

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL DIVISION



The Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) Division delivers victim-centered advice and advocacy through comprehensive, independent representation to sexual assault victims and domestic violence victims worldwide, assists them in obtaining support and recovery resources, and promotes greater confidence in the military justice process and the United States Air Force.

SVCs represent victims at every step of the military justice process to enforce their rights; SVCs represent victims at law enforcement interviews, trial and defense counsel interviews, every pre-trial hearing and in trial. SVCs enforce victims' rights to safety, privacy, and right to be treated fairly and respectfully. SVCs engage with base leaders and other decision makers to ensure that a victim's voice and choices are heard.

SVCs are attorneys who form a protected attorney-client relationship with the victim, so that they can talk about every concern privately.



“During the most stressful, most discouraging, most painful experience of my life, my SVC was there to guide me. My SVC didn't just file papers; he knew the best strategies and always said things in exactly the right way so I could understand. I owe him my sanity.”

SVCs are supported by Special Victims' Paralegals (SVPs). Together, their primary duty is to represent the client. The SVC/SVP chain of command is independent from every base chain of command. SVCs/SVPs provide a broad range of legal assistance, represent the victim in other related proceedings, such as a separation or parole board and can work with local authorities when a case is not prosecuted by the military.

Which victims can be given an SVC upon request? In most cases, clients are victims who are Active Duty, Reserve, or Air National Guard members. Victims who are dependent spouses or children and retirees can be represented by an SVC, upon request, if the accused is subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). DoD civilian employees can be represented by an SVC, upon request, if the accused is subject to the UCMJ and there is a connection between the assault and the victim's workplace. Importantly, any other sexual assault victim or domestic violence victim can request an SVC by making an "Exceptional Circumstances Request" which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact your servicing SVC office for additional guidance.

“My SVC is amazing. She helped me out so much by explaining everything when I didn't understand it. She was always there when I needed her, and she supported me through the whole process. She let me move at my own pace. She never pushed me to make a quick decision.”



SVCs can also represent clients in post-trial parole and clemency hearings, and in certain appellate hearings.

Who does a victim ask to get an SVC?

A victim can always call or visit a Special Victims' Counsel's Office. A victim can ask military law enforcement members, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Family Advocate Program members, chaplains, members of the legal office, or Victim Witness Assistance Program advocates.



“Of all the programs that exist with regards to sexual assault in the military, the SVC program is by far the most important one... Without my SVC, I would have felt I was drowning and powerless to have my voice heard.”