

## **Law Enforcement Patrol Protocol (Overview) – Ramsey County Sexual Assault Protocol Team**

*Victim-centered: the victim's needs and wishes are strongly considered along with the interests of police and prosecutors in convicting sex offenders. Goal: Professional, compassionate and consistent response across Ramsey County.*

- Children under 13 or adolescents abused by family or household member or adult with intellectual disability: MCRC should interview: 651.220.6750, MCRC also interviews and provides medical care to non-acutely assaulted teens.

### Victim & Witness Interview

- Respond to every sexual assault victim interview with a professional, compassionate demeanor
- Find a private location to briefly interview the victim (only with him/her), limiting victim interview to information immediately needed to assess situation – especially if the victim will be going to hospital for exam, document that this interview is preliminary in nature
- Use a neutral interpreter if needed, avoid using children and other witnesses as interpreters
- Reassure the victim that s/he is safe
- If children are present, evaluate whether they need care (contact child protection if appropriate)
- Ask whether the victim is injured or needs medical attention right away
- Appropriate to tell the victim that you are sorry this happened and briefly explain the process of what will happen
- Call an advocate if the victim wishes
- Provide the complaint number and a list of victim service agencies
- Interview any witnesses immediately available
- A detailed account of the assault can be obtained with a later investigative interview
- Document the demeanor, appearance, intoxication (if any), and emotional state of the victim
- If the report is not immediate, document the reason the victim waited to report (keeping in mind that most sexual assaults are reported after a delay for several different legitimate reasons)
- Ask open-ended questions, taking care not to ask the victim to explain or justify her actions/inaction
- Ask the victim who is the first person s/he told about the assault – and interview that person
- Explain the need to collect clothing, etc and collect it
- Suggest a forensic medical examination - done up to 120 hours after the sexual assault
- Suggest a purely medical examination even if *more than* 120 hours has passed - to check for disease, pregnancy, or injury
- Warrant check procedure – consider arresting the victim only on serious felony warrant, make other arrangements on less serious warrant
- Consider not charging drug, alcohol, or other less serious offenses committed by the victim in favor of investigating the more serious sexual assault complaint

### At the hospital

- Accompany the victim to hospital – sexual assault nurse examiner will obtain verbal history and perform exam
- Officer will not be present during interview and it should not be audio recorded
- Obtain the victim's signature on medical release – available from hospital
- Collect and inventory rape kit (chart for where to pick them up at various hospitals)

***SOS Sexual Violence Services of Ramsey County (answered 24/7) 651.266.1000***

***Ramsey County Attorney's Office On Call Attorney (Saturdays 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) 651.788.1871***