

## CRIME SCENE CLEANUP

(18 P.S. §11.103 & 18 P.S. §11.107 and 37 Pa Code §411.11)

### Who?

Anyone, including a landlord or a property manager, who assumes the responsibility to pay for the cleanup of the crime scene.

**NOTE:** The person who assumes the obligation for crime scene clean up may not seek reimbursement from the direct victim's family.

### What?

The award amount is \$500 for each crime-scene. This amount is over and above the \$35,000 maximum award. Multiple crime scenes could be considered for crime-scene cleanup if each of the sites are identified in the police report.

This benefit is intended to compensate for the reasonable and necessary costs for cleaning a *private residential crime scene*. A private residence includes a house, apartment, condominium, mobile home or other personal living space.

Cleaning means to remove or attempt to remove blood and stains caused by bodily fluids, food, paint or other materials used to deface property within a private residence, or other dirt and debris caused by the processing of the crime scene. **NOTE: It does not include costs to replace damaged property.**

#### Eligible expenses:

- The cost of cleaning supplies purchased for cleaning the scene.
- The cost of any necessary equipment purchased or rented.
- The cost of professional labor for cleaning the crime scene. The Program cannot compensate to reimburse a friend, family member, or other individual for clean-up labor.
- Painting may only be considered if it is used to “remove” bloodstains. Reviewed on a case by case basis.

#### Ineligible expenses:

- Motor vehicles and locations other than a private residence are not eligible.
- Repair or replacement of damaged property is not reimbursable.

### How?

If the claimant is filing for crime scene cleanup the following information must be provided:

1. Copies of all itemized bills and receipts related to the crime-scene cleanup. These must be in the name of the claimant and include the date(s) of service, the name, address and telephone number of the provider of the services and/or products.
2. In a homicide, if the claimant received any benefits as a result of the death of the victim, such as life insurance, a copy of the benefit statement must be included. The statement must include the name, address, and telephone number of the company, the policy number, and the amount of the benefit and to whom the benefit was paid. Such benefits may be offset from an award.

**Please Note: A victim or claimant filing for crime scene cleanup is *no longer required to file with their homeowners or renters insurance.***

### *Crime Scene Cleanup Q & A*

- Q** A man is stabbed in his apartment. The landlord agrees to take care of the cleaning of the crime scene. Can he file with VCAP for crime scene clean up?
- A** *Yes. A landlord or any other individual who assumes the obligation or who pays for the crime-scene cleanup may be eligible for reimbursement. Since a person who assumes the obligation for crime scene cleanup may not seek reimbursement from the direct victim's family, they must accept VCAP's payment as payment in full. However, if the claim was denied by the Program, then they could seek reimbursement from the victim or family.*
- Q** A husband and wife are murdered in their home. Is the claimant eligible to apply for the \$500 crime scene cleanup for each victim?
- A** *No. The entire residence is considered one crime scene. Therefore, the VCAP would pay a maximum of \$500.*
- Q** A woman is stabbed in her home and runs across the street to her neighbor's home for help. Both homes require crime-scene cleanup to remove blood stains. Are the victim and the neighbor eligible for crime-scene cleanup expenses?
- A** *Yes. Both homes are considered crime scenes. Each would be eligible for the reimbursement for crime scene expenses up to \$500 per crime scene, given that both scenes were listed in the police report.*
- Q** A victim is raped in her car. Is she eligible for crime-scene cleanup benefits?
- A** *No. This benefit is intended to compensate for the reasonable and necessary costs for cleaning a private residential crime scene. A car is not considered a private residence, even if the victim is homeless.*
- Q** A man's mailbox was vandalized and defaced with racial epitaphs. Is the man eligible to file a claim for compensation?
- A** *No. The crime scene clean up benefit is intended to compensate for the costs of cleaning a private residential crime scene. The mail box is considered personal property, which is not covered under VCAP and it is not within the private residential residence.*
- Q** A family's house is egged. Can the owner apply to VCAP for the costs to have the house power washed by a professional?
- A** *No. The crime scene clean up benefit is only to clean the inside of a private residential crime scene.*
- Q** A woman is raped and assaulted in her apartment by her ex-boyfriend. After committing this crime, the offender goes into the victim's kitchen and smears food on the walls, cabinets, and floors. Is the cost to clean the kitchen of the food stains an eligible expense under crime scene clean up?
- A** *Yes.*

**Q** A man's home is burglarized. Before leaving the home, the offender spray paints derogatory words on the victim's living room walls. Can the victim apply to VCAP for the costs of paint he purchased to paint over the words?

**A** *Most likely, yes. Claims submitted for the purchase of paint to "clean" a stain are reviewed on a case by case basis.*