

# Sexual Assault Investigations

## 602.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the investigation of sexual assaults. These guidelines will address some of the unique aspects of such cases and the effects that these crimes have on the victims.

Mandatory notifications requirements are addressed in the Child Abuse and Senior and Disability Victimization policies.

### 602.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Sexual assault** - Any crime or attempted crime of a sexual nature, to include but not limited to offenses defined in Penal Code § 243.4, Penal Code § 261 et seq., and Penal Code § 285 et seq.

**Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)** - A multidisciplinary team generally comprised of advocates; law enforcement officers; forensic medical examiners, including sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFEs) or sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) if possible; forensic laboratory personnel; and prosecutors. The team is designed to coordinate a broad response to sexual assault victims.

## 602.2 TITLE IX OF THE CALIFORNIA EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

### General Information

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (hereafter, Title IX), 20 U.S.C §§1681 et seq., and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities. Sexual harassment of a student or employee, with includes acts of sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Title IX requires the university to take immediate action to eliminate the harassment/violence, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects. Sexual violence may constitute both sexual harassment under Title IX and criminal activity per the Penal Code.

Police investigations may be useful for fact-gathering; but because the standards for criminal investigations are different, police investigations or reports are not determinative of whether sexual harassment or violence violates Title IX. As responding police officers investigate, it is important to note that a person's conduct may constitute unlawful sexual harassment/sexual violence even if there is insufficient evidence of a criminal violation.

It is therefore important that police personnel do not dismiss or overlook behavior that violates Title IX by concluding that a criminal offense did not occur. Even if a criminal violation has not occurred, the University still has a duty under Title IX to resolve complaints promptly and equitably.

Reference: [CSU Executive Order 1095](#) - Implementation of Title IX, VAWA/Campus SaVE Act, and Related Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Legislation

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### 602.2.1 TITLE IX TRAINING

Title IX training shall be provided to all department personnel annually, as well as upon the hiring of new personnel.

### 602.2.2 TITLE IX INVESTIGATIONS

Title IX investigations and criminal investigations may occur concurrently. Title IX investigations will occur in accordance with CSU executive orders:

- [CSU Executive Order 1095](#) - Implementation of Title IX, VAWA/Campus SaVE Act, and Related Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Legislation
- [CSU Executive Order 1096](#) - Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Against Employees and Third Parties and Procedure for Handling Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Allegations by Employees and Third Parties
- [CSU Executive Order 1097](#) - Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Against Students and Systemwide Procedure for Handling Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Complaints by Students
- [CSU Executive Order 1098](#) - Student Conduct Procedures

## **602.3 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT (VAWA)**

### 602.3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) imposes obligations on colleges and universities under its Campus Sexual Violence Act ("SaVE Act") provision, Section 304.

Under VAWA, colleges and universities are required to:

- (a) Report domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking statistical data within the Clery Act annual security report (ASR);
- (b) Adopt certain student discipline procedures, such as for notifying purported victims of their rights; and
- (c) Adopt certain institutional policies to address and prevent campus sexual violence, such as to train in particular respects pertinent institutional personnel.

### 602.3.2 RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION

Although most VAWA requirements fall under the responsibility of the institution as overseen by the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, the police department plays a vital role in the implementation of these federal mandates whenever an act of sexual violence is reported and/or occurs. In as such, the university and police departments role is described in [CSU Executive Order 1095](#). Officers shall provide all victims of sexual violence with a written explanation of his or her rights and options. VAWA also prescribes standards for the investigation and conduct of student discipline proceedings in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking cases. Investigative reports taken by police officers are to be made available to the Title IX and/or student conduct hearing officers (in accordance with both federal and state confidentiality laws).

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In as such, it is imperative police officers thoroughly investigate and document all reports of sexual violence, regardless of where the incident occurred.

### **602.3.3 POLICY**

It is the policy of the CSU Police Department, San Luis Obispo that its members, when responding to reports of sexual assaults, will strive to minimize the trauma experienced by the victims, and will aggressively investigate sexual assaults, pursue expeditious apprehension and conviction of perpetrators, and protect the safety of the victims and the community.

### **602.3.4 REQUIREMENTS TO EDUCATE STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Under VAWA, new students and new employees (faculty and staff) must be offered "primary prevention and awareness programs" that promote awareness of rape, acquaintance rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. VAWA requires that training programs include:

- (a) A statement that the institution prohibits those offenses.
- (b) The definition of those offenses in the applicable jurisdiction.
- (c) The definition of consent, with reference to sexual offenses, in the applicable jurisdiction.
- (d) Safe and positive options for bystander intervention an individual may take to "prevent harm or intervene" in risky situations.
- (e) Recognition of signs of abusive behavior and how to avoid potential attacks.
- (f) Ongoing prevention and awareness campaigns for students and faculty on all of the above.

Cal Poly has a variety of educational programs to meet these requirements. The department hosts and participates in numerous public safety education/awareness programs to support the university in its public education goals.

### **602.4 POLICY**

It is the policy of the CSU Police Department, San Luis Obispo that its members, when responding to reports of sexual assaults, will strive to minimize the trauma experienced by the victims, and will aggressively investigate sexual assaults, pursue expeditious apprehension and conviction of perpetrators, and protect the safety of the victims and the community.

### **602.5 QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS**

Qualified investigators should be available for assignment of sexual assault investigations. These investigators should:

- (a) Have specialized training in, and be familiar with, interview techniques and the medical and legal issues that are specific to sexual assault investigations.
- (b) Conduct follow-up interviews and investigation.

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- (c) Present appropriate cases of alleged sexual assault to the prosecutor for review.
- (d) Coordinate with other enforcement agencies, social service agencies and medical personnel as needed.
- (e) Provide referrals to therapy services, victim advocates and support for the victim.
- (f) Participate in or coordinate with SART.

### **602.6 REPORTING**

In all reported or suspected cases of sexual assault, a report should be written and assigned for follow-up investigation. This includes incidents in which the allegations appear unfounded or unsubstantiated.

#### **602.6.1 COLLECTION AND TESTING OF BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

Whenever possible, a SART member should be involved in the collection of forensic evidence from the victim.

When the facts of the case indicate that collection of biological evidence is warranted, it should be collected regardless of how much time has elapsed since the reported assault.

If a drug-facilitated sexual assault is suspected, it is critical to the investigation that a urine sample from the victim be collected by a medical professional.

Subject to available resources and other law enforcement considerations which may affect the ability to process and analyze rape kits, other sexual assault victim evidence and other crime scene evidence, any member of this department assigned to investigate a sexual assault offense should take every reasonable step to ensure that DNA testing of such evidence is performed in a timely manner and within the time periods prescribed by Penal Code § 803(g). Generally, rape kits should be submitted to the crime lab within 20 days after being booked into evidence (Penal Code § 680).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of such testing and identify the perpetrator of any sexual assault, the assigned officer should further ensure that the results of any such test have been timely entered into and checked against both the Department of Justice Cal-DNA database and the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).

If, for any reason, DNA evidence in a sexual assault case in which the identity of the perpetrator is in issue and is not going to be analyzed within 18 months of the crime, the assigned officer shall notify the victim of such fact in writing no less than 60 days prior to the expiration of the 18 month period (Penal Code § 680(d)).

#### **602.6.2 VICTIM NOTIFICATION OF DNA STATUS**

- (a) Upon receipt of a written request from a sexual assault victim or the victim's authorized designee, the assigned officer may inform the victim of the status of the DNA testing of any evidence from the victim's case (Penal Code § 680).

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1. Although such information may be communicated orally, the assigned officer should thereafter follow-up with and retain a copy of confirmation by either written or electronic mail.
  2. Absent a written request, no member of this department is required to, but may, communicate with the victim or the victim's authorized designee regarding the status of any DNA testing.
- (b) Subject to the commitment of sufficient resources to respond to requests for information, sexual assault victims shall further have the following rights (Penal Code § 680):
1. To be informed if a DNA profile of the assailant was obtained from the testing of the rape kit or other crime scene evidence from their case.
  2. To be informed if there is a match between the DNA profile of the assailant developed from the evidence and a DNA profile contained in the Department of Justice Convicted Offender DNA Database, providing that disclosure would not impede or compromise an ongoing investigation.
  3. To be informed if the DNA profile of the assailant developed from the evidence has been entered into the Department of Justice Databank of case evidence.
- (c) Provided that the sexual assault victim or the victim's authorized designee has kept the assigned officer informed with regard to current address, telephone number and email address (if available), any victim or the victim's authorized designee shall, upon request, be advised of any known significant changes regarding the victim's case (Penal Code § 680).
1. Although such information may be communicated orally, the assigned officer should thereafter follow-up with and retain a copy of confirmation by either written or electronic mail.
  2. No officer shall be required or expected to release any information which might impede or compromise any ongoing investigation.

### 602.6.3 DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE

Any destruction of evidence related to a sexual assault shall occur only after victim notification is made as required pursuant to Penal Code § 680 and only in compliance with the Property and Evidence Policy.

### 602.6.4 DISPOSITION OF CASES

If the assigned investigator has reason to believe the case is without merit, the case may be classified as unfounded only upon review and approval of the Investigations Division supervisor.

Classification of a rape case as unfounded requires the Investigations Division supervisor to determine that the facts have significant irregularities with reported information and that the incident could not have happened as it was reported. When a victim has recanted his/her original statement, there must be corroborating evidence to support the recanted information before the case should be determined as unfounded.

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### **602.6.5 AUDITING CASE DISPOSITIONS**

The Investigations Division supervisor will ensure case dispositions are reviewed on a periodic basis using an identified group that is independent of the investigation process. The SART and/or victim advocates should be considered for involvement in this audit.

### **602.7 RELEASING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

In cases where the perpetrator is not known to the victim, and especially if there are multiple crimes where more than one appear to be related, consideration should be given to releasing information to the public whenever there is a reasonable likelihood that doing so may result in developing helpful investigative leads. The Investigations Division supervisor should weigh the risk of alerting the suspect to the investigation with the need to protect the victim and the public, and to prevent more crimes.

### **602.8 TRAINING**

Subject to available resources, periodic training should be provided to:

- (a) Members who are first responders. Training should include:
  - 1. Initial response to sexual assaults.
  - 2. Legal issues.
  - 3. Victim advocacy.
  - 4. Victim's response to trauma.
  - 5. Proper use and handling of the California standardized SAFE kit (Penal Code § 13823.14).
- (b) Qualified investigators, who should receive advanced training on additional topics. Advanced training should include:
  - 1. Interviewing sexual assault victims.
  - 2. SART.
  - 3. Medical and legal aspects of sexual assault investigations.
  - 4. Serial crimes investigations.
  - 5. Use of community and other federal and state investigative resources, such as the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP).
  - 6. Techniques for communicating with victims to minimize trauma.

### **602.9 VICTIM INTERVIEWS**

The primary considerations in sexual assault investigations, which begin with the initial call to the Dispatch Center, should be the health and safety of the victim, the preservation of evidence, and preliminary interviews to determine if a crime has been committed and to attempt to identify the suspect.

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Whenever possible, a member of SART should be included in the initial victim interviews. An in-depth follow-up interview should not be conducted until after the medical and forensic examinations are completed and the personal needs of the victim have been met (e.g., change of clothes, bathing). The follow-up interview may be delayed to the following day based upon the circumstances. Whenever practicable, the follow-up interview should be conducted by a qualified investigator.

No opinion of whether the case is unfounded shall be included in the report.

Victims shall not be asked or required to take a polygraph examination (34 USC § 10451; Penal Code § 637.4).

Victims should be apprised of applicable victim's rights provisions, as outlined in the Victim and Witness Assistance Policy.

### 602.9.1 VICTIM RIGHTS

Whenever there is an alleged sexual assault, the assigned officer shall accomplish the following:

- (a) Prior to the commencement of the initial interview, advise the victim in writing of the right to have a victim advocate and a support person of the victim's choosing present at any interview or contact by law enforcement, about any other rights of a sexual assault victim pursuant to the sexual assault victim card described in Penal Code § 680.2, and the right to have a person of the same or opposite gender present in the room during any interview with a law enforcement official unless no such person is reasonably available (Penal Code § 679.04).
- (b) If the victim is transported to a hospital for any medical evidentiary or physical examination, the officer shall immediately cause the local rape victim counseling center to be notified (Penal Code § 264.2).
  1. The officer shall not discourage a victim from receiving a medical evidentiary or physical examination (Penal Code § 679.04).
  2. A support person may be excluded from the examination by the officer or the medical provider if the support person's presence would be detrimental to the purpose of the examination (Penal Code § 264.2).

### 602.9.2 VICTIM CONFIDENTIALITY

Officers investigating or receiving a report of an alleged sex offense shall inform the victim, or the victim's parent or guardian if the victim is a minor, that his/her name will become a matter of public record unless the victim requests that his/her name not be made public. The reporting officer shall document in his/her report that the victim was properly informed and shall include any related response made by the victim, or if a minor, any response made by the victim's parent or guardian (Penal Code § 293).

Except as authorized by law, members of this department shall not publicly disclose the name of any victim of a sex crime who has exercised his/her right to confidentiality (Penal Code § 293).

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**602.10 COLLECTION AND TESTING OF BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

Whenever possible, a SART member should be involved in the collection of forensic evidence from the victim.

When the facts of the case indicate that collection of biological evidence is warranted, it should be collected regardless of how much time has elapsed since the reported assault.

If a drug-facilitated sexual assault is suspected, urine and blood samples should be collected from the victim as soon as practicable.

Subject to requirements set forth in this policy, biological evidence from all sexual assault cases, including cases where the suspect is known by the victim, should be submitted for testing.

Victims who choose not to assist with an investigation, do not desire that the matter be investigated, or wish to remain anonymous may still consent to the collection of evidence under their control. In these circumstances, the evidence should be collected and stored appropriately (Penal Code § 680).

**602.10.1 COLLECTION AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS**

Members investigating a sexual assault offense should take every reasonable step to ensure that DNA testing of such evidence is performed in a timely manner and within the time periods prescribed by Penal Code § 803(g). SAFE kits should be submitted to the crime lab within 20 days after being booked into evidence (Penal Code § 680).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of such testing and identify the perpetrator of any sexual assault, the assigned officer shall ensure that an information profile for the SAFE kit evidence has been created in the California Department of Justice (DOJ) SAFE-T database within 120 days of collection and should further ensure that the results of any such test have been timely entered into and checked against both the DOJ Cal-DNA database and the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) (Penal Code § 680.3).

If the assigned officer determines that a SAFE kit submitted to a private vendor laboratory for analysis has not been tested within 120 days after submission, the officer shall update the SAFE-T database to reflect the reason for the delay in testing. The assigned officer shall continue to update the status every 120 days thereafter until the testing is complete, the statute of limitations has run, or the SAFE kit is exempt from the update requirement (Penal Code § 680.3).

If, for any reason, DNA evidence in a sexual assault case in which the identity of the perpetrator is in issue and is not going to be analyzed within 18 months of the crime, the assigned officer shall notify the victim of such fact in writing no less than 60 days prior to the expiration of the 18-month period (Penal Code § 680).

Additional guidance regarding evidence retention and destruction is found in the Property and Evidence Policy.



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### 602.10.2 DNA TEST RESULTS

A SART member should be consulted regarding the best way to deliver biological testing results to a victim so as to minimize victim trauma, especially in cases where there has been a significant delay in getting biological testing results (e.g., delays in testing the evidence or delayed DNA databank hits). Members should make reasonable efforts to assist the victim by providing available information on local assistance programs and organizations as provided in the Victim and Witness Assistance Policy.

- (a) Upon receipt of a written request from a sexual assault victim or the victim's authorized designee, members investigating sexual assault cases shall inform the victim of the status of the DNA testing of any evidence from the victim's case (Penal Code § 680).
  - 1. Although such information may be communicated orally, the assigned officer should thereafter follow-up with and retain a copy of confirmation by either written or electronic mail.
  - 2. Absent a written request, no member of this department is required to, but may, communicate with the victim or the victim's authorized designee regarding the status of any DNA testing.
- (b) Sexual assault victims shall further have the following rights (Penal Code § 680):
  - 1. To be informed if a DNA profile of the assailant was obtained from the testing of the SAFE kit or other crime scene evidence from their case.
  - 2. To be informed if there is a confirmed match between the DNA profile of the assailant developed from the evidence and a DNA profile contained in the DOJ Convicted Offender DNA Database, providing that disclosure would not impede or compromise an ongoing investigation.
  - 3. To be informed if the DNA profile of the assailant developed from the evidence has been entered into the DOJ Databank or the federal Department of Justice or Federal Bureau of Investigation CODIS database of case evidence.
  - 4. To access the DOJ SAFE-T database portal consistent with Penal Code § 680.3(e) for information involving their own forensic kit and the status of the kit.
- (c) Provided that the sexual assault victim or the victim's authorized designee has kept the assigned officer informed with regard to current address, telephone number, and email address (if available), any victim or the victim's authorized designee shall, upon request, be advised of any known significant changes regarding the victim's case (Penal Code § 680).
  - 1. Although such information may be communicated orally, the assigned officer should thereafter follow-up with and retain a copy of confirmation by either written or electronic mail.
  - 2. No officer shall be required or expected to release any information which might impede or compromise any ongoing investigation.

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### 602.10.3 COLLECTION OF DNA REFERENCE SAMPLES

Reference samples of DNA collected directly from a victim of sexual assault, and reference samples of DNA collected from any individual that were voluntarily provided for the purpose of exclusion, shall be protected as provided in Penal Code § 679.12 (Penal Code § 680).

### 602.11 DISPOSITION OF CASES

If the assigned investigator has reason to believe the case is without merit, the case may be classified as unfounded only upon review and approval of the Investigations Division supervisor.

Classification of a sexual assault case as unfounded requires the Investigations Division supervisor to determine that the facts have significant irregularities with reported information and that the incident could not have happened as it was reported. When a victim has recanted his/her original statement, there must be corroborating evidence that the allegations were false or baseless (i.e., no crime occurred) before the case should be determined as unfounded.

### 602.12 CASE REVIEW

The Investigations Division supervisor should ensure case dispositions are reviewed on a periodic basis, at least annually, using an identified group that is independent of the investigation process. The reviews should include an analysis of:

- Case dispositions.
- Decisions to collect biological evidence.
- Submissions of biological evidence for lab testing.

The SART and/or victim advocates should be considered for involvement in this audit. Summary reports on these reviews should be forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police.