

Third Party Reporting

Third Party Reporting is when a person informs the police that a sexual assault has occurred, without making their identity known. You may wish the police to know there has been a sexual assault committed in order for them to be aware in case anyone else is assaulted by the same person; however, you may wish not to have your name known to the police. Anonymous reports may be made to any police station, many through on-line services. Call the general inquires number of the police nearest you, and state you would like to tell of the crime. You do not have to give your name. Charges will not be laid, but the police will be made aware of the situation. Others can third party report on your behalf.

Important Telephone Numbers

All Emergencies: 911
Non-emergency Police (Halifax Regional): 490-5016

If you would like help with explanations regarding your case or the legal system, you can call Regional Victim Services, a division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

In Halifax : 424-8785
Toll Free outside Halifax : 1-888-470-0773

Some Regional Police Departments have their own Victims' Services unit. Please ask the police what is available in your area.

Halifax Regional Police Victim Services: 490-5300
Help Line 24 Hours: 421-1188

Avalon Centre acknowledges the contribution of the METRAC (1994) publication, "Sexual Assault: A Guide to the Criminal System", in the development of this brochure.

About Avalon Sexual Assault Centre Who We Are

Avalon Centre is the only sexual assault centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We are a registered, not-for-profit, community based, charitable organization. The agency was established in 1983 and incorporated in 1984. We are a women-centred organization and provide a leadership role in ending all forms of sexual violence against women and children. We are committed to providing support programs, counseling, education, and advocacy for women affected by sexual violence. Our vision is to eliminate sexual violence, social injustice and other forms of oppression.

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support provided by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Community Services; Capital Health; and the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

All donations from the public are gratefully accepted. Tax receipts will be issued upon request. We are an Associated Member of the Metro United Way's Donor Option program.

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Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
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Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K3
Business Line: (902)422-4240
After Hours Response Line: (902)425-0122
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Sexual Assault: What Happens if I Report to the Police?

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What Happens if I Report to the Police?

If you are an adult, 16 years of age and older, it is *your* decision whether or not to call the police to report the sexual assault. This brochure is intended to give you information so that you can make an informed decision; it is not intended to tell you what to do. **ALL sexual assaults of persons under the age of 16, must be reported to a child welfare agency for investigation.**



When you first call the police, a uniformed police officer (first responder) will respond. They will respond to the hospital, if you wish, your home, or you may go to the police

station. **You may ask for a female officer, but one may not be available at this time.** They will ask you questions, take notes and collect any evidence that may be available. The police will ask you to report details such as: time, place, the order in which things took place, who assaulted you, what did the person look like, and other detail-type questions. If you wish, the police will transport you to the hospital for medical treatment. (See: “What Happens at the Hospital?”).

The police will then file a report based on the information you provide and this is usually called a *complaint*. Depending on the type of police force in your area, your case may be given to another officer who will investigate further, or the original officer will investigate. Regardless, you should receive a follow-up interview, without too much delay.

During the follow-up interview, the officer will ask you to tell what happened in great detail, much like the first interview.

You will be asked about: time, place, the order things happened, if you know the attacker, what you said and did, what the attacker said and did, what did the attacker look like, what was he/she wearing, and you may be asked to go to the scene of the assault with the police. If you do not understand a question, or do not want to answer, you may say so. You will be asked if you are sexually active, and with whom. This is for comparison purposes of any evidence found. Everything you say to the officer will be written down, and this forms what is called a *police statement*. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Do not guess at details. This information will be typed up, and you will be asked to review it and sign it. Your statement may also be videotaped. You may ask the police for a copy of your statement. The police will now investigate your complaint, consult with the Crown, and decide whether to lay a charge (see: “Sexual Assault and the Legal System: A Basic Overview”, for more information on the legal system).



Things to Keep in Mind

- You may have a support person with you when the police arrive, or when you go to the police station. It is unlikely that a support person will be permitted to stay with you while you give your police statement, except in exceptional circumstances. If they are in the room, there is the potential for them to be called as a witness. They can, however, wait in another room and you may request a break to speak with them.
- You can report the sexual assault at any time: immediately following, or years after the assault.

- The police may not proceed with your complaint if they are not able to collect enough evidence to lay a charge.
- Once charges have been laid, neither the police nor you can have them dropped. Only the Crown Attorney can have the charges dropped, or changed.
- In Nova Scotia, if you are outside the Halifax area, and wish to have a forensic examination done, the police must be called. This is because there is no capacity to store the evidence. In the Halifax area, the evidence from a forensic exam may be frozen for up to six months, while you decide if you wish to involve the police (See: “Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program”).
- **THE ASSAULT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT.**



Women tell us there are a variety of reasons that they may not report to the police. Some of those reasons may include:

- Fear that they will be blamed for the assault or face revenge from the person who assaulted them;
- Concern that there are attitudes or biases of the police and/or the Courts that will impact upon them, a belief that the police will not be able to do anything, and that the accused will not be found guilty;
- Not wanting anyone to know what happened to them, feelings of embarrassment and shame regarding the assault;
- Fear of racism, homophobia or other forms of discrimination.