**ANONYMOUS SEXUAL REPORT**

**What is Anonymous Sexual Assault Reporting?**

It is estimated that only 16 percent of all rape victims report their crime to the police. In an attempt to make it easier for the victims of sexual assault to report these offenses, and at the same time expand the Lincoln Police Department's database concerning these crimes, an anonymous reporting system has been created.

**How Does it Work**?

Victims will be able to call the Crimestoppers telephone number at (402) 475-3600, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to anonymously report sexual assaults. These victims will be assigned a number similar to the numbers we use to track Crimestoppers reports. The employee taking the call will explain that if the crime took place within the last 72 hours there may be physical evidence on the victims body or clothing that could be critical should the victim later decide to pursue prosecution. This evidence can be collected at any Lincoln area hospital and if the victim gives the hospital the sequential number they were assigned when they called in to report the crime, the evidence will be maintained by confidential number and the City of Lincoln will pay for the exam. To insure payment the hospital need only call the Crimestoppers number and confirm that Sexual Assault victim SA117 has filed a report. The employee fielding the call will authorize payment for the exam. The examination reports will only be made available for prosecution if the victim signs a release of information form. The sequential number on the form and the medical staff's testimony will be enough to connect the victim, the exam, and the anonymous report should the victim decide to proceed with prosecution.

**Will I Remain Anonymous?**

Victims should be assured that we will protect their desire to remain confidential. Employees fielding these reports by phone should accept the amount of information the caller offers; if the caller chooses not to answer some of the questions, that is acceptable. These reports will be filed in our Crime Analysis Unit and will not be made a part of a case file in records unless the victim later decides to come forward with an official report.

The Lincoln Police Department has also created a form on our web site to allow victims to fill out the anonymous report on our site. The victim may then submit this report on-line. This is the same form that will be filled out if a victim calls the Crimestoppers number.

**What Happens After I Make a Report?**

Victims will be asked to call the Crimestoppers number a week after their initial report and a month after their initial report to insure that officers reviewing the information can leave questions for the victims that might assist in an ongoing investigation. The blind reporting link also includes the offer of multi-lingual assistance in 17 languages for non-English speaking residents.

The Lincoln Police Department has an excellent working relationship with the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department, so if the incident a caller is reporting occurred on campus or outside the city, we will forward the report to the appropriate agency. Those agencies support this effort.

Victims will be asked to occasionally check Lancaster Lookout for requests for additional information concerning their reports. For example, if the Lincoln Police Department needs more information concerning a suspect mentioned by an anonymous caller, the television program would include something like this:

"(Sexual Assault) caller SA117 is asked to call Crimestoppers, officers believe they have detected a trend involving information you mentioned and they have given Crimestoppers a short list of simple questions they would like you to answer. You may, of course, remain anonymous.

**How Can Voices of Hope Help**

Voices of Hope is another anonymous reporting site and victims may wish to make contact there or call the center at (402) 475-7273, to make a report. Voices of Hope advocates will go to the Lincoln Police Department's online anonymous reporting site and assist the victim in completing the questionnaire.