



Canadians Victimized Abroad Working in Partnership with Consular Affairs

**Canadian Association for Victim Assistance (CAVA)
Conference**

**Mississauga, ON
October 23, 24, 25, 2006**

**Beth Heinze
Policy Centre for Victim Issues**





Canadians Victimized Abroad

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues – Department of Justice Canada

- Criminal law policy and law reform with a “victims’ lens”
- Research, consultation, public information, P/T liaison
 - Collaboration with P/T Directors of Victim Services
 - Collaboration with other federal departments and information sharing to ensure a consistent approach to victim issues
 - Administers the Victims Fund (currently \$2M per year) to provide grants and contributions to governmental (P/T) and non-governmental organizations to support initiatives to improve the justice system’s response to victims
 - Provides financial assistance to victims to attend National Parole Board hearings of the offender who harmed them (launched November 1, 2005).





Canadians Victimized Abroad

Overview of Presentation

- **What happens when a Canadian is victimized abroad?**
- **What is the role of Consular Affairs, and what is not their role?**
- **Number of Canadians victimized abroad**
- **New federal programs**
- **A comparison with the American program**
- **Training for Consular Officers**





Canadians Victimized Abroad

Canada's presence abroad includes:

- 273 points of service in approximately 180 countries

Canadians Travel

- over 8 million trips overseas
- over 28.4 million same day visits to the United States
- close to 2 million Canadians live abroad
- same problems abroad as at home, but more difficult to resolve





Canadians Victimized Abroad

If a Canadian becomes a victim of a crime in a foreign jurisdiction ideally they should:

- Contact the nearest Canadian embassy, consulate or consular agency for assistance
- Contact local police to report the incident and obtain immediate help with safety concerns
- Request a copy of the police report





Canadians Victimized Abroad

What is the role of Consular Affairs?

Emergencies

- Arrange help in a medical emergency or assist in the event of a death providing a list of local doctors and hospitals
- Comfort and assist victims of robbery and other violence
- Help find missing persons and abducted children

Legal Issues

- Provide guidance on sources of information about local laws and regulations
- Seek to ensure that Canadians are treated fairly under the host country's laws if they are arrested or detained
- Provide assistance if a child has been abducted and taken to another country
- Notarize documents (fees apply)





Canadians Victimized Abroad

What is the role of Consular Affairs (cont.)

Other Issues

- Extend the period of validity in a limited-validity passport (fees apply)
- Add a married or conjugal name to a passport (fees apply)
- Issue a statement in lieu of a certificate of non-impediment to marriage abroad (fees apply)
- Provide an emergency loan, but only as a last resort and subject to strict rules (fees apply)
- Transfer funds (fees apply)
- Contact relatives or friends to assist by providing money or airline tickets
- Contact next of kin, with appropriate authorization, in the event of an accident or detention by police
- Accept citizenship applications
- Provide advice about burying a Canadian abroad or repatriating the remains to Canada
- Contact next of kin in case of death
- Request that local authorities investigate suspicious circumstances in the event of an alleged or apparent crime or death





Canadians Victimized Abroad

Consular Affairs does not provide the following services:

Legal Issues

- Provide legal advice
- Obtain a criminal record check
- Post bail, pay fines or pay legal fees
- Secure release from detention or prison
- Take possession of an abducted child
- Enforce a Canadian custody agreement overseas to compel a country to decide a custody case
- Investigate a crime or death
- Ask local authorities to give preferential treatment to Canadians





Canadians Victimized Abroad

Consular Affairs does not provide the following services (cont):

Other Issues

- Provide compensation or reimbursement for delayed or cancelled travel
- Pay hotel, medical, travel or other expenses
- Store personal effects or search for lost items
- Acquire local permits or licences on behalf of Canadian citizens, including foreign visas or work permits
- Assist with job hunting
- Help find an apartment or house
- Accept mail on behalf of a Canadian citizen
- Issue pension or social security cheques
- Perform marriage ceremonies
- Pay the burial, cremation or repatriation costs of a deceased Canadian





Canadians Victimized Abroad

- In 2005/2006, 262 reported cases of Canadians victimized abroad
- Five categories of violent crime were identified by PCVI
 - Homicide
 - Sexual assault
 - Domestic violence
 - Threat of personal violence
 - Child abuse





Canadians Victimized Abroad

- In partnership with Foreign Affairs Canada, the Policy Centre for Victim Issues is developing training and awareness to educate consular officers in specialized assistance for victims of crime.
- Two steps:
 - Development of training manual for consular officers
 - In person training of consular officers by content experts





Canadians Victimized Abroad

What are other Western countries doing to assist their nationals victimized abroad?

- United States
 - Victim Assistance Specialist within Dept. of State
 - Four subject experts deliver training
 - Training Manual
- United Kingdom
 - Similar services as offered by Canadian Consular Officers
 - No formal victim assistance training, to date

Not aware of other jurisdictions formally training their Consular Officers in victim assistance.





Canadians Victimized Abroad

Victim Assistance Training for Consular Officers

- Equip Canadian consular officers with an understanding of the particular and special needs of victims of violent crime, especially Canadians who are victimized abroad
- Develop a Resource Guide/Training Manual for Consular Officers
- Develop a training component for Consular Officers
- Development of public education materials including pamphlets, fact sheets and website for use by Canadians victimized abroad
- Embassies, consulates to develop pamphlets on available services and criminal justice system in host country





Canadians Victimized Abroad

- The Policy Centre for Victim Issues continues to work closely with our colleagues at Foreign Affairs Canada, to improve the experience of victims of crime and particularly Canadians who are victimized abroad.
- Questions?
- Thank you.





Canadians Victimized Abroad

Contact Information:

Beth Heinze

Policy Analyst

Policy Centre for Victim Issues

284 Wellington Street

Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Phone: 613-954-1392

Fax: 613-952-1110

Email: beth.heinze@justice.gc.ca

