COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ABOUT WITNESS SUPPORT
AT THE CORNWALL PUBLIC INQUIRY

Q: What is Witness Support?

A: Witness support provides assistance to those who are called as witnesses at the Cornwall Public Inquiry by providing witnesses with: Orientation to the physical setting of the Inquiry room, explaining what to expect from the hearings processes, arranging or providing escort to and from the Inquiry on testimony day, escorting individuals to a private witness room during breaks in testimony, ensuring provision of refreshments during lunch breaks, touching base to ascertain well being after testimony, informing witnesses about delays in bringing them forward to testify and liaison with counselling support if witnesses are interested in obtaining counselling.

Q: Who can ask for Witness Support?

A: Anyone who will testify as a witness at the Cornwall Public Inquiry. Witnesses will be told that they are witnesses by Commission Counsel at the Cornwall Public Inquiry. Witness Support is also available for informal testimony.

Q: Who provides Witness Support?

A: A trained professional person at the Cornwall Public Inquiry who is neutral and who will provide the help that a witness requests, within scope of the services available from Witness Support. Service in English or French is available.

Q: Who pays for Witness Support?


Q: How is Witness Support different from Counselling Support?

A: Counselling Support for those affected by the Cornwall Public Inquiry gives the opportunity for an individual to receive therapy within a personal plan. Such plans usually cover a longer time period and include sessions with qualified counselling professionals. Although many affected by the Cornwall Public Inquiry are witnesses, Counselling Support is also provided to those affected who are not witnesses. Witness Support is more focused on the actual time when a person provides testimony as a witness. The services provided are structured to increase comfort and provide information for the witness process. However, no therapy or counselling is provided as part of Witness Support.
Q: Can witnesses have both Counselling Support and Witness Support?

A: Yes. These types of supports provide different kinds of help so witnesses can have both if they want. Counselling Support has been available to anyone affected by or participating in the Cornwall Public Inquiry. However, general intake for Counselling Support ended August 31, 2008 and ended October 22, 2008 for those using Witness Support in either Phase 1 or informal testimony.

Q: If someone had Witness Support, does this mean they got Counselling Support?

A: No. A person was allowed to choose to have Counselling Support but was not required to do so.

Q: What are the first steps for getting Witness Support?

A: If you are a witness at the Cornwall Public Inquiry, call the Cornwall Public Inquiry at 613.938.2461 and indicate you are interested in Witness Support. Leave a number where you can be reached and you will be contacted by telephone by a Witness Support worker to discuss on a confidential basis what can be provided. If you decide to go on and access some or all of the services of witness support, you can set up arrangements with the Witness Support worker. At this point, the Witness Support worker will need to verify that you are a witness by contacting Inquiry Commission Counsel.

Q: How confidential is Witness Support?

A: The fact that you called to get information about witness support will be kept confidential. If you decide to proceed with some or all services, there will need to be verification that you are a witness or are participating in informal testimony. This will be done discreetly within the Inquiry. The Inquiry will not indicate publicly that a person is using Witness Support services. However, it may become apparent if the Witness Support person is providing escort or other services that would occur in a public setting.

A decision to use Witness Support is up to each witness. Witnesses can discuss Witness Support with the Witness Support Worker without making a decision to use it. Once witnesses have the information they need, they can decide if they want Witness Support.