



# Victim's Legal Counsel Organization



***“The Marine Corps Victims’ Legal Counsel Organization (VLCO) is fully committed to provide legal advice and representation to victims of sexual assault and other crimes, and to protect victims’ rights at all stages of the military justice process.”***

## **What is a Victims’ Legal Counsel (VLC)?**

- VLCO services are primarily intended for active duty military members and reservists on active who are victims of sexual assault; however, eligible victims of other crimes in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) may also seek assistance from a VLC. In addition, dependents and retirees are eligible for VLCO services.
- Marine Corps VLC are judge advocates, who are highly qualified attorneys with military justice backgrounds, and who have completed a certified victims’ advocacy course. The VLCO chain-of-command is functionally independent of convening authorities, staff judge advocates, Legal Services Support Section (LSSS) OICs, trial counsel, and defense counsel. VLC are under the supervision of, and report to, the OIC, VLCO, who reports directly to the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC).
- VLCO services will supplement, not replace, existing victim support services, including assistance currently provided by the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), Sexual Assault Prevention & Response (SAPR) Program, Family Advocacy Program (FAP), Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), and Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Victim Advocates (SAPR VAs).
- If you choose to retain a VLC, you and the VLC will form an attorney-client relationship so the VLC can best assist you. Communication with the VLC will be confidential.
- VLC provide victims an overview of the military justice system, including; investigation of crimes and roles and responsibilities of the convening authority, trial counsel, defense counsel, and investigators; purpose of the Article 32 hearing; preferral and referral of charges; trial procedures; and evidentiary matters.
- VLC assist victims to understand legal options including: obtaining restraining orders and military protective orders; making restricted versus unrestricted reports of sexual assault; and obtaining testimonial or transactional immunity regarding collateral misconduct before testifying against the accused in the case.
- VLC may represent victims of crime in the military justice process. Detailed VLC attend interviews of the victim investigators, trial counsel, defense counsel, and others. They represent the interests of the victim in court by writing and arguing appropriate motions for relief.
- Location: We are located in the 22 Area, building 22161, second deck.
- To set up an appointment with a VLC at Camp Pendleton, call (760) 725-8521.