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# No police station visit for women, child witnesses

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**Mumbai:** Women, children and the infirm have something to thank the Bombay high court and the state police for. They can no longer be called to the police station to get their statements recorded as witnesses or informants. Instead, the police will send an officer to their house.

Additional public prosecutor Ajay Gadkari recently presented a circular issued by the director general of police, which promises to enforce the already existing provision. The circular states that the police have to abide by Section 160 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in this regard.

The section deals with cops' powers to seek attendance of witnesses at a police station. It specifically provides that "no male person under the age of 15 years and no woman shall be required to attend any place other than their residence" when the police want to record their statements. The DGP added the "physically infirm" to that category.

The circular satisfied a bench of Justices Ajay Khanwilkar and A.R. Joshi, who took it on record. Now, it would benefit women and children across the state, who till now had to go through the trouble of visiting a police station even as a witness.

The development followed

a petition by a woman through her lawyer S Kunjuraman, who contended that the police were not taking cognizance of a complaint she had made and not registering an FIR against her landlord for alleged trespass and other offences.

The HC found that the offence ought to be registered and had earlier directed the police to do so. When the state said she could go to the police

## Know Your Rights

**U**nder Section 160 of the Criminal Procedure Code, a person under 15 years of age or a woman cannot be called to a police station to record their statements. The police have to go to their residence for this. The state has now added a third category to this list: the infirm.

station where her statement would be recorded, the judges were not pleased. The court pointed out how the police were flouting legal provisions of Section 160 of the CrPC by often forcing women and children to remain present at police stations to record their statements as witnesses or complainants. The court earlier passed oral directions asking the state to take steps to implement the provisions.

The DGP's circular was issued last month and the court was informed of its compliance on Monday.