

Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission

Ritchie County

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24/Local Board/SART Overview

To meet SAFE Commission standards, Ritchie County has formalized a coordinated response through the creation of a local board convened specifically to meet the SAFE Commission's guidelines. Members of this local coordinated response collaboration include:

- Prosecuting Attorney
- Ritchie County Sheriff
- Family Crisis Intervention Center, Ritchie County Outreach Coordinator
- Chief Medical/ Operating Officer at Integrated Health Centers of WV
- Ritchie County 911

The local board meets annually with the intent to:

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

ADVOCACY PROTOCOL

OVERVIEW

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

^[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.

Advocacy services in Ritchie County are provided by the **Family Crisis Intervention Center (FCIC)**, Ritchie County Outreach Office, which will be offering services to our county.

- Advocates will be contacted by law enforcement, local hospitals, FCIC staff, or any other agency in need of services for victims.
- Services will be provided within an hour of the call.

First responders will be informed of this Advocacy Protocol by:

In Ritchie County, the SAFE Plan will be reviewed annually during a February meeting coordinated by the Ritchie County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Advocate. An informational session will be held in March or April for all local first responders. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office will send invitations to the session and will ensure the SAFE Plan is distributed to any first responder agencies unable to attend.

In-person follow-up with first responders will occur quarterly or as needed to ensure the SAFE Plan is understood and being communicated throughout each agency. The advocate and Prosecuting Attorney's Office will work together to encourage agencies to include the SAFE Plan in their new staff onboarding procedures.

Agencies that need access to the SAFE Plan include the Ritchie County Sheriff's Department, West Virginia State Police – Harrisville Detachment, Harrisville Police Department, Pennsboro Police Department, Ritchie County EMS, 911 Dispatch, WVU Medicine – Camden Clark. Integrated Health Centers of WV locations in Ellenboro, Smithville, and Harrisville, Lastly, the Ritchie County Health Department.

Phone number of Rape Crisis Center to Activate Protocol: 304-643-2407

MEDICAL FORENSIC PROTOCOL

OVERVIEW

Services are provided via a letter of agreement with a medical facility from another county:

WVU Medicine Camden Clark Medical Center
800 Garfield Avenue
Parkersburg, WV 26101
304-424-2111

Forensic exams are provided by physicians and SANEs available on-call 24/7.

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

In Ritchie County, the SAFE Plan will be reviewed annually during a February meeting coordinated by the Ritchie County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Advocate. An informational session will be held in March or April for all local first responders. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office will send invitations to the session and will ensure the SAFE Plan is distributed to any first responder agencies unable to attend.

In-person follow-up with first responders will occur quarterly or as needed to ensure the SAFE Plan is understood and being communicated throughout each agency. The advocate and Prosecuting Attorney's Office will work together to encourage agencies to include the SAFE Plan in their new staff onboarding procedures.

Agencies that need access to the SAFE Plan include the Ritchie County Sheriff's Department, West Virginia State Police – Harrisville Detachment, Harrisville Police Department, Pennsboro Police Department, Ritchie County EMS, 911 Dispatch, WVU Medicine – Camden Clark. Integrated Health Centers of WV locations in Ellenboro, Smithville, and Harrisville, Lastly, the Ritchie County Health Department.

Phone number to Activate Medical Forensic Protocol:

WVU Camden Clark Medical Center 304-424-2111

TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOL

OVERVIEW

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

1. 911 Call with Injuries:

If a sexual assault victim calls 911 needing emergent medical care:

- **Ritchie County Emergency Squad** will transport the victim, at no cost, to the appropriate medical facility, **WVU Medicine Camden Clark Medical Center** or another designated facility as needed.
- If the victim chooses to initiate a **police investigation**, the responding **law enforcement officer** will document the incident and stay at the medical facility, if necessary, for the safety of the victim. Law enforcement will return once the medical forensic exam is complete and transport the victim to a safe location, if needed.
- If the victim **chooses NOT to initiate a police investigation**, law enforcement will assess the immediate safety and security of the victim, provide contact information should the victim wish to file a report later, and transport the victim to a safe location, at no cost.
- **Victims with disabilities** will be transported to a safe location by **Ritchie County EMS**, at no cost to the victim.

2. 911 Call with No Injuries:

If a sexual assault victim calls 911 or contacts a **law enforcement agency** to report the assault and is safe but does **not** need emergent medical care:

- The **appropriate law enforcement agency** will be contacted, and the responding officer will inform the victim of their medical forensic exam options (whether they wish to report to law enforcement or not).
- If the victim chooses to have a **medical forensic exam** and initiates a police investigation but **does not have transportation**, the **Ritchie County Sheriff's Department** will provide transportation to the medical facility (**WVU Medicine Camden Clark Medical Center** or other designated facility), at no cost to the victim. Law enforcement will stay with the victim at the medical facility if needed or return to transport the victim to a safe location after the exam is completed.
- If the victim chooses **not** to initiate a police investigation and **does not have transportation**, the **Ritchie County Sheriff's Department** will transport the victim to the medical facility, at no cost to the victim, and return once the medical exam is completed to transport the victim to a safe location.

3. Call to Rape Crisis Center:

If a sexual assault victim contacts the **Rape Crisis Center** after an assault:

- The **Advocate** will inform the victim about medical forensic exams and law enforcement reporting/non-reporting options.
- If the victim has **emergent medical needs** or requests a medical forensic exam but does **not have transportation**, the advocate will guide the victim to **call 911**, activating one of the protocols outlined in scenarios 1 and 2.

First responders will be informed of this Transportation Protocol by:

In Ritchie County, the SAFE Plan will be reviewed annually during a February meeting coordinated by the Ritchie County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Advocate. An informational session will be held in March or April for all local first responders. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office will send invitations to the session and will ensure the SAFE Plan is distributed to any first responder agencies unable to attend.

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Phone number to Activate Transportation Protocol: 911