

## Victim Impact Statement

### Five purposes of the victim's right to be heard at sentencing:

1. Exercising your opportunity to speak on your own or your loved one's behalf - The offender may exercise the opportunity to have witnesses give personal testimony on his/her behalf. Likewise, the Victim Impact Statement gives the victim the opportunity to be heard.
2. Providing information to the sentencing body - The impact of the offense is an important consideration in determining the appropriateness of a plea agreement and can influence the court's decision to accept or reject a plea.
3. Improving the perceived fairness of sentencing - By sharing the impact the crime has had on their lives and voicing their views on sentencing, victims can play an essential role in the appropriate administration of justice.
4. Explaining the crime's harm to the defendant - The victim can offer the court a unique perspective on the impact of the crime.
5. Benefitting and empowering the victim.

### Three categories of content in victim impact statements:

1. Information relating to the victim and the impact of the crime on the victim and the victim's family
2. Characterizations (qualities of) and opinions about the crime and the defendant
3. Characterizations (qualities of) and opinions about the appropriate sentence

The prosecutor's office and victim service professionals can help victims prepare and submit impact statement that are useful to the prosecutor and the court throughout the process.

**To ensure that the Victim Impact Statement follows the offender through his incarceration and is read by the Parole Board, etc., send a written copy of your Statement to Dept. of Corrections via one of these options:**

Department of Corrections  
3400 Knipp Drive  
Jefferson City, MO 65109  
Fax: 573-526-2574  
Email: [victims@doc.mo.gov](mailto:victims@doc.mo.gov)

***Include the offender's name and/or Inmate Number on your correspondence.***