

We can also tell our friends and neighbors how vital this service is to counter the indignities of incarceration and to help our fellow human beings re-enter our society.

Our enthusiasm to expand the work of PVS may bring us opportunities to speak to religious, social or civic organizations or submit an article about PVS visiting, inviting anyone interested to inquire about volunteering, or soliciting financial support for PVS.

- Focus on the mission and its benefits
- Ask a trusted mentor or PVS staff to review your submission beforehand.

Tip: If anyone should ask you to submit an article, the PVS national office has approved templates for articles to promote the work of PVS.



PVS Policy: _____ **Handle Emergencies According to Guidelines**

Emergency procedures

The following situations are considered emergencies. If either occurs, use the emergency procedure described below.

- 1. Escape plans or contact from escaped prisoner**
If you learn of any escape plans, or if an escaped prisoner contacts you, do not assist in any way. Inform the prisoner you cannot be involved and follow the Emergency Procedure.
- 2. Life-threatening situations**
If you learn that the life of a prisoner or prison staff member is in danger (potential suicide/assault) follow the Emergency Procedure.

Emergency Procedure

- 1. Call the PVS national office: 215-241-7117.** If you do not reach anyone there, leave a message. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.
- 2. Call the executive director on the director's cell phone.** Currently, the PVS executive director is Molly Clifford and her cell phone number is 585-233-3699.
- 3. If you have not reached someone on the PVS national staff within four hours, call the prison and ask to speak with the executive assistant to the warden or the warden's secretary (during weekday office hours) or the duty officer (during evening and weekend hours).** If you are asked whether your call is about a prisoner, just say you are calling about a PVS matter that needs to be dealt with immediately by the executive staff or duty officer.

Other serious situations

Sexual abuse or sexual assault. If a prisoner informs you that she or he has been a victim of sexual abuse or sexual assault, or if you yourself experience sexual abuse while visiting, notify the PVS national office immediately to receive counsel and assistance with the reporting process. As discussed earlier in the section about BOP volunteer training, volunteers are encouraged to report such

matters immediately. It is PVS's experience that this requirement should be discussed and discerned with PVS staff before being elevated. This policy is in support of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

Safety. If you are concerned about the safety of any person you encounter, discuss it with another PVS visitor and, if necessary, contact the PVS national office. Do not keep concerns to yourself.

Many concerns are not about rules or procedures, but how to handle a difficult situation with a prisoner. Visitors often find themselves dealing with negative or traumatic information and need to process the burden that has been shared with them. Visitors may also find themselves in a compromising situation and only gradually realize that they have been "played." Whatever your concerns, reach out and discuss them with another experienced visitor in confidence. If you are not fortunate enough to have seasoned visitors around you can talk with, pick up the phone and talk with the executive director or the visitor coordinator. We're all in this together, we're all committed, and we need each other to do this important work. Remember, you are part of the PVS family.