

Compensation for injuries suffered as the result of a crime is available through the Victims of Crime Compensation (VOCC) fund. VOCC is not available in instances of property loss or damage (including damage to a motor vehicle).

If you have been a victim of a crime relating to property loss or damage there may be compensation available to you from the following sources:

Civil Case

If the offender is known, you can sue them in the civil courts. If the claim is for an amount less than \$6,000, it is classified as a Minor Civil matter and is a fairly inexpensive process.

Lawyers are generally not allowed in the court and you have to present your own case. This would probably involve coming into contact with the offender.

Before deciding to sue the offender you should:

- Seek legal advice.
- Consider the strength of your case.
- Consider whether the offender has the financial capacity to pay.

Legal Aid is not available for these cases, but free advice is available from the Legal Services Commission on 1300 366 424 or the Legal Advice Clinic at the Adelaide Magistrates Court on (08) 8204 2444, extension 3.

Criminal Case

When an offender is found guilty of a criminal offence, the court can order him/her to pay compensation to the victim. This can include the cost of repairing or replacing damaged property.

To proceed with this you will need to:

- Inform the prosecution acting in your case of your request.
- Provide evidence such as a quote or invoice.

Discretionary Payments

These payments may be awarded by the Attorney-General where the level of emotional and/or physical trauma sustained does not meet the minimum threshold for a VOCC payment. A payment may also be awarded to victims who have incurred a small out of pocket expense as the result of a crime.

If you wish to apply for a discretionary payment, you can write to the Attorney-General (GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001) and explain your situation.

- Include some background details of the offence (e.g. a copy of the police report).
- You do not need medical evidence unless your claim relies on it.
- If you are seeking payment for a specific item, include details of the cost and how it will help you in restoring your life after the crime.

There are no set rules to awarding these payments and the Attorney-General will look at each case individually.

This fact sheet has been developed to provide general information to victims of crime. It is not intended as a replacement for medical, therapeutic or legal advice. If you have particular concerns please contact your general practitioner, counsellor or Victim Support Service.

For further information regarding discretionary payments, contact Michael O'Connell, Commissioner for Victims' Rights on (08) 8207 1969 or via email on voc@agd.sa.gov.au.

Insurance

Neither damage to a motor vehicle nor property loss or damage will be covered by either VOCC or a discretionary payment. However, comprehensive car insurance or home-and-contents insurance may cover you in these situations. Consult your policy or contact your insurer for further details.

Crime Prevention Tips

There are some simple steps you can take to increase the safety of your home:

- Consider locking doors and windows when you are heading out, or even when you may be preoccupied in the back garden or on the phone.
- Avoid leaving a spare key outside, if needing to leave a key perhaps try a trusted neighbour or friend.
- Don't forget to also lock up gates, sheds and garages.
- Keeping entrances around your home visible and free from obstruction, such as trees, shrubs etc; this provides less protection for intruders.
- Mark your valuable property with identification codes.
- Light up at night: sensor lights are very useful, and consider leaving a light or lamp on inside whilst you are out at night.
- Avoid leaving your home obviously unoccupied, avoid leaving notes on your door, try using timers for a light and radio to come on each night whilst your away, and plan for holidays by asking a trusted neighbour or person to collect your mail, take in your bin etc, and cancel any regular deliveries such as newspapers and milk.
- Family dogs can also be a good deterrent. If you don't have a dog you might consider one or you could put "Beware of the Dog" signs on your entrance ways.
- It is also useful to have an emergency plan, so if something was to happen you have a rehearsed plan and emergency phone numbers handy. It is also helpful to get to know your neighbours where possible as it's you and your neighbours that are in the best position to recognise suspicious activities in your street and you can look out for each other.

Services that may be able to offer further crime prevention support:

Home Assistance Scheme

Phone 8204 2817 or 8226 2919

If you are a person of any age with a disability, an elderly person over 65 years of age or the carer of a disabled or elderly person, you are eligible for a police officer to attend your home to conduct a security audit. There is no charge for this service. Your local council may be able to help you secure your home. Public housing tenants should contact Housing SA first.

Police Crime Reduction Section

Phone 8204 2430

The Police can provide information and advice on home, personal, business and motor vehicle security. Information is also available on the website www.police.sa.gov.au

Further Information

If you would like more information, please contact Victim Support Service on (08) 8231 5626 or view our website at www.victimsa.org