

# **State of Iowa Department of Corrections**

## **Policy and Procedures**

Policy Number: IS-CL-06  
Applicability: Institutions, CBC, Central Office  
Policy Code: Public Access  
Iowa Code Reference: 915  
Chapter 4: INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES  
Sub Chapter: CLASSIFICATION  
Related DOC Policies: OP-SOP-06  
Administrative Code Reference: 201-20.15  
Subject: VICTIM NOTIFICATION  
PREA Standards: N/A  
Responsibility: Sally Kreamer  
Effective Date: August 2023  
Authority:

### **1. PURPOSE**

To describe the procedures that shall be used by Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) staff to provide required victim notification.

### **2. POLICY**

It is the policy of the IDOC that victims of those under the care, custody or control of the IDOC shall be notified to protect their rights and safety.

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- A. Registration
- B. Notification
- C. Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE)
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### **3. DEFINITIONS – As used in this document:**

- A. Victim – A person who has suffered physical, emotional, or financial harm as the result of a public offense or a delinquent act committed in this state. Victim may also include the immediate family members of a victim, members of a victim's household, and/or witnesses.
- B. Registered – Any person having provided either the County Attorney or the IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs with the victim's request for registration, current mailing address, telephone number, and/or email address.
- C. Notification – Communicating by regular mail, telephone, or email appropriate information or papers.
- D. OVRJP - Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs
- E. ICON - Iowa Corrections Offender Network
- F. See IDOC Policy **AD-GA-16** for additional Definitions.

### **4. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Registration**

1. Victims shall become registered upon official request of a County Attorney's office, by victims' own request to the OVRJP, or to the Iowa Board of Parole. Victim registration with the IDOC is confidential per **Iowa Code Section 915**.
2. Effective July 1, 1989, the County Attorney shall be the primary registrar of victims for the IDOC. Other registration requests will be reviewed by the IDOC's OVRJP.
3. Any registration requested for offenses committed prior to July 1, 1989, shall be referred to IDOC's OVRJP for approval.
4. Victim registrations may be received by the Iowa Board of Parole or the IDOC's OVRJP. Once received, the OVRJP's designee shall process the registration in ICON under Records/Alerts Victim. Victims shall be notified of their registration status via mail and advised that they are responsible for updating their contact information.

5. The institution where the incarcerated individual is housed shall notify the victim(s) prior to the occurrence of any situation outlined in the Notification section using the **IS-CL-06 F-1, *Victim Notification Form***. Victim Notification Letter Form in ICON, under Records/Alerts - Victims.
6. All registered victim information is confidential per **Iowa Code Section 915** (This provision is exempt from the Public Records Law contained in **Iowa Code Section 22**).
7. All DOC Victim Registrations shall remain active until such time the incarcerated person/parolee/probationer discharges from all supervision statuses relative to the date the victim became registered, the victim requests to no longer be registered, the victim is deceased, the registering County Attorney requests closure, or the registration was done in error.

## **B. Notification**

1. Records staff, other staff designated by IDOC management, or the OVRJP shall be responsible for notifying registered victims of incarcerated individual releases in as timely a manner as possible. This notification shall comply with the requirements of **Iowa Code Section 915**. The OVRJP may use discretion when notifying victims who are not registered.
2. Documentation of all notifications shall be made in ICON with the creation of a notification letter under Records/Alerts - Victim or, when applicable, as a note under Records/Alerts - Victim Confidential Comments.

When providing Escape from Custody notifications, the preferred method is immediate telephone or email notification when possible. Telephone and email notifications shall be documented in ICON section "Records Alerts – Victim Confidential Comments".

3. Victim(s) shall be notified of the following situations and in the following recommended time frames. All notifications shall be documented in ICON as described in B.2. above. ICON Notification Letter.
  - a. Parole (within 5 days prior to release to the community on parole)
    - Provide approximate date of parole and the general location (city/state) to where incarcerated individual is expected to

release. For Interstate Compact Parole cases, any additional notifications (Ex., discharge, absconding, death) shall be made by the sending state.

- b. Work Release (at least 14 working days prior to release) – Provide approximate date of release and the facility where the incarcerated individual is expected to reside.
- c. Furlough/Escorted Visits (as soon as possible) – Provide approximate date and time of the escorted trip/furlough as soon as possible following approval, and the general location of said visit/furlough (city/state). This notification shall be by telephone when possible. If a victim expresses safety concerns, he/she shall be referred to the IDOC O V RJP for assistance.
- d. Escape from Custody – Provide date of escape immediately following confirmation of escape. Escape from Custody Notifications shall be made by phone or email to a registered victim. When phone or email is not possible, or a victim is not located, facility staff or the OVRJP's office shall contact local law enforcement for assistance.
- e. Discharge by Expiration of Sentence (at least 20 days prior to release) – Provide date of expected release and the general anticipated release location (city/state) where the incarcerated individual intends to reside.
- f. Death (prior to a media release) – All death notifications shall be made by the OVRJP immediately following confirmation of incarcerated individual's death. Notifications should be made by phone if possible. If not, an email or a notifications letter may be sent to a registered victim's address as an "offender status update" with instructions to contact the OVRJP.
- g. Corrections Compact (after the incarcerated individual has been transferred) – Provide the facility and state where the incarcerated individual will be housed. These notifications will NOT be made when the transfer is confidential. Any additional notifications (ex. discharges, releases, death, etc.) for Corrections Compact cases shall be the same as in-state notifications.
- h. Sentence reconsideration release (as soon as possible) – Provide approximate date of the incarcerated individual's release from

custody and the general location (city/state) where the released person intends to reside.

4. Notices shall be sent to the current address, phone or email provided by the victim. Any returned or undeliverable notices shall be noted in ICON discharges, releases, death, etc. Corrections Compact cases shall be the same as in-state notifications no further action is needed until the victim provides the IDOC with updated contact information.
5. Additional victim notifications that are required of Judicial Districts can be found in IDOC Policy **OP-SOP-06**, *Electronic Monitoring System*.

### **C. Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE)**

1. VINE is administered by the Iowa Attorney General Crime Victim Assistance Division in collaboration with IDOC.
2. Victims shall be informed, upon IDOC registration, of the option of anonymous registration with VINE.
3. Victims who receive notification through VINE may contact the IDOC OVRJP for additional information.
4. VINE registration records may also be updated through the IDOC OVRJP.
5. VINE registrations are confidential per **Iowa Code Chapter 915**.

### **D. Documentation of Victim Contact and Information**

1. All contact with a victim, whether registered or not, should be considered confidential. Staff shall document contact with a victim in ICON under Records Alerts – Victim Confidential Comments. No victim information should be documented under an incarcerated individual's Generic Note unless it is information that is already known to the incarcerated individual.
2. Specific situations that shall be documented under Records Alerts – Victim Confidential Comments include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Contact with a victim regarding safety concerns, submitted Victim Input Statements, and/or requests for information.

- b. Contact with family members of an incarcerated individual when safety and/or confidentiality are indicated.
- 3. Identifying information about a victim shall not be noted in Generic Notes.