

Morgan County
Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission
Morgan County Plan

Local Board/SART Overview

To meet SAFE Commission standards, Morgan County has formalized a coordinated response through the creation of a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)_convened specifically to meet the SAFE Commission's guidelines. Members of this local coordinated response collaboration include:

- Morgan County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center
- Morgan County Sheriff's Department
- West Virginia State Police
- Paw Paw Police Department
- Safe Haven Child Advocacy Center
- Valley Health – Winchester Medical Center
- Morgan County School Lead Social Worker

The local board/SART meets/plans to meet **quarterly** with the intent to:

- ✓ Share information and resources
- ✓ Identify gaps in the service delivery system
- ✓ Increase awareness on issues of sexual assault and stalking in the community
- ✓ Increase victim and community safety
- ✓ Develop professional relationships and an understanding of varying roles and responsibilities of first responders
- ✓ Develop, implement, and review county protocol to meet legislative requirements of the SAFE Commission

ADVOCACY PROTOCOL

A victim advocate provides free, confidential and non-judgmental emotional support, information, social service referrals and guidance following a sexual assault. A victim advocate's involvement will begin at the time the victim reports the sexual assault and extend beyond the point when other agencies have terminated their involvement. A victim advocate offers the victim the support needed to understand what is happening and make informed decisions.

Services can only be provided by trained advocates who have received a minimum of 32 hours of specific sexual assault advocacy training that meets the training standards established by the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services <http://www.fris.org/> .¹

The following seven advocacy services meet core service standards. The following services exist in our county:

- ✓ 24/7 advocacy, support, and accompaniment during the medical forensic exam, law enforcement investigations and court proceedings
- ✓ Information for victims about reporting/not reporting to law enforcement
- ✓ Crisis intervention and/or emotional support to victims and their families
- ✓ Referrals and coordinated services with other agencies
- ✓ Support for victims through the criminal justice system
- ✓ Replacement clothing for victims after medical forensic exams, if needed
- ✓ Protection of victim privacy and confidentiality

Advocacy services in our county are:

- ✓ Services for adolescent/adult victims are provided by Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center which will be providing services to our county.

Responding law enforcement agency will contact Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center's 24-hour hotline, 304-263-8292, to make a referral for advocacy services accessing advocacy services within the first 90 minutes of making contact with the victim. The law enforcement officer will make this referral wherever contact is being made, including at the hospital, agency office, or any other location in which the officer is responding.

If the hospital/medical facility has first contact with the victim, the nurse or emergency room personnel will contact the Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center 24-hour hotline, 304-263-8292 within the first 90 minutes of making contact, to make a referral/request the on-call advocate's presence in the hospital as the victim sees fit.

Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center's on-call advocate will respond to the hospital within 60 minutes of initial hotline phone call.

First responders will be informed of this Advocacy Protocol by:

^[1] In cases of child abuse perpetrated against an adolescent as defined by WV law, the local Child Advocacy Center may also be contacted for support and/or forensic services.

A Standard Operating Procedure enacting the Advocacy Protocol will be sent to all law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center and Valley Health (War Memorial/Morgan County and Winchester Medical Center/Fredrick County, VA) along with the protocol and flow sheets and will be accessible to all agents.

Phone number of Rape Crisis Center to Activate Protocol: Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center 304-263-8292

MEDICAL FORENSIC PROTOCOL

For medical forensic services for adolescent/adult victims within our county, services ARE PROVIDED via a letter of agreement with a medical facility from another county: *Winchester Medical Center*. Medical forensic exams are provided by SANEs who are available on-call 24/7.

Valley Health – Winchester Medical Center: 540-536-4147

Medical forensic services for adolescent/adult victims ARE NOT provided at War Memorial Hospital – Valley Health.

First responders will be informed of this Medical Forensic Protocol by:

A Standard Operating Procedure enacting the Medical Forensic Protocol will be sent to all law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center and Valley Health (War Memorial/Morgan County and Winchester Medical Center/Fredrick County, VA) along with the protocol and flow sheets and will be accessible to all agents.

**Phone number to Activate Medical Forensic Protocol: Winchester Medical Center
– Valley Health 540-536-4147**

TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOL

This protocol will be activated when a victim of sexual assault requires a medical forensic exam and cannot transport himself/herself to and from a facility that provides that care. Each county will have a responsive service system that will provide transportation services to victims of sexual assault.

- The SAFE Commission requires that this transportation protocol must include the following four core components:
 1. Accessible transportation, including the ability to transport victims with disabilities
 2. Transportation to and from the medical forensic exam regardless of the victim's ability to pay
 3. Plan for victim confidentiality
 4. Plan to return the victim to his or her point of origin (or an agreed upon safe place) after the medical forensic examination

Morgan County Transportation Plan

Overview. This transportation protocol will be activated when a victim of sexual assault requires a medical examination and does not have access to transportation and/or cannot transport herself/himself to a facility that provides the exam. Morgan County has a response team that has created a system with trained service providers who will ensure transportation is available to victims of sexual assault. As per the state SAFE Commission requirements, this protocol includes accessible transportation regardless of the victim's ability to pay and whether or not the victim wishes to report to law enforcement. The plan addresses victim confidentiality and outlines a process to return the victim to her/his point of origin or a safe location after the medical examination has been completed.

All victim information will be CONFIDENTIAL and will only be used for medical treatment and/or Law Enforcement investigation, if reported.

Protocol. When a sexual assault victim in Morgan County requires a medical forensic examination and has no transportation to a facility providing such services, the following procedures will be activated when a sexual assault is reported.

911 Call with Injuries. If a sexual assault victim calls 911 needing emergent medical care, EMS and the appropriate law enforcement agency will both respond.

EMS will transport the victim to the appropriate medical facility (Winchester Medical Center) where the victim can receive a medical forensic exam.

Law Enforcement will contact the local Rape Crisis Center's 24-hour hotline (Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center / EPEC – 304-263-8282) and request the presence of the on-call victim advocate.

Responding Law Enforcement Officer will document and report the incident. If the victim has no means of transportation to return to their Morgan County residence, the SANE nurse or victim advocate will activate the transportation protocol and request that Valley medical transport will ensure transport to the victim's residence in Morgan County or to a safe location at **no** cost to the victim.

If the victim has a disability and no means of transportation to their Morgan County residence or safe location, the SANE nurse or victim advocate will activate the transportation protocol and request that Valley Medical Transport will ensure transport home or to a safe location at **no** cost to the victim.

Victim Presenting to Morgan County Hospital (War Memorial). If a sexual assault victim reports to War Memorial Hospital (Morgan County hospital without a SANE program), requests a medical forensic exam, and does not have access to transportation, the hospital will contact the local Rape Crisis Center's 24-hour hotline (Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center / EPEC – 304-263-8292) and request the on-call advocate.

If it is determined that there is no transportation available for the victim to access (family, friend, or vehicle), the on-call advocate will discuss and exhaust option with victim as follows:

When applicable, the on-call advocate and/or the War Memorial emergency room personnel will put the victim in contact with the on-call forensic nurse examiner (FNE) from Winchester Medical Center. The FNE and victim will discuss the option of "next-day scheduling" which Winchester Medical Center routinely utilizes in certain urgent cases when the forensic examination requires the patient to travel. In this case, the FNE would specify precisely to the victim how to preserve evidence based on the nature of their case enabling them to reschedule to a timeframe wherein transportation is available.

When applicable, the emergency room department (War Memorial Hospital) supervisor can supply the victim with a taxi voucher for transportation. If the victim is comfortable with this mode of transportation, the on-call advocate can follow the taxi to the appropriate hospital.

If none of the above options listed above are appropriate, the on-call advocate or emergency room personnel will activate the transportation protocol and request that Valley Medical Transport (ambulance service) personnel to transport the victim to Winchester Medical Center to receive a medical forensic examination.

If the victim chooses not to report to law enforcement and does not have transportation to return to their Morgan County residence, Valley Medical Transport will ensure transport home or to a safe location at **no** cost to the victim.

If the victim has a disability and no means of transportation to return to their Morgan County residence, Valley Medical Transport will ensure transport home or to a safe location at **no** cost to the victim.

Call to Rape Crisis Center. If a sexual assault victim contacts a Rape Crisis Center (EPEC) after a recent assault, the on-call advocate will inform them of the medical forensic exam and Law Enforcement report/non-report options. IF the victim has emergent medical needs, the advocate will guide the victim to call 911 thereby activating the protocol outlined above. If the victim chooses to not report to Law Enforcement and would like to have a medical forensic examination completed but has no access to transportation, the on-call advocate will activate the transportation protocol outlined above.

Contact information for service personnel:

- Winchester Medical Center SANE/FNE 540-536-2361
- EPEC (Rape Crisis Center) 304-263-8292 (24 hotline)
304-258-1078 (Morgan Co.)
- Morgan County Sheriff's Office 304-258-1067
- West Virginia State Police 304-258-0000
- Town of Bath Police Department 304-258-1198
- Paw Paw Police Department 304-947-7476
- Valley Medical Transport 540-536-0082
- War Memorial Emergency Department 304-258-1234

First responders will be informed of this Transportation Protocol by:

A Standard Operating Procedure enacting the Transportation Protocol will be sent to all law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center and Valley Health (War Memorial/Morgan County and Winchester Medical Center/Fredrick County, VA) along with the protocol and flow sheets and will be accessible to all agents.

Phone number to Activate Transportation Protocol: EPEC - 304-263-8292