these crimes.

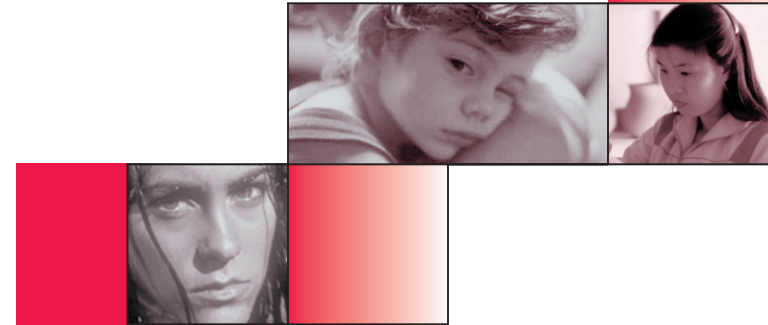
Public safety and the safety of individuals and their families depend on our criminal justice system. That system can only act when a crime has been reported. If you or someone you know has been a victim of a crime, please call the police immediately. Victims play a significant role in ensuring offenders take responsibility for their criminal actions and protecting themselves and our community from further harm. I urge all citizens to be proactive in reporting cases of sexual assault to law enforcement authorities so that justice can be served.

Sincerely,

Andrew P. Thomas
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SEXUAL ASSAULT



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ANDREW THOMAS
County Attorney

Sexual assault

Sexual assault is the act of having non-consensual sex with another person. This involves any act of sexual violence including date rape, spousal rape, stranger rape, unwanted touching, or any sexual behavior exhibited toward a child under the age of 15. Unfortunately, there is a major misconception about sexual assault — most people believe these violent acts are carried out by strangers. Although sexual assault is the fastest rising violent crime in America today, stranger-rape is not the leading form of sexual assault. The majority of victims involved in non-fatal, violent sexual assault know, and more than likely trust, the offender.

In many cases, the sexual offender and/or the victim had been drinking and/or using drugs. The use of alcohol or drugs is never an excuse to commit unwanted sexual acts.

If you are assaulted

Cooperation with police and prosecutors will bring sexual offenders to justice. Legal proceedings may prevent other women or children from becoming victims of sexual assault. The Maricopa County Attorney needs help to successfully prosecute these individuals. If you or someone you know are the victim of a sexual assault, follow the steps below.

- Immediately call the police. They are trained to respond.
- Do not shower, bathe, douche, or change clothes until you have been medically examined.
- As soon as possible, receive a medical examination. A medical examination allows evidence to be recorded by a professional
- Do not touch any evidence. Do not change the sheets or touch anything the assailant might have touched. These actions will destroy medical and legal evidence.

- Write down a description of the person who assaulted you: age, height, weight, hair color, clothing, and any other noticeable physical characteristics.
- If needed, seek counseling. You are not alone and trained specialists are available to help. For a toll-free rape crisis hotline, call (800) 656-HOPE.
- If someone sexually assaults you, it is not your fault. You are never to blame for someone else's actions.
- If your child is the victim of sexual assault, the same procedures apply. Leave the questioning of your child about the incident or incidents to a trained authority.

Counseling

Sexual assault is a traumatic violation of a person. Many victims of this crime find consolation through professional counseling. Counseling is recommended as a way to relieve the feelings of isolation and fault.

Listed below are the numbers of several programs and crisis centers designed to specifically help sexual assault survivors:

Center Against Sexual Assault

24-Hour Crisis Helpline: (602) 254-9000

Banner Health

Help Line and Psychiatric Triage:
1-800-253-1334

Community Information and Referral Service

24-Hour Information and Referral:
(602) 263-8856

Child Help Hotline

Nationwide Help Line: 1-800-422-4453

Victim assistance

As a victim you have certain rights. When a case is filed by the Maricopa County Attorney, victims are contacted by the Victim Witness Division so your rights can be explained. A separate pamphlet explaining these rights is available. For a copy of our Victims' Rights brochure, call (602) 506-8522.

Victim compensation

If you have been the victim of a sexual assault committed in Maricopa County, you may be eligible for victim compensation. Victim compensation is designed to assist you with financial expenses incurred because of the sexual assault. You can apply for victim compensation to cover: medical expenses; mental health counseling; and lost wages.

You are eligible for victim compensation if you: are in the United States legally; are victimized in Maricopa County; report the crime to a police agency within 72-hours; willingly cooperate with appropriate law enforcement agencies; and file an application with the Victim Compensation Bureau within two years of the date of the crime.

To file a victim compensation claim, contact:

Maricopa County Attorney's Office

Victim Compensation Bureau

301 W. Jefferson, Suite 900

Phoenix, AZ 85003-2151

(602) 506-4955

Prevention

Area police departments are a good source of information on sexual assault. Police departments offer self-defense classes as well as provide information and presentations about sexual assault. Arming one's self with knowledge is often the best weapon for preventing sexual assault.

Here is a list of the police agencies in Maricopa County which currently conduct sexual assault classes:

Chandler Police: (480) 782-4520

Glendale Police: (623) 930-3380

Mesa Police: (480) 644-2539

Paradise Valley Police: (480) 948-7418

Scottsdale Police: (480) 312-7784

Tempe Police: (480) 350-8305

Phoenix Police: *Contact you local precinct*

For help locating your precinct call (602) 262-7626.