I. PURPOSE

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

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the IDOC that victims of offenders under the care, custody or control of the IDOC shall be notified to protect their rights and safety. (4-4447)

CONTENTS

A. Registration

B. Notification

C. Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE)

D. Attendance at Parole/Work Release Hearings by Registered Victims
E. Documentation of Victim Contact and Information

III. 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 or telephone appropriate information or papers.

D. See IDOC Policy AD-GA-16 for additional Definitions.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Registration

1. Victims shall become registered upon official request of a County Attorney’s office or by victims’ own request to the Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs. 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 Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Program.

3. Any registration requested for offenses committed prior to July 1, 1989, shall be referred to IDOC Office Victim and Restorative Justice Program for approval.

4. All victim registrations shall be processed and approved through Central Office Victim and Restorative Justice Program. If a registration is received by an institution, which has not been processed by the IDOC, the registration shall be immediately forwarded to Central Office Victim and Restorative Justice Program. The registration shall be processed and entered into computerized information storage and marked confidential. After a registration has been processed, the
Director of IDOC Victim and Restorative Justice Programs, or designee, shall notify the victim with electronic copies to the County Attorney and the institution or judicial districts. Victims shall be advised that they are responsible to notify the IDOC Director of Victim Services and the County Attorney of any change of address.

5. The institution where the offender 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.**

6. All registered victim information shall be treated as confidential. Only information pursuant to **Iowa Code Section 915.17** may be released - (This provision is exempt from the Public Records Law contained in **Iowa Code Section 22**).

**B. Notification**

1. Records staff, or other staff designated by the DOC Institution per policy or practice, shall be responsible for notifying registered victims of offender releases in as timely a manner as possible. This notification shall comply with the requirements of **Iowa Code Section 915**. An entry is made in Iowa Corrections Offender Network (ICON) to reflect the date, person notified, and person performing the notification. Additionally, the victim notification document is created and maintained in ICON.

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”.

2. Victim(s) shall be notified of the following situations and in the following recommended time frames, when possible using the **IS-CL-06 F-1:**

   a. Parole (within 5 days after parole is granted) - Provide approximate date of parole and the general location (city/state) to where offender is expected to release.

   b. Work Release (at least 14 working days prior to release) - Provide approximate date of release and whether the offender is expected to return to the community where the victim resides.
c. Furlough/Escorted Funeral and Bedside Visits – 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 victim expresses safety concerns, he/she shall be referred to the IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs.

d. Escape from Custody – Provide date of escape immediately following confirmation of escape. Notifications of escape shall be made by telephone or email when possible. If victim expresses safety concerns, he/she shall be referred to the IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs, the victim’s local victim services agency, or the victim’s local law enforcement agency.

e. Expiration of Sentence – Provide date of expected release at least 14 days prior to release date, and the general anticipated release location (city/state) where the offender intends to reside.

f. Death – Provide the date the offender was taken off count. Death notifications shall be done immediately following confirmation of offender’s.

g. Transfer out of state – Provide approximate date the offender will be transferred and the general location (city/state) where the offender is approved to reside. These notifications will NOT include general location when the offender’s transfer is confidential. Additionally, Interstate Compact and Corrections Compact staff will notify IDOC Office of Victim and Restorative Justice Programs upon offender transfer and is responsible for victim notification of subsequent release, escape, death or other guidelines as defined in this policy.

h. Sentence reconsideration release – Provide approximate date of offender release from custody and the general location (city/state) where offender intends to reside.

3. Notices shall be sent to the current address provided by the victim. Any return notices shall be noted in Offender’s ICON record and no further action shall be taken until the victim advises the IDOC of a change of address.
4. All verbal and email victim notifications shall be documented in the offender’s ICON record under the confidential section “Records/Alerts – Victim Confidential Comments”.

5. Additional victim notification requirements responsibilities 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 Office of Victim Programs for additional offender information.

4. VINE registrations may also be updated through the IDOC Office of Victim Programs.

5. VINE registrations are confidential per Iowa Code Chapter 915.

D. Attendance at Parole/Work Release Hearings by Registered Victims

1. A victim registered with the Iowa Board of Parole (IBOP) has the right to appear at the offender(s) parole/work release hearing either personally, by counsel or by electronic means.

2. The IBOP notifies victims of any scheduled parole/work release hearings where the Board shall interview the offender not less than 20 days prior to the hearing.

3. The IBOP notification shall request any victim planning to attend a hearing to notify the Warden/Superintendent of their intention to attend prior to the hearing.

4. A victim may be required to attend the hearing over an electronic medium from another location when, in the opinion of the Warden/Superintendent or designee, the victim presents a threat to the security and order of the institution.
5. If a victim is denied attendance at a hearing, the IBOP shall be notified immediately.

6. To the extent possible, the Associate Warden/Security or designee shall separate victim(s) and the offender's family/friends in attendance at the same hearing. If there are any signs of conflict between victims and family/friends of offenders, the victims shall be protected until one of the parties can be safely escorted out of the institution.

7. If the hearing is conducted by videoconferencing, the IBOP shall notify victims of their right to attend and also outline procedures for the victim's attendance at the hearing.

E. Documentation of Victim Contact and Information

1. Staff shall document contact with a victim, whether registered or not. This will be documented into ICON under Records/Alerts – Victim Confidential Comments. A notation in Generic Notes is appropriate to indicate an entry was made in Records/Alerts.

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.
   b. Visitation appeal decisions related to family members who are victims of an offender.
   c. Contact with family members of an offender when safety and confidentiality are indicated.

3. Identifying information about a victim shall not be noted in Generic Notes.