

Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime, 2003

At a meeting on October 1, 2003 Federal, Provincial, Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice endorsed a new Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime, 2003 that modernizes the statement of principles issued at their 1988 meeting. These basic principles continue to guide the development of policies, programs and legislation related to victims of crime. They also provide a foundation for the Policy Centre for Victim Issues' work.

In honour of the United Nations' Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime, and with concern for the harmful impact of criminal victimization on individuals and on society, and in recognition that all persons have the full protection of rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other provincial Charters governing rights and freedoms; that the rights of victims and offenders need to be balanced; and of the shared jurisdiction of federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers Responsible for Criminal Justice agree that the following principles should guide the treatment of victims, particularly during the criminal justice process.

The following principles are intended to promote fair treatment of victims and should be reflected in federal/provincial/territorial laws, policies and procedures:

1. Victims of crime should be treated with courtesy, compassion, and respect.
2. The privacy of victims should be considered and respected to the greatest extent possible.
3. All reasonable measures should be taken to minimize inconvenience to victims.
4. The safety and security of victims should be considered at all stages of the criminal justice process and appropriate measures should be taken when necessary to protect victims from intimidation and retaliation.
5. Information should be provided to victims about the criminal justice system and the victim's role and opportunities to participate in criminal justice processes.
6. Victims should be given information, in accordance with prevailing law, policies, and procedures, about the status of the investigation; the scheduling, progress and final outcome of the proceedings; and the status of the offender in the correctional system.
7. Information should be provided to victims about available victim assistance services, other programs and assistance available to them, and means of obtaining financial reparation.

8. The views, concerns and representations of victims are an important consideration in criminal justice processes and should be considered in accordance with prevailing law, policies and procedures.
9. The needs, concerns and diversity of victims should be considered in the development and delivery of programs and services, and in related education and training.
10. Information should be provided to victims about available options to raise their concerns when they believe that these principles have not been followed.