

**A Victim Impact Statement is a powerful personal account delivered by a victim, or their loved ones, to a court at the time of sentencing.** This statement can be presented either in written form or delivered verbally and is included in the presentence investigation report prepared by a probation officer. It is not an argument about guilt or innocence, nor a legal summary of the case. Rather, it is a deeply personal reflection on how a crime has affected the victim's life: emotionally, physically, financially, and psychologically.

These statements allow victims to voice their experiences, convey the ripple effects of the crime, and express their perspectives on appropriate sentencing and conditions that should be placed on the offender, such as restitution, no-contact orders, or community service requirements.

## **When to Submit a Victim Impact Statement**

Victims are encouraged to submit their statements at least **3 to 5 days prior to the sentencing hearing**. This ensures that the statement is included in the presentence report and reviewed by the judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, and probation officer before sentencing occurs.

Timely submission is crucial, as it allows adequate time for the statement to be considered as part of the official record. In most jurisdictions, late submission may still be accepted, but it risks being excluded from the report.

## **Why a Victim Impact Statement**

# Matters

Victim Impact Statements serve several purposes:

- **Give victims a voice:** They allow those harmed by a crime to share their story in their own words.
- **Humanize the crime:** Judges and prosecutors often see cases in terms of legal statutes. A personal narrative reminds them of the real people affected.
- **Guide sentencing:** Judges may take into account the victim's suffering when determining appropriate punishment or probationary terms.
- **Support healing:** Writing or speaking a victim impact statement can help victims process trauma and feel empowered through expression.

## What to Include in a Victim Impact Statement

While every situation is different, the most effective statements often touch on the following:

1. **Emotional and psychological impact:** How has the crime changed your emotional state? Do you experience anxiety, depression, fear, or insomnia?
2. **Physical effects:** Describe any injuries, physical symptoms, or medical treatment needed as a result of the crime.
3. **Financial consequences:** Were you unable to work? Did you incur unexpected medical bills, therapy costs, or property damage?
4. **Effect on relationships:** Has your connection with family, friends, or coworkers changed? Did the crime cause isolation or strain?
5. **Changes in daily life:** Have you moved homes, changed

- jobs, avoided certain places, or altered your routine?
6. **Sense of safety and trust:** Do you feel less secure in your home or community? Are you more cautious or fearful?
  7. **Recommendations for sentencing:** Share any specific outcomes you believe are appropriate for the defendant. This could include jail time, restitution, counseling, or probation conditions.

## How to Write a Victim Impact Statement

When crafting your statement, consider the following writing guidelines:

- **Be honest and personal:** Speak from your own experience. Avoid exaggeration, but do not minimize your pain either.
- **Use clear, simple language:** You do not need to use legal jargon. Judges appreciate straightforward, heartfelt accounts.
- **Focus on the impact:** The court is most interested in understanding how your life has changed as a result of the crime.
- **Stay respectful:** Avoid using hostile or offensive language. You are encouraged to express anger or sadness, but in a composed and focused way.
- **Limit speculation:** Stick to your lived experience, rather than assumptions about the defendant's intent or future behavior.

# Important Considerations

- **Public Record:** Your statement is part of the probation officer's report and will be available to the defense and to the public for 60 days following sentencing.
- **Optional Participation:** You are not required to submit a Victim Impact Statement, but doing so can provide valuable input during sentencing.
- **Delivery Methods:** You may submit the statement in writing, read it aloud during court, or have the probation officer read it on your behalf.

## Victim Impact Statement Templates

*Use these templates as a starting point. Feel free to adjust the structure or content to match your personal experience. Keep the tone authentic and respectful.*

### Victim Impact Statement Template #1

[Your Name]

[Date]

[Case Number, if known]

[Name of Defendant]

Court: [Name of the Court]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],

I am writing to share how the crime committed by [Defendant's Name] has impacted my life and the lives of those close to me. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this statement as part of your consideration during sentencing.

Since the incident on [Date of Crime], my life has been profoundly affected. Emotionally, I have struggled with [describe emotional impact, such as anxiety, depression, fear, sleeplessness, etc.]. I have had to seek help from [therapist,

support group, clergy, etc.], and I continue to work through the trauma caused by this event.

Physically, I [describe any physical injuries or ongoing health issues if applicable]. The pain and recovery process have interfered with my ability to work and take care of my daily responsibilities.

Financially, the crime has caused [lost wages, medical bills, therapy expenses, etc.]. This has placed an additional burden on me and my family during an already difficult time.

Relationships in my life have changed as a result of what happened. I find myself more isolated, less trusting, and more fearful of others. Some relationships have been strained due to the emotional weight I carry.

My daily life has been altered in ways I never anticipated. I no longer feel safe in my home or neighborhood. I avoid certain places and situations that remind me of the crime. My quality of life has diminished significantly.

I respectfully ask the Court to consider these impacts when determining an appropriate sentence. I believe that [insert recommendations, such as a specific sentence, restitution, counseling, no-contact order, etc.] would be appropriate given the circumstances.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my statement and for allowing my voice to be heard in this process.

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]

## **Victim Impact Statement Template #2 – Domestic Violence Case**

[Your Name]  
[Date]  
[Case Number, if known]  
[Name of Defendant]

Court: [Name of the Court]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am writing to share the personal impact of the abuse I endured at the hands of [Defendant's Name]. This statement reflects the emotional, physical, and psychological consequences I have experienced and continue to live with since the abuse began.

I lived in fear in my own home, a place that should have been safe. The emotional damage is still unfolding: panic attacks, nightmares, and an overwhelming sense of distrust that seeps into my daily life. I have been diagnosed with PTSD and anxiety, and I am currently undergoing therapy to begin to process the trauma.

Physically, I suffered multiple injuries including [brief description if comfortable: bruises, fractures, etc.], which required medical treatment and time away from work. I lost income and stability, and I now face financial hardship trying to rebuild.

The abuse damaged my relationships with my family and friends. I withdrew from people who cared about me because I was ashamed and afraid. It has taken time to even begin to repair those bonds.

I respectfully urge the Court to consider a sentence that includes a no-contact order, mandatory counseling, and strict probationary conditions. I fear for my safety and the safety of others if [Defendant's Name] is not held fully accountable.

Thank you for hearing my voice.

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]

**Victim Impact Statement Template #3 – DUI**

# Fatality

[Your Name]

[Date]

[Case Number, if known]

[Name of Defendant]

Court: [Name of the Court]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],

On [Date], my life changed forever. My [relation, e.g., daughter, husband, sister], [Victim's Name], was killed by the actions of [Defendant's Name], who chose to drive under the influence. This statement is not just about a legal matter, it is about the irrevocable loss of a loved one.

[Victim's Name] was [age] years old, full of life, with dreams and plans for the future. That future was stolen. My family now lives with an emptiness that cannot be described. We will never hear [his/her/their] laugh again. We missed [graduations, holidays, milestones].

Emotionally, I am a shell of the person I was. I experience grief every day and have had to attend therapy just to get through the most basic parts of life. I am on medication for depression. My family has suffered immensely, my other children are struggling with trauma, and our home has been filled with silence and sadness since that night.

I hope the Court imposes the maximum sentence allowed by law. A message must be sent that reckless, intoxicated decisions have devastating consequences.

Thank you for allowing me to share the impact of this terrible loss.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

# Victim Impact Statement Template #4 – Burglary and Invasion of Privacy

[Your Name]

[Date]

[Case Number, if known]

[Name of Defendant]

Court: [Name of the Court]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],

I am submitting this statement to explain how the burglary committed by [Defendant's Name] has impacted me and my family.

When I discovered that my home had been broken into, I was devastated. Not only were valuable and sentimental items stolen, including heirlooms that belonged to my late parents, but our sense of safety was completely shattered. Since the incident, I have struggled with anxiety and insomnia. I now have cameras in every room, locks on every door, and I rarely feel comfortable being home alone.

My children, especially my [age]-year-old, still ask if the “bad person” is coming back. It breaks my heart that they feel afraid in their own home. I have had to seek counseling for myself and my kids.

In addition to the emotional toll, the burglary caused us financial stress. Insurance did not fully cover the losses. We had to pay out of pocket to replace doors, windows, and electronics, and I lost income from missing work to deal with the aftermath.

I am asking the Court to consider restitution, community service, and counseling as part of the sentencing. A crime like this doesn't just take things, it takes peace of mind, too.

Thank you for taking this impact into account.

Sincerely,



[Your Full Name]

# Victim Impact Statement Examples

## Victim Impact Statement Example #1

Jane Divero

May 3, 2027

Case Number: 555-CR-4810

Defendant: Marcus James

Court: Riverside County Superior Court

To the Honorable Judge Alvarez,

I am writing to share how the crime committed by Marcus James has impacted my life and the lives of those close to me. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this statement as part of your consideration during sentencing.

Since the incident on October 12, 2026, my life has been profoundly affected. Emotionally, I have struggled with intense anxiety and constant fear. I've been unable to sleep soundly and often wake up from nightmares. I have had to seek help from a licensed trauma therapist and continue to attend weekly sessions to manage my symptoms.

Physically, I suffered a concussion and several bruised ribs from the assault. The pain and recovery process have interfered with my ability to work and take care of my daily responsibilities, including caring for my two young children.

Financially, the crime has caused me to miss over a month of work and pay thousands in medical bills not fully covered by insurance. This has placed an additional burden on me and my family during an already difficult time.

Relationships in my life have changed as a result of what happened. I find myself more isolated, less trusting, and more

fearful of others. Some friendships have been strained due to the emotional weight I carry.

My daily life has been altered in ways I never anticipated. I no longer feel safe in my home or neighborhood. I avoid walking alone and take alternate routes to work. My quality of life has diminished significantly.

I respectfully ask the Court to consider these impacts when determining an appropriate sentence. I believe that a custodial sentence, restitution for medical bills, and mandatory counseling would be appropriate given the circumstances.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my statement and for allowing my voice to be heard in this process.

Sincerely,  
Jane Divero

## **Victim Impact Statement Example #2**

Julie Smith  
April 28, 2028  
Case Number: 24-DV-1092  
Defendant: John Thompson  
Court: Franklin County District Court

To the Honorable Judge Simmons,

My name is Julie Smith, and I am writing to share the personal impact of the abuse I endured at the hands of John Thompson. This statement reflects the emotional, physical, and psychological consequences I have experienced and continue to live with since the abuse began.

I lived in fear in my own home, a place that should have been safe. The emotional damage is still unfolding: panic attacks, nightmares, and an overwhelming sense of distrust that seeps into my daily life. I have been diagnosed with PTSD and

anxiety, and I am currently undergoing therapy to begin to process the trauma.

Physically, I suffered multiple injuries which required medical treatment and time away from work. I lost income and stability, and I now face financial hardship trying to rebuild.

The abuse damaged my relationships with my family and friends. I withdrew from people who cared about me because I was ashamed and afraid. It has taken time to even begin to repair those bonds.

I respectfully urge the Court to consider a sentence that includes a no-contact order, mandatory counseling, and strict probationary conditions. I fear for my safety and the safety of others if John Thompson is not held fully accountable.

Thank you for hearing my voice.

Sincerely,  
Julie Smith

## **Victim Impact Statement Example #3**

Alan Rodriguez  
March 19, 2025  
Case Number: 21-FH-3735  
Defendant: Jullianne Bennett  
Court: Alameda County Superior Court

To the Honorable Judge Lin,

On August 5, 2023, my life changed forever. My daughter, Lucia Rodriguez, was killed by the actions of Jullianne Bennett, who chose to drive under the influence. This statement is not just about a legal matter, it is about the irrevocable loss of a loved one.

Lucia was 19 years old, full of life, with dreams and plans

for the future. That future was stolen. My family now lives with an emptiness that cannot be described. We will never hear her laugh again. We missed her college graduation and all the future she deserved.

Emotionally, I am a shell of the person I was. I experience grief every day and have had to attend therapy just to get through the most basic parts of life. I am on medication for depression. My family has suffered immensely, my other children are struggling with trauma, and our home has been filled with silence and sadness since that night.

I hope the Court imposes the maximum sentence allowed by law. A message must be sent that reckless, intoxicated decisions have devastating consequences.

Thank you for allowing me to share the impact of this terrible loss.

Sincerely,  
Alan Rodriguez

## **Victim Impact Statement Example #4**

Leah Grant  
February 14, 2025  
Case Number: 23-BU-2067  
Defendant: Jerome Davis  
Court: Multnomah County Circuit Court

To the Honorable Judge Carter,

I am submitting this statement to explain how the burglary committed by Jerome Davis has impacted me and my family.

When I discovered that my home had been broken into, I was devastated. Not only were valuable and sentimental items stolen, including heirlooms that belonged to my late parents, but our sense of safety was completely shattered. Since the incident, I have struggled with anxiety and insomnia. I now

have cameras in every room, locks on every door, and I rarely feel comfortable being home alone.

My children, especially my 9-year-old, still ask if the “bad person” is coming back. It breaks my heart that they feel afraid in their own home. I have had to seek counseling for myself and my kids.

In addition to the emotional toll, the burglary caused us financial stress. Insurance did not fully cover the losses. We had to pay out of pocket to replace doors, windows, and electronics, and I lost income from missing work to deal with the aftermath.

I am asking the Court to consider restitution, community service, and counseling as part of the sentencing. A crime like this doesn't just take things, it takes peace of mind, too.

Thank you for taking this impact into account.

Sincerely,  
Leah Grant

## Final Tips Before Submitting

- **Proofread:** Review your statement carefully. Read it aloud to catch any awkward or unclear parts.
- **Practice:** If you plan to speak in court, rehearse your statement a few times to stay calm and confident.
- **Ask for help:** Victim advocates or counselors can support you in writing or delivering your statement.
- **Submit on time:** Ensure that your statement reaches the probation officer or court at least 3-5 days before the sentencing hearing.