

Police work with victims of property crime – between kindness and efficiency

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The authors examine why police officers have recently dealt more intensively with the reactions of victims of property crime, how to help them and how victims assess their work. They discovered a wide variety of reasons: from pure crime investigation (victims are a good source of information for the investigation of a case and for the possibility of preventing future victimisation), psycho-social (victims expect police officers dealing with their case to help them to recover their psychological balance) to strategic (satisfaction of victim with investigation proceedings can be an important indicator of the efficiency of police work, which for long has been unable to boast a high clearance rate of property crimes). A relatively high appraisal of police work by victims of property crimes is consistent with the results of prior domestic research studies. What contributed to a high appreciation of the professionalism of police proceedings by victims of property crimes is not only their assessment of the professional approach to a crime scene investigation and the collection of relevant information at the time of reporting a crime and the subsequent investigation, but also the kindness of police officers at the first contact, the feeling that information from the victims have been valuable to the police, their advice on victims' self-help, providing further information, the progress of the investigation; in brief, all that is supposed to calm a victim. It can be concluded that the new strategic orientations of the police in dealing with victims have produced some results and that a different approach towards victims of property crime can also be noted. At the level of the implementation, there are still some shortcomings, which can be eliminated by training in communication skills and by the dissemination of additional (victimological) findings, resulting from this research study.

Key words: victims of crime, assistance to victims, property crime, police proceedings, assessment, police officers, work with victims of crime

UDC: 351.74-051: 343.7-058.6