

# International Cruise Victims



*International Cruise Victims (ICV) is an international organization with members throughout the world, currently represented by over 20 countries. Under the ICV International News Section, many stories will be found in the original language. Google can be used to translate many of these articles into English or whatever you use.*

## Want to commit the perfect crime? Take a cruise

**If cruise ships are floating cities, where are the cops?** Some cruise ships feature [neighborhoods](#) and carry up to 9,000 passengers and crew. The captain is the *de facto* mayor.

There's no sign of an independent law enforcement presence to protect the passengers and crew — regardless of the fact that all cities have crime, including the cities called cruise ships.

So, what happens when a crime occurs on a cruise ship? That was the question raised several weeks ago when a Carnival crew member [was charged with molesting a teenage passenger](#).

Here's what normally happens: The victim goes to the "security" department on the ship to report the crime. But, wait a minute! The security officers work for the cruise line, don't they? Ultimately, they're protecting their employer, not the passenger, right?

And it's not at all like hotel security, which has only to pick up the phone and call the local police to take over and begin any necessary investigation. But you can rest assured that your ship security officer will be interested in getting a statement from you, especially if a crew member is involved in the incident so he can then write up a report and submit it to his boss, who then reports it to the FBI.

So far, the victim hasn't dealt with the legal authority. Can you see where this is going?

Since the security person and the probable perpetrator *both* work for the cruise line, the victim is the outsider now. The cruise line is no longer your friend. Any statement you give will now likely be used to minimize your claim and maximize the cruise line's impunity.

For instance, when someone reports a sexual assault or rape, many times a case is never opened, charges are never filed, as the incident is deemed consensual. Or it's recast as a "he said/she said" case because of the way the cruise line reports the



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facts they have gathered to the FBI.

Cruise lines know the FBI will seldom investigate such cases. Additionally, your information is no longer confidential from the cruise lines and their lawyers.

In addition, a cruise line takes the legal position that they have no duty to even investigate a crime. In a legal memorandum of law, the legal position taken by Royal Caribbean stated as follows: "Courts have specifically held that no duty to investigate exists."

What *should* happen when a passenger is a victim of a crime?

Some of the main provisions of the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act (CVSSA) legislation were designed to give victims certain rights and maintain the confidential nature of any information a victim gives in reporting their crime.

The CVSSA requirement is as follows:

*Provide the patient free and immediate access to "(A) contact information for local law enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Coast Guard, the nearest United States consulate or embassy, and the National Sexual Assault Hotline program or other third party victim advocacy hotline service;" and "(B) a private telephone line and Internet-accessible computer terminal by which the individual may confidentially access law enforcement officials, an attorney, and the information and support services available through the National Sexual Assault Hotline program or other third party victim advocacy hotline service."*

You can clearly see what a difference it might make if and when the FBI gets the report directly from the victim instead of getting the cruise line version of the crime.

Sadly, this legal right is very seldom, if ever, shared with the victim when they report a crime to the cruise line.

Of all the cruise ship crimes committed during a period between 2011-2012, a number totaling 563 (material obtained under the Freedom of Information Act), there were only four convictions reported by the FBI. Sounds like a cruise ship might just be the perfect place to commit a crime, doesn't it?

It's up to the passenger to insist on their legal rights, should they become the victim of a crime, and report the crime directly to the FBI and not to the security of the cruise ship, which does not have the authority and the best interest of the victim as their main concern.

Should cruise ships have police onboard? In a recent survey, 88% indicated they should. New legislation proposed would require this. It is time to move forward by support such and effort.

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## The International Cruise Victims Association, Inc.

[www.internationalcruisevictims.org](http://www.internationalcruisevictims.org)

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