



# Common questions about the letter you have received

## Why did I receive this letter?

When police start a prosecution, their computer system automatically generates a letter addressed to the person listed as the victim of the crime. This is done because victims have a legal right to know if someone is being prosecuted. It also provides you with the necessary information to track the progress of this case, if you ask the police or prosecutor to keep you informed.

## Why did I receive the letter after the first court date?

The letter is generated after police staff enter the first court date on their computer system. Sometimes, for various reasons, victims do not receive the letter before that date. (For example, when a defendant is arrested on a Monday and remanded in custody to appear in court on Tuesday it is not possible to produce and deliver a letter before that hearing.) Despite receiving the letter after the first court date, you may still use the information in the letter to track the progress of your case.

## Will I receive automatic updates about my case?

No, you will not receive automatic updates. Victims can however, obtain updates if you ask the investigating officer, victim contact officer, prosecutor or witness assistance officer.

## How can I use the letter to exercise my rights as a victim of crime?

The letter contains four important pieces of information.

### Police reference number

In the top right corner is the Reference Number. Police use this to keep track of all information about this case. You should quote it if calling police to ask about the case.

### Accused person's name

The letter also tells you who has been charged. As a victim of crime, you are entitled to know the name of any person charged with committing an offence against you or your property. Generally, if that person is under 18, you are only entitled to his or her initials, but you can (in writing) ask the Commissioner of Police for the full name.

### Details for first court hearing

Third, the letter tells you the first court date and place. Unless you have been asked to attend court, or received a subpoena, you do not need to go. If you wish to go, it is worth contacting the prosecutor to find out what will happen on that date. The first court date may turn out not to be the trial. There can be many brief, formal court appointments before the trial date.

The courts are generally open to any interested observer. There are some situations, however, in which you would not be allowed to sit in court. One is when you are going to give evidence later in the case. Another is if the judge or magistrate has made an order closing the court. Check with the prosecutor before making the trip to court.

### Right to make a Victim Impact Statement

The letter also reminds you about your right to make a Victim Impact Statement (VIS), which is a statement about how the offence has affected you. More information on Victim Impact Statements is available from the Commissioner for Victims' Rights website: [www.voc.sa.gov.au](http://www.voc.sa.gov.au). You should ask the police investigator for a brochure and VIS form.

### Victims of domestic abuse

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and the perpetrator has been charged you may still be at risk. It is important that you apply for an Intervention Order for your safety. The Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Gateway can assist you with this (1800 800 098).

## Where can I find out more about the progress of the investigation?

If you have questions about your case, you should try to speak with the police investigator. If the investigator is not available then you should speak with a Police Victim Contact Officer or Victim Liaison Officer.

A Victim Contact Officer is available to help victims (Monday - Friday) at the following metropolitan police stations and specialist branches for police investigations:

Eastern Adelaide	(08) 8172 5917
Elizabeth	(08) 8207 9390
Holden Hill	(08) 8207 6045
Western Adelaide	(08) 8207 6421
South Coast	(08) 8392 9013
Sturt	(08) 8207 4869
Major Crash Investigation (Fatal and serious road crashes)	(08) 8207 6525
Major Crime (Homicide)	(08) 8172 5439

Police staff (sometimes called Victim Liaison Officers) are available to help victims in main police stations in regional South Australia.

Berri	(08) 8595 2020
Ceduna	(08) 8626 2020
Gawler	(08) 8522 0400
Mount Gambier	(08) 8735 1020
Murray Bridge	(08) 8535 6020
Nuriootpa	(08) 8568 6620
Port Augusta	(08) 8648 5020
Port Lincoln	(08) 8688 3020
Port Pirie	(08) 8638 4000
Whyalla	(08) 8648 8020

These officers are not necessarily full-time liaison officers; instead, they might carry out other police tasks.

Contact information for police stations can be found in the White Pages and on the SA Police website:  
[www.sapolice.sa.gov.au](http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au)

## Where can I find out about the prosecution?

Once someone is charged, the case goes to either a police prosecutor or a prosecutor from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions depending on the charge. If the police are prosecuting the case and you want more information, you should contact the local police Criminal Justice Section that serves the court where the case is being heard. For example, if the case is at the Elizabeth Magistrates Court then the prosecution file will probably be with the Elizabeth Police Criminal Justice Section.

The White Pages lists police stations. Contact information is also available on the South Australia Police website:  
[www.sapolice.sa.gov.au](http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au)

If the Director of Public Prosecutions is prosecuting the case, he may have assigned you a Witness Assistance Officer. If so, phone 8207 1529 and ask to speak to that officer. Otherwise, you can contact the Director's office:

Phone: (08) 8207 1529

Email: [dpp@agd.sa.gov.au](mailto:dpp@agd.sa.gov.au)

## Where can I find out about the court proceedings?

The Courts Administration Authority has information about the court process on its website: [www.courts.sa.gov.au](http://www.courts.sa.gov.au). For information on victims and witnesses see <http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/GoingtoCourt/Witness-Victim/Pages/default.aspx>

You can also ask about the progress of the case and the result. The Magistrates Courts operate a telephone helpline (08) 8204 2444. After the case is finalised you can ask the Commissioner for Victims' Rights for a copy of the Record of the Court Outcome.

Phone: (08) 8204 9635

Email: [voc@agd.sa.gov.au](mailto:voc@agd.sa.gov.au) and include the name of the defendant, the police reference number and court details as per this letter.

For general enquires for the District Court and the Supreme Court, phone (08) 8204 0289.