

# Frequently Asked Questions About Forensic Medical Exams



We've seen several social media posts circulating with questions and concerns about forensic exams in the context of documenting injury stemming from a physical assault, as opposed to a sexual assault. MNCASA, with our Forensic Nursing Member Programs, would like to share clarifying information about what a forensic exam is, what it may include, and how it can support survivors. Our goal is to ensure people have accurate information so they can make informed decisions and access the care and support they deserve.

## What is a SANE?

A SANE is a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. This is a registered nurse with special training to care for people who have experienced sexual assault. A SANE provides medical care, explains options, and—if the patient chooses, can collect evidence in a respectful and trauma-informed way.

## What is an FNE?

An FNE is a Forensic Nurse Examiner. FNEs have similar training to SANEs, but their role can include caring for people who have experienced other types of violence, such as intimate partner violence, elder abuse, or child abuse—not just sexual assault.

## What's the difference?

SANEs and FNEs receive the same foundational training and follow the same standards of care. The difference is mostly in the name and the scope of care being provided. When nurses respond to sexual assault specifically, they may be called a SANE. When they provide forensic care for other forms of violence, they are often called FNE.

## Why are you seeing the term FNE more often?

Across the country, the term Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) is increasingly being used because it better reflects the full range of care these nurses provide.

You can view a map of MN SANE/FNE Programs at [mncasa.org/find-help/emergency-medical-care](https://mncasa.org/find-help/emergency-medical-care).

### **What is the cost of a forensic medical exam?**

If you choose to have a forensic medical exam after experiencing sexual violence, the State of Minnesota will cover the cost of that exam. You will not be billed for it.

If you need additional medical care during the visits such as X-rays or treatment for injuries, those services may be billed to your insurance.

For exams related to other experiences, like intimate partner violence or physical assault, insurance is typically billed.

If you want medical documentation of injuries after a physical assault—regardless of who caused the harm—any healthcare provider can help. This may include a primary care provider, urgent care, or emergency services.

Your medical record will not be available right away and may need to be requested later through medical records. You will receive an after-visit summary before you leave.

If you're ever unsure about what medical care might be right for you, you're not alone. You can reach out to any SANE/FNE program in Minnesota to talk through your options—they are there to help and support you.

### **More Information About Emergency Medical Care**

You can also contact MNCASA at [info@mncasa.org](mailto:info@mncasa.org), and we would be glad to help connect you with those teams and answer any questions you may have.