

# Reporting Sexual Assault



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE

2-705 Students' Union Building  
780-492-9771 | [www.sac.ualberta.ca](http://www.sac.ualberta.ca)

We know that choosing whether or not to report an experience of sexual assault can be very difficult; there are many moving parts to the process and it can be daunting when you're not quite sure what it will look like. To help you make the best decision for yourself and your needs, we've summarized some of the most important aspects of the three main reporting options typically available to U of A Sexual Assault Centre clients – choosing to not report, reporting to Edmonton Police Service, and reporting to University of Alberta Protectice Services.

Overall, we hope this handout can help provide clarity on what can be a very confusing topic. At the Sexual Assault Centre, we believe in supporting and empowering folks to make their own decisions in their recovery, and will support you in whatever your choice is. If you'd like to talk out your options and the pros & cons of reporting, you are welcome to do so with a support worker at our Centre.

## Not Reporting

Choosing to not report an experience of sexual violence to the authorities is a completely valid option. Reporting can ask a lot of someone who has experienced sexual violence, and can be a long and tiring process. Know that you are not responsible for

protecting others from the individual who caused you harm; they are responsible for their own actions. Your only responsibility is to yourself and what feels best for your own healing.

## Reporting to the Edmonton Police Service

First and foremost, it is important to know that there is no time limit for reporting a sexual assault in Canada. This means that you do not have to decide right now if you'd like to report, as it will always remain an option for you.

In terms of protocol, there is no one way that the police will proceed for any sexual assault situation – which means every situation may be treated very differently. That said, there are two general ways to contact the police to begin the process of reporting:

- **Phoning the police:** To report a sexual assault, you can call the Edmonton Police Non- Emergency line at (780) 423-4567. After letting them know what you would like to report, they will dispatch

uniformed officers to your location to take a statement from you. Please know you are welcome to coordinate with the police to meet you in the Sexual Assault Centre space if you would prefer to meet them in a private setting that is not your home. The dispatched officers will also explain to you the generalities of the reporting process, and what to expect next.

- **Report online:** It is possible to report a sexual assault to the Edmonton Police Service online if it happened more than 7 days ago. The online report can be accessed on the Edmonton Police Service website and clicking on "report a crime" and then "report a sexual assault online." The form will allow you to choose to submit the report for

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information only. This means that no investigation will take place and you will not be contacted. The information in the report is used only to identify patterns between reports or potential repeat offenders. If you choose to submit the report for an investigation, someone from the sexual assault unit will contact you within 10 business days to begin that process.

- **Going to the hospital:** You can also report a sexual assault to the police by going to a hospital to be examined. The first step is going to an emergency department of a hospital and telling the triage nurse at the desk that you have been sexually assaulted and/or you would like to see a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) nurse. SART is a team of Registered Nurses who have been trained specifically to care for people who have been sexually assaulted within the past 7 days. **By asking for a SART nurse, you are not**

## **automatically reporting the assault to the police.**

The SART nurse will ask you if you want to report to the police. If you do not want to report, the SART nurse will do a physical and genital exam to assess any injuries that may have occurred from the assault. If there is concern about sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy, the nurse will discuss treatment options such as emergency contraception or medication. **If you do decide to report, the nurse will call the police for you, and a police officer will come to the hospital to speak with you.** Once the police arrive, the officer will ask you what happened; if you are not able to give a full verbal statement at that time, the officer will usually wait until the next day. They may also give you witness statement forms and ask you to complete a written statement at home.

## Reporting to University of Alberta Protective Services (UAPS)

An alternative reporting process for University of Alberta students or staff whose experience happened on campus, in residence, or at a university related event is reporting to University of Alberta Protective Services (UAPS). Protective Services responds to incidents and complaints on campus that fall under the Criminal Code of Canada and the University Of Alberta Code Of Student Behaviour. Protective Services is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There are a few different ways to begin the process of reporting to University of Alberta Protective Services (UAPS). The first is contacting them directly at (780) 492-5050 or attending their office, situated at Education Car Park (North Campus) 11390-87 Avenue, during regular business hours and disclosing to them that you would like to report a Sexual Assault.

The second option is to connect with a staff member from the U of A Sexual Assault Centre who can help schedule a meeting between you and a UAPS investigator.

Once you have connected with UAPS, they will explain available reporting options. The process is survivor driven, which means you have full control over how your report moves forward. Some of the options available to you are (but not limited to):

- **Making a Complaint – Code of Student Behaviour (COSB):** Any person claiming physical and/or sexual harm may initiate a complaint under the COSB. This process would include:
  - Conducting an interview with the harmed party, referred to as the complainant.

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- Speaking to witnesses
- Collecting evidence that corroborates complainant and witness information
- Conducting an interview with the alleged subject of the complaint

When, based on the outcome of an investigation, sufficient evidence exists to support a provable and substantial violation of the COSB, the Director of UAPS shall refer the matter to the Office of Student Conduct and Accountability, where a Discipline Officer will review the UAPS investigation. This review would include reading the UAPS written report, viewing videotaped and/or written statements, evidence, photographs, text messages and any other included documentation and/or materials. As part of their review, a Discipline Officer may also choose to meet and interview the complainant, witnesses and the subject of the complaint for further clarification. If the evidence meets the standard of proof, based on a Balance of Probabilities, the Discipline Officer may impose sanction(s) against the subject.

- **Balance of Probabilities:** This means that when Conduct Officers make their decision, they have to be 51% certain that the event, as disclosed, occurred. This is a lower standard of proof than for criminal matters, which is proof **Beyond a Reasonable Doubt**. This means they must be 99% certain that the event, as disclosed, occurred.

When a student has been found to have committed an offence under the COSB, a Discipline Officer may impose sanctions. Based on the severity of the offence, this could mean exclusion, expulsion, conduct probation. (etc.) It is important to note that after receiving a sanction(s) the subject student may appeal that decision, through the University Appeals Board (UAB). This process can involve a

trial-like hearing and, in some cases, lawyers hired to represent subject students may cross-examine you. This can be incredibly overwhelming and therefore a support person from the U of A Sexual Assault Centre can accompany you for emotional support.

- **Information Sharing Only:** This would involve sharing your experiences with a UAPS investigator for information purposes and participation in a complaint process is not required. The benefit of this option is if you are feeling apprehensive in any way about reporting your experience, this option allows you to share your information, which may be important to UAPS. In addition, once you have shared your experience with UAPS, you can always choose to initiate a formal process later in the future.
- **Interim Measures – University Sexual Violence Policy:** This would involve non-disciplinary conditions that the University may impose on a person alleged to have committed sexual violence. Such conditions may be imposed in response to a disclosure or complaint made to UAPS. The purposes of interim measures are to ensure the safety of the person who disclosed or of the University's learning, working and University residence environment, to discourage or prevent retaliation, prevent further sexual violence and/or preserve the University's ability to conduct a thorough investigation. They are not considered sanctions under any University complaint process. The decision to impose interim measures, in most cases, will be made by the Dean of Students, after a briefing of the circumstances occurs with UAPS. The **benefit of this option** is the potential for the individual who caused harm to be made aware that their actions are not tolerated, without you having to endure the sometimes-long process of a formal investigation.