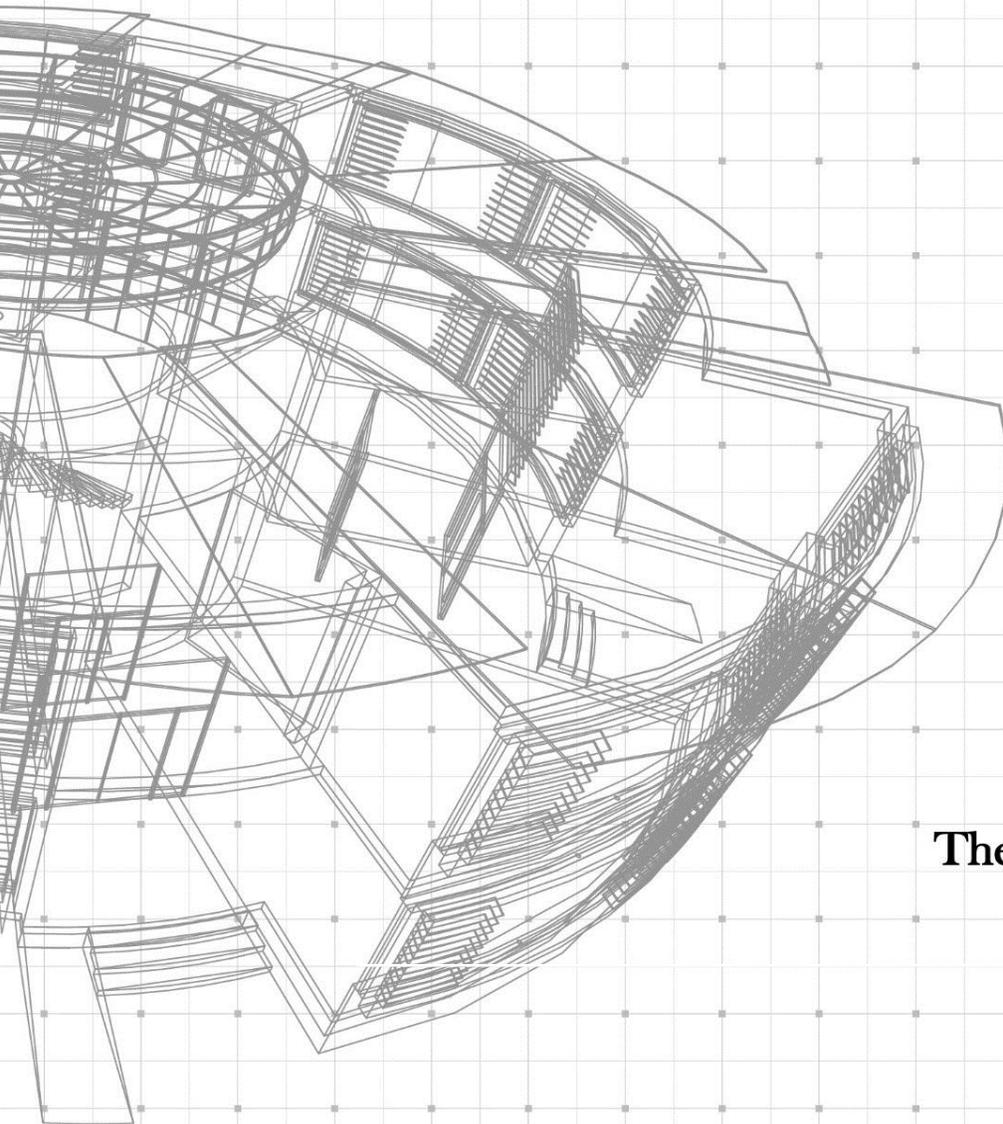


CHAPTER TWO

911

New Orleans Police Department



The New Orleans
blueprint
for **safety**

Policy

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The NOPD Communications Services Domestic Violence Policy shall apply to the respective duties of operators, dispatchers and the Command Desk in responding to calls that involve intimate partners, family or household members. Communications staff and supervisors shall access the Department's domestic violence policies and procedures for platoon officers and supervisors, the Domestic Violence Unit and the Training Academy in the online resource folder.

A. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The collaboration of criminal justice agencies within New Orleans to develop a coordinated criminal justice response to domestic violence is the City's *Blueprint for Safety*. The New Orleans Police Department, along with the city's other *Blueprint for Safety* agencies, is committed to a set of shared foundational principles that maximize safety for victims of domestic violence and holds offenders accountable while offering them opportunities to change. These foundational principles are:

- Adhering to an interagency approach and collective intervention goals;
- Building attention to context and severity of abuse into each intervention;
- Recognition that most domestic violence is a patterned crime requiring continuing engagement with victims and offenders;
- Ensure sure and swift consequences for continued abuse;
- Send messages of help to victims and messages of accountability to offenders; and
- Act in ways that reduce unintended consequences and the disparity of impact on victims and offenders.

NOPD shall ensure supervisors participate in ongoing interagency *Blueprint* monitoring, evaluation and maintenance.

B. DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Battering – An ongoing pattern of coercion, intimidation, and emotional abuse, reinforced by the use and threat of physical or sexual violence. Battering can include a range of tactics including:

- Cyberstalking (La. R.S. 14:40.3)
- Bodily injury or threat of bodily injury, including, but not limited to domestic abuse aggravated assault (La. R.S. 14:37.7) and domestic abuse battery (La. R.S. 14:35.3).
- Harassing telephone calls (La. R.S. 14:285)
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Property crime directed against the victim (La. R.S. 14:56)
- Stalking (La. R.S. 14:40.2 (A))
- Strangulation (La. R.S. 14:35 B. (3))
- Violation of a court order of protection or similar injunction (La. R.S. 14:79)
- Death threats or death (including a third party)

Court order – All forms of court orders related to domestic violence, both civil and criminal, whether issued by a court of this state or another and regardless of whether service has been made.

Cyberstalking – The action of any person to accomplish any of the following (R.S. 14:40.3):

- Use in electronic mail or electronic communication of any words or language threatening to inflict bodily harm to any person or to a person's family member or physical injury to the property of any person, or for the purpose of extorting money or other things of value from any person.
- Electronically mail or electronically communicate to another repeatedly, whether or not conversation ensues, for the purpose of threatening, terrifying or harassing any person.

Domestic abuse aggravated assault – An assault with a dangerous weapon committed by one household member upon another household member (R.S. 14:37.7).

Domestic abuse battery – The intentional use of force or violence committed by one household member upon another household member (R.S. 14:35.3).

Domestic violence – Used to refer to battering between intimate partners, family or household members. Intimate partner, family and household relationships include (R.S. 46:2132, R.S. 46:2151, OPC 54-525):

1. Adults or minors who are current or former spouses;
2. Adults or minors who live together or who have lived together;
3. Adults or minors who are dating or who have dated;
4. Adults or minors who are engaged in or who have engaged in any type of consensual sex act;

5. Adults or minors who are related by blood or adoption (i.e. parents, children, foster parents, foster children, siblings);
6. Adults or minors who are related or formerly related by marriage (i.e. stepparents, stepchildren);
7. Persons who have a child in common or whose relationship resulted in a current pregnancy; or
8. Minor children resulting from the offender having any of the relationships listed in sections (1) through (6) of this definition.

Electronic communication – The transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature, transmitted in whole or in part by wire, radio, computer, electromagnetic, photoelectronic, or photo-optical system.

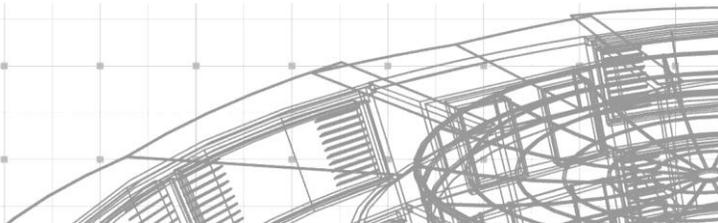
Electronic mail – the transmission of information or communication by the use of the Internet, a computer, a facsimile machine, a pager, a cellular telephone, a video recorder, or other electronic means sent to a person that is identified by a unique address or address number and received by that person (R.S. 14:40.3 (A)).

Harassing telephone calls – The use of a telephone call, conversation or conference with another person, anonymously or otherwise, and therein use obscene, profane, vulgar, lewd, lascivious or indecent language; making any suggestion or proposal of an obscene nature; threatening any illegal or immoral act with the intent to coerce, intimidate or harass another person; making repeated telephone communications anonymously or otherwise in a manner that is reasonably expected to annoy, abuse, torment, harass, embarrass or offend another, person, whether or not conversation ensues (R.S. 14:285).

Household member – A household member is:

- A person of the opposite sex who is presently living with the offender “as a spouse” (whether married or not).
- A person of the opposite sex who lived with the offender “as a spouse” (whether married or not) within the past five years.
- A child who presently lives with the offender or has lived with the offender during the previous five years.
- Any child of the offender, regardless of where the child resides.

This definition relates specifically to charges of domestic abuse battery and domestic abuse aggravated assault. See the Domestic Violence definition for other relationships covered by this policy and procedure.



Petitioner – The person alleging abuse in a petition for an order of protection.

Protective order – *Any civil or criminal restraining order, injunction, bail or release order, probation condition and all other orders for protection issued to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking or to deter offenders from further violence or abuse [. . .including] protections contained in support, child custody, and visitation orders and protective directives in other court orders. 18 U.S.C. § 2266(5). Emergency, ex parte, temporary, and final orders are subject to full faith and credit under VAWA.*

Public figure – An elected official, sports figure, television or radio personality, celebrity, or other well-known person.

Respondent – The person alleged in a petition for a protective order to have abused another.

Self-Defense – The use of force or violence in defense. If force has been legally used in self-defense, there is an absolution of guilt or culpability. Officers shall apply laws regarding self-defense (La. R.S.14:19).

Stalking - The intentional and repeated following or harassing of another person that would cause a reasonable person to feel alarmed or to suffer emotional distress. Stalking shall include but not be limited to (R.S. 14:40.2 (A)):

- The intentional and repeated uninvited presence of the perpetrator at a person's home, workplace, school or any place that would cause a reasonable person to be alarmed or to suffer emotional distress as a result of verbal or behaviorally implied threats of death.
- Threats of bodily injury.
- Sexual assault.
- Kidnapping.
- Any other statutorily criminal act to him/herself or any member of his/her family or any person with whom he/she is acquainted.

Strangulation - Intentionally impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood by applying pressure on the throat or neck or by blocking the nose or mouth of the victim (R.S. 14:35 B. (3)).

Violation of Protection Order - Violation of a protective order is the willful disobedience of a preliminary or permanent injunction issued after a contradictory court hearing, or any ex parte protective order if the defendant has been given notice of the order through a contradictory hearing or service of process (La. R.S. 14:79).

2. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The New Orleans Police Department's Communications District is committed to responding to the complex situations domestic violence calls present in ways that diminish danger and advance safety for all involved. The NOPD recognizes that domestic violence is a patterned crime, usually

occurring over a long period of time, and that a single call is rarely the extent of the 911 center's involvement with a victim and offender. The response to each call must therefore establish a foundation for continuing engagement if it is to reflect the ongoing nature of the crime and contribute to the long-term safety of victims, their children, and responding officers. It is the policy of this department to ensure callers receive the same safety-oriented response whether it's a caller's first, fifth or fifteenth time calling.

A. ASSIGNING THE DOMESTIC SIGNAL

Code all incidents involving parties who are family or household members or intimate partners with a "D" (for domestic) signal.

- Assign the domestic signal whether or not there is an allegation of physical violence and whether or not an arrest is made.
- Assign the domestic signal for calls that involve allegations that a protection order has been violated.

1) CHANGING THE SIGNAL

Dispatch or the Command Desk shall only reclassify a domestic call as non-domestic if a platoon supervisor contacts them to make a change. A call for service shall not be reclassified where the relationship between the parties fits the intimate partner, family or household member definition.

When notified by an officer, dispatch shall reclassify a non-domestic to a domestic signal when the relationship between the parties fits the intimate partner, family or household member definition and there is an allegation of a crime whether or not an arrest is made.

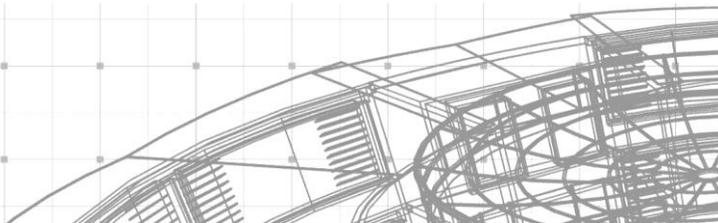
B. RESPONSE PRIORITY

Domestic violence occurs along a continuum of severity and urgency. A call may signal a high level of immediate danger to the victim, responding officers and others at the scene. Or the caller may be reporting an event with little urgency, where no one has been hurt or is in immediate danger. Accurately recognizing and communicating the risk that one party poses to another can enhance the immediate safety of responding officers and everyone at the scene.

1) PRIORITY 2

Code each domestic violence call as Priority 2 if any of the following circumstances exist, including calls where the suspect has left the scene:

- A weapon is involved.
- A physical assault is occurring or has just occurred.



- It appears that violence is imminent, or the caller is afraid, or the argument is escalating.
- The suspect has made severe threats, such as to kill the victim, take or harm children, harm or kill pets, burn down the house or commit suicide.
- The suspect has left the scene and the caller or victim fears his or her imminent return.
- There is a verbal argument between the parties with no known history of violence or no threat of harm.
- A third party reports shouting or a loud argument with no further information.
- The call is disconnected prior to the operator gathering all necessary information to determine the priority or nature of the call.
- The call involves a police officer, regardless of the involved officer's jurisdiction.

2) PRIORITY 1A

Code calls as Priority 1A if any of the following circumstances exist:

- The suspect is gone and unlikely to return soon, and the caller or victim does not think he or she will return.
- There is a reported violation of a stay away order, order for protection or harassment restraining order with no threat of harm, and the suspect is not at the scene or likely to return soon.
- When in doubt, code the call as Priority 2.

C. OPERATORS

In addition to adhering to general department policy, the following guidelines shall be followed by operators when responding to a domestic violence call for service:

- Communicate effectively, respectfully and safely with callers.
- Determine the location and parties at the scene, including information to assist in locating a suspect who has left the scene.
- Determine the nature of the emergency and the response priority.
- Collect all available information about the type and level of danger involved.
- Provide victim assistance and advance safety.
- Establish a foundation for continuing engagement with members of the public seeking help in domestic violence cases.

D. DISPATCHERS

In addition to adhering to general department policy, dispatchers shall follow these guidelines when responding to a domestic violence call for service:

- Dispatch all Priority 2 domestic violence calls to two officers and a supervisor and all Priority 1A domestic violence calls to a minimum of one officer. Relay the response priority to responding officers.
- Direct responding officers to the correct location of the scene and the location of the parties at the scene, including descriptive information that will assist officers in locating a suspect who has left the scene.
- Relay the nature of the emergency to responding officers.
- Relay to responding officers all available information about the type and level of danger involved, including presence of weapons, description of violence, threats, strangulation, stalking and injuries.
- Communicate and document information related to the nature of the emergency and the safety of all involved to responding officers and other practitioners who use call recordings and transcripts.

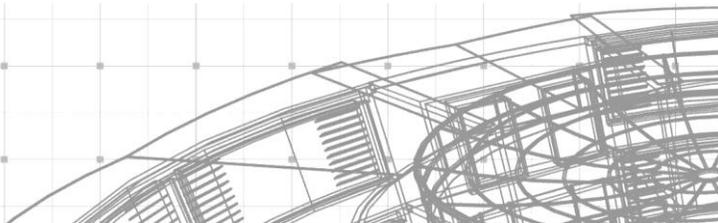
E. COMMAND DESK

In addition to adhering to general department policy, supervisors shall follow this policy to provide the support and oversight necessary to ensure a safety-oriented response to domestic violence calls:

- Act as the liaison between communications and other divisions, bureaus and agencies, providing necessary information and documents during and after domestic violence calls for service.
- Conduct reviews of 911 recordings and CAD transcripts in accordance with NOPD Procedure 320.
- Respond to requests for recordings of 911 calls and related documents by investigators, prosecutors and defense attorneys as requested.

F. TRAINING

NOPD Training Academy shall provide training to operators and dispatchers on the following topics: accurate coding of 911 domestic violence calls; collecting specific and pertinent information on risk and violence; speaking with suspects on the line; and handling interrupted and open-line calls. NOPD will provide additional training as the Communications Services Commander deems necessary for the effective implementation of this policy. NOPD Training Academy shall provide training to 911 supervisors on supervising the response to domestic violence calls.



Procedure

1. COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE

This procedure manual is not meant to instruct operators and dispatchers in a set of strict sequential steps. It acknowledges that receiving 911 domestic violence calls involves simultaneously obtaining and relaying information while maximizing safety for victims and responding officers. These functions often occur within a short period of intense activity. A safe response to domestic violence calls requires considerable judgment on the part of operators and an understanding of complex factors affecting communication and safety.

The more explicit and descriptive the call taker can be in documenting what the caller saw or heard, the more likely the officer will make an accurate determination regarding self-defense and the predominant aggressor. The emphasis for 911 is to convey accurate information about what the caller has heard or seen to assist officers in determining who did what to whom when at the scene. Dispatch's conveying the information from the caller accurately to the responding officer is an important factor in determining which party to arrest.

A. OPERATORS

In addition to adhering to general department policy, operators shall follow this procedure when responding to a domestic violence call for service:

1) COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AND RESPECTFULLY

Communicate in ways that (1) get help quickly and safely to the scene; (2) help the caller convey what is happening; and (3) establish an initial relationship with a member of the public who is turning to law enforcement. Operators shall:

- Connect the caller to the appropriate language access and TTY/TDD services.
- Slow down, simplify language and adjust the response when the caller appears to have difficulty because of fear, injury, disability, intoxication or other barriers to communication.
- Be alert to the impact of strangulation or other injuries on a caller's ability to communicate.

2) COMMUNICATE SAFELY

Operators shall:

- Verify that it is safe for the caller to speak freely.
- Utilize strategies that promote safety when it has not been confirmed that the caller can speak freely.

- Not force the caller to stay on the line if she or he says it is not safe. Instruct the caller to put the phone down and keep an open line.
- When it is safe to keep the caller on the line, inform caller when the platoon officer has been notified and tell the caller when a squad has been dispatched. In emergency situations where the victim is afraid or anxious, check with dispatch to see if the officer is en route and relay that information to the caller.
- Utilize strategies that promote safety when a call has been disconnected or otherwise interrupted or a possible suspect is on the line.

3) KEEP A CALLER ON THE LINE

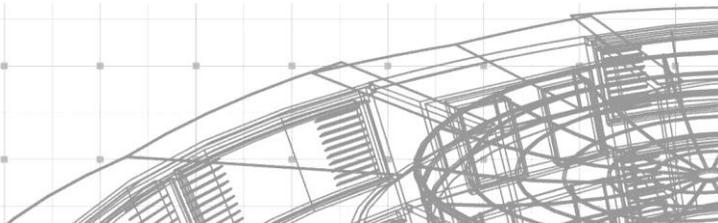
When it is safe to do so and as call volume permits, operators shall keep the caller on the line in the following types of calls until an officer is on the scene and has made contact with the caller, victim or witness:

- Calls reporting or suggesting high danger, volatility or escalation, including but not limited to calls involving weapons
- The caller states that she or he is afraid
- An assault or another crime is in progress or someone has been seriously injured
- The suspect is at the scene, and the threat is ongoing
- A possible suspect is on the line
- The caller is a child, and the situation reported is ongoing
- If a call is interrupted, call back.
 - If there is no answer, do not leave a message. Enter any information about the call prior to disconnect, including screams, threats or other background noises, in the CAD.
 - If the call is answered by the caller, be alert to the suspect on the line and ask yes or no questions.
 - If the call is answered by another adult party:
 - Ask to speak to the other person there.
 - Be alert the adult may be the suspect.
 - Ask yes or no questions.

4) SAFELY RESPOND TO A CHILD CALLER

Safely respond to a child caller by adjusting communication to the caller's age and comprehension. In addition to determining the caller's name, age and location, ask:

- Do you need police help?
- How old are you?



- Are you scared?
- What is happening?
- Has anyone been hurt?
- Is it okay if I ask you some questions, or are you afraid to talk to me right now?

5) ESTABLISH RAPPORT

Establish rapport with and communicate core messages to callers. Operators shall:

- Reflect awareness of cultural and social factors in communication with the caller.
- Respond to callers with courtesy, respect and reassurance, even when they are difficult to work with.
- Avoid blaming or criticizing the caller.
- Reinforce that 911 is available when a caller needs it, regardless of how many times he/she has called.

6) DETERMINE THE LOCATION AND PARTIES AT THE SCENE

Determine the correct address, location and parties at the scene. Include information to assist in locating a suspect who has left the scene. Operators shall:

- Establish the correct address, parish and physical location of the event, including whether or not the emergency took place at multiple locations.
- Utilize information available via GPS sources as necessary and appropriate. If the exact location is unknown, determine the approximate location of the scene.
- Establish the means of entry to the premises.
- In third-party calls, determine whether the caller can let officers into the building.
- Establish the identities, descriptions and locations of those involved at the scene.
- Establish and communicate the caller's location on or off the scene.
- Document all pertinent details about the suspect's identity, physical description and vehicle description when the suspect has left the scene. If possible, obtain information on the direction of the suspect's flight to assist platoon officers.
- Elicit the suspect's date of birth and social security number, when possible.

7) NATURE OF THE EMERGENCY AND RESPONSE PRIORITY

Enter initial information on the nature of the emergency and the response priority into the CAD. Operators shall:

- Follow NOPD policy to assign a priority level. When in doubt, code the call Priority 2.
- Establish the immediate threat of harm, including presence or use of a weapon, to

persons at the scene, responding officers and others.

- Determine the nature of any injuries and the need for immediate medical attention.
- Establish whether or not children are present at the scene of the incident; witnessed the incident; or are safe, harmed or abducted.
- Establish whether other parties were involved in the incident or witnessed the incident.

8) TYPE AND LEVEL OF DANGER

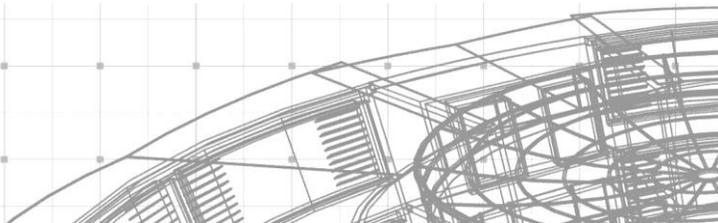
Establish the type and level of danger to the caller, responding officers and others at the scene. Operators shall:

- Establish as clear a picture as possible of the type of violence and actions of aggression or harm involved and the immediate danger.
- Enter specific details in the CAD about the type of violence, actions of aggression, threats, injuries and harm being reported.
- Include an exact report of what the caller saw or heard to assist officers in determining the means of entry, asking questions at the scene and establishing probable cause.
- Determine the presence and use of weapons.
- Elicit pertinent information about the suspect's history of aggression and domestic violence, including aggression toward law enforcement. When possible, elicit information about protective orders or warrants against the suspect that are in place.
- Determine the risk to persons at the scene.
- Determine the risk to responding officers, including dogs or other pets that may pose a problem for them.
- Determine and document whether or not there are previous calls involving the same parties or address, when possible.
- Stay alert to changing conditions at the scene.

9) PROVIDE VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND ADVANCE SAFETY

Operators shall:

- Continue to stay alert to and confirm whether it is safe for the caller to stay on the line and respond to questions.
- Make the safety of domestic violence victims a primary concern. Address threats of violence, whether immediate or remote, by working with the victim to focus on ways to enhance safety, such as waiting for officers at another location or leaving the location if the suspect returns.
- If it is safe to keep the caller on the line, connect the caller to EMS as necessary. If it



is unsafe to keep the caller on the line, notify EMS of the emergency and the need for medical assistance.

- Stay alert to and respond safely to a suspect on the line. When helpful to reinforcing safety, engage with a suspect on the line to control escalation while officers are en route.
- Not cancel the original call for service even if a subsequent request to cancel the original call is received. Provide information about the second call to dispatch.

10) ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION FOR CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT

Establish a foundation for continuing engagement with members of the public seeking help in domestic violence incidents. To do so, operators shall:

- Convey explicit, detailed information about what the caller has heard or seen to assist officers in making accurate determinations about self-defense and the predominant aggressor.
- Avoid placing the victim in a position of confrontation with the suspect.
- Protect the victim from retaliation when communicating with the suspect.
- Treat each interaction with the victim as an opportunity to build collaboration over multiple contacts.
- Know the signs that violence may be resuming or escalating.
- Maintain current contact information of local domestic violence victim advocacy organizations and respond to callers' requests for information about community resources related to domestic violence.

11) RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS INVOLVING DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES OR PUBLIC FIGURES

Notify the Command Desk when one of the parties involved is a law enforcement officer or public safety officer (regardless of jurisdiction), communications employee, public official or a prominent member of the public.

B. DISPATCH

In addition to adhering to general department policy, dispatchers shall follow this procedure when responding to a domestic violence call for service:

1) LOCATION AND PARTIES AT THE SCENE

Dispatchers shall:

- Relay the address and physical location of the call as well as the caller's location on or off of the scene.

- Relay to responding officers all pertinent details about the identities and physical descriptions of those involved and at the scene.
- Relay to responding officers all available details about suspect identity, physical description and vehicle when the suspect has left the scene.

2) NATURE OF THE EMERGENCY

Dispatchers shall:

- Relay the nature of the emergency to responding officers.
- Relay the immediate threat of harm to responding officers, the victim and others.
- Relay the nature of any injuries and the need for immediate medical attention.
- Relay whether or not children are present, witness to the incident and safe or unharmed.
- Query operator as needed to verify details related to responding officer and victim safety.

3) TYPE AND LEVEL OF DANGER

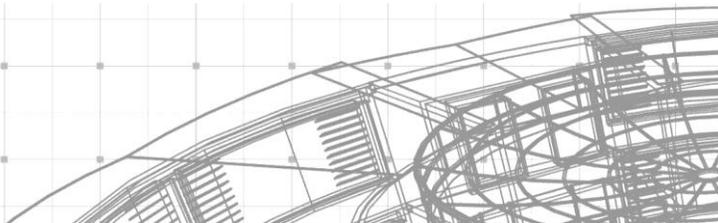
Dispatchers shall:

- Verify and relay the presence and use of any weapons.
- Relay the risk to persons at the scene.
- Relay the risk to responding officers, including dogs or other pets that may pose a problem for them.
- Verify and relay information about the suspect's history of aggression toward those at the scene and toward law enforcement.
- Promptly relay details about changing conditions at the scene to responding officers.
- Promptly relay details about any change in suspect location and information that will aid officers in locating a suspect who has left the scene.
- Determine and relay the history of past calls to the location or those involved, when feasible.
- Check officer status and safety at the scene as warranted.

4) DOCUMENT COMMUNICATION WITH RESPONDING OFFICERS

Dispatchers shall document information related to the ongoing nature of the emergency and the safety of all involved and relay that information to responding officers and subsequent interveners through the CAD. Dispatchers shall:

- Enter into the CAD report specific details about the violence, threats and injuries involved.



- Provide updated information about the call and conditions at the scene to responding officers.
- Inform the officer via radio of the general nature and severity of any threats.
- Respond to requests for information from officers en route or at the scene.
- If a subsequent request to cancel the original call is received, advise the responding officers of the second call and instruct them to continue to respond, investigate and assess the situation to ensure that all parties are safe.

C. COMMAND DESK

In addition to adhering to general department policy, the following procedure shall be followed by 911 supervisors to provide the support and oversight necessary to ensure a safety-oriented response to domestic violence calls:

1) LIASON TO OTHER AGENCIES

911 supervisors shall:

- Notify the platoon supervisor and PIB when a domestic violence call involves a law enforcement or public safety officer, 911 personnel, a public official or any other prominent member of the public.

2) REVIEW CALLS & CAD TRANSCRIPTS

911 supervisors shall conduct regular reviews of 911 recordings and CAD transcripts. 911 Supervisors shall:

- Listen to three 911 domestic violence calls from each operator on a quarterly basis. If problems are identified, meet with the operator to listen to the calls and provide feedback and guidance as needed.
- On a quarterly basis, listen to the radio transmissions from each dispatcher of three 911 domestic violence calls and read the related CAD transcripts and operator generated information. If problems are identified, meet with the dispatcher to listen to the calls and read the accompanying CAD transcript and provide feedback and guidance.
- Prepare an annual report for the Communications Services Commander regarding compliance with these policies and procedures.