

The reporting, investigation and court process for victims of sexual violence

For more advice, videos, and resources visit sexualviolence.victimsinfo.govt.nz



Sexual assault happens

It's your choice whether or not to tell police what happened to you.



Report assault to police

You can do this over the phone or by going to a police station.



Police investigation

It's hard to say how long the investigation will take, however police will keep in touch with you.

The decision whether to arrest the suspect and prosecute will be based on a number of factors including all the evidence available and other considerations.

Arrest and charging



It could be months or more than a year between arrest and trial

Defendant will plead guilty or not guilty

During the trial, the person accused of the crime is called the defendant

Not guilty plea

The defendant can choose between a jury or judge-alone trial (generally it will be a jury trial).



1 year (or more)



Trial

- You can be shown around the court and meet the prosecutor before the trial.
- Average length of trial is 2-4 days
- You'll need to give evidence at court.

During the trial, the victim is called a witness. As a witness, you can choose to pre-record your cross-examination before the trial.



Jury or judge decides on the verdict (within hours)



Verdict

Not guilty of all charges

- Defendant free to go

Hung jury

- Jury can't agree
- May be another trial

Guilty

- Found guilty on some or all charges



4+ weeks

Sentencing

- The judge decides what happens next to the defendant, taking into account a number of factors including the impact on you.
- Your victim impact statement is the way to tell the judge this. You may be able to read it out in court.
- If you are concerned about your safety you can ask for a protection order to be part of the sentence.

Defendant may appeal

Post-sentence

If you are on the Victim Notification Register, you will be contacted in case of parole etc