

Frequently Asked Questions: Reporting Sexual Assault in Spokane

You have multiple reporting choices:

1. Dial 911 for immediate assistance, especially in cases where the assault just occurred, if you have injuries, or safety concerns.
2. Visit an emergency room, where you can tell a professional about the assault and receive medical care and a forensic exam.
3. Visit [Seek Then Speak Washington](#) to complete a self-guided interview in “Speak,” which generates a pdf report that you can email to SPD:
SPDRecordsDataEntry@SpokanePolice.org.

For more information about reporting through Seek Then Speak, see the FAQs below.

Q: What if I’m worried about telling others about my assault?

A: Many survivors have concerns about reporting the assault, such as fear of not being believed, worry about proof, or concerns about the perpetrator’s relationship to them. It’s important to know that all reports are taken seriously, and there are trained professionals to guide you through the process. If you wish to speak with someone about your concerns, confidential advocates are available at local agencies such as Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), YWCA, and Mujeres in Action (MiA).

Q: If I seek medical care, do I have to report to law enforcement?

A: No, it is your choice to report to law enforcement. You can receive general medical care following an assault with or without choosing to get a sexual assault kit (SAK) also known as a Forensic/SANE Exam. You don’t have to decide which choice you want before you go to the hospital. Staff at the hospital can help with some of your decision making. Also, you don’t need to make a police report to receive a forensic exam, you can complete the SAK and then report when you are ready.

Q: The assault occurred a few days ago and I’ve showered since, is it too late to have a sexual assault kit done?

A: While it is true that evidence is best collected within 120 hours of the assault (5 days), you can still seek general medical care following an assault. If you have already taken a shower or cleaned up, it does not mean that you cannot complete a sexual assault kit.

Q: I don’t have any bruises or injuries from the assault. Does that mean there isn’t enough proof?

A: Most sexual assaults do not result in external injuries. It’s important to still receive medical attention to check for internal injuries. Medical care following an assault also includes a physical exam to determine any injuries, tests for sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), medication to prevent HIV and other STIs, and emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy. Toxicology testing is only done as part of a forensic exam, if you think you were drugged, please tell your doctor.

Q: Where do I go for an exam?

A: In Spokane County the following hospitals provide sexual assault exams: Sacred Heart Medical Center (Adult and Pediatric), Deaconess Hospital (Adult and Pediatric), Providence Holy Family

Hospital (Adult), and Valley Hospital (Adult and Pediatric) all offer forensic exams. For more information about SAKs, visit www.wasafe.org.

Q: How does the reporting option work?

A: The “Speak” feature asks you questions to gather important information about the assault. After finishing, you can download your answers as a PDF. Seek Then Speak is not able to send your report, it only allows you to download it. You can keep this report for yourself or email it to the Spokane Police Department at SPDRecordsDataEntry@SpokanePolice.org . If you would like officer contact, you can call Crime Check at (509)456-2233.

Q: What happens after a PDF report is submitted?

A: SPD’s Special Victims Unit (SVU) will review the initial report to determine next steps, and an advocate will reach out to discuss what outcomes you are hoping for and offer support.

Q: What are the benefits of using this reporting option?

A: The tool helps explain why questions are asked, how the information will be used, and what survivors’ rights are throughout the process. This can help you prepare for the in-person interview and investigation, if you decide to provide the report to law enforcement.

Q: Can I report without starting an investigation?

A: You can request to simply submit your report without triggering an investigation, SPD will follow the victim’s wishes whenever possible. However, there are exceptions, such as cases involving very young or elderly victims, serious injuries, serial offenders, or intimate partner violence.

Q: Will a Seek Then Speak report always lead to an investigation?

A: Not necessarily. SPD carefully reviews each report to see if there’s enough information to open an investigation. It depends on the details you provide, the nature of the incident, and related laws.

Q: How is my privacy protected?

A: No information is stored or uploaded to the Seek Then Speak website. Report data is temporarily stored on your device, so it is recommended that you clear your device’s history after submitting a report to maintain your privacy. It is also important to note that once you send your PDF to SPD, it becomes a part of the official police record accessible by legal parties if the case goes to court. It will also become part of their public record. This means you or a member of the community may request a copy of the record that will have names and other identifying information removed for privacy, in accordance with the Public Records Act. While initial submission steps offer some confidentiality, complete privacy cannot be guaranteed once it becomes part of the legal process.

Q: Can I report anonymously through Seek Then Speak?

A: Yes, you can submit an anonymous report. You decide how much information you choose to share. However, please note, that anonymous reports can’t be used to investigate or prosecute.

Q: Who can I contact with questions about submitting a Seek Then Speak report?

A: You can contact a Crime Victim Advocate at VictimAdvocate@spokanepolice.org for any questions relating to submitting a report. Please do not send reports to this email.