



City of Racine Police Department
Policy and Procedure

Number: 1315

Subject: Use of Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) for Citizens at High Risk		
Date Issued: 03-18-19	Date Revised: 03-18-19	Revision Number: 1

POLICY

The Racine Police Department Personnel will use the Lethality Screen at the scene of domestic violence related calls for service to identify victims of domestic violence in potentially lethal situations and follow the established criteria to place those victims in immediate and direct contact with a domestic violence service program hotline advocate. Officers administering the Lethality Screen with the victim receiving a High-Danger rating will call Women's Resource Center (WRC) Hotline at 262-633-3233 and ask the victim to speak to an advocate for safety planning purposes.

DEFINITIONS

Domestic Violence/Abuse - Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior characterized by the domination and control of one person over another, usually an intimate partner, through physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, sexual, and/or economic abuse. Domestic violence is often called "domestic abuse" because it does not necessarily involve physical violence, and some form of control tactics that may not even be considered a crime.

Abuser - A person who exhibits a pattern of coercive tactics which can include physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse against an intimate partner, with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control over the victim.

Intimate Relationship - An "intimate relationship" is one in which heterosexual or homosexual partners have, or have had, a sexual or emotionally intimate relationship and is more inclusive than the Wisconsin Statute for Domestic Violence.

Intimate Partner - Intimate partners are persons who are, or have been involved, in an intimate relationship and meet any of the following criteria:

1. Are married, separated, or divorced;
2. Live or have lived together;
3. Have children in common; or
4. Date, or have dated, but do not live, or never have lived together.

Lethality Screen - The evidence-based field instrument used by trained practitioners to assess a person who is a victim of intimate partner violence for her/his risk of being killed by an intimate partner.

High Danger - A term used for a victim who has been assessed through the use of the LAP and the Lethality Screen as being at the greatest risk of being killed. The victim is said to be at "High Danger."

PROCEDURE

The following steps shall be taken by members of the Department to assess Interpretation Services:

MEMBER

1. The responding officer shall complete the Lethality Screen when he/she responds to a domestic violence complaint involving intimate partners and one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - a. There is reason to believe an assault or an act that constitutes domestic violence has occurred, whether or not there is an arrest.
 - b. There is a belief or sense on the part of the responding officer that once the victim is no longer in the care or presence of the responding officer the potential for assault or danger is high.
 - c. Repeated calls for domestic violence complaints at the same location or involving the same parties.
 - d. The responding officer believes one should be administered based on his/her experience, training and/or instinct.
2. Procedure after the responding officer asks the victim the questions on the Lethality Screen the Officer shall handle the information as follows:
 - a. A **single** "yes" or positive response by the victim to questions #1, 2 or 3 reflects a High-Danger situation and automatically triggers the hotline call. Officers shall still ask the remaining questions, as they will help the officer gather a more comprehensive understanding of the victim's situation before calling the hotline. Doing so will also allow the victim to recognize the lethality predictors that indicate that she/he is at risk of being killed by her/his intimate partner.
 - b. If the victim gives negative responses to questions #1-3, but positive responses to four or more of questions #4 thru 11, this reflects a High-Danger situation and triggers the hotline call.
 - c. The officer may also assess a victim as High-Danger if the officer believes it is appropriate when:
 - 1) The victim declines to answer all the questions on the Lethality Screen, or
 - 2) If the victim's responses do not reflect High-Danger, but the officer's experience indicates High-Danger, the officer should make the hotline call.
3. When High-Danger assessment is made the hotline call shall be implemented as follows (Use a department Cell Phone):
 - a. Advise the victim that her/his situation has indicated to the officer that the victim is at an increased level of danger, and that people in the victim's situation have been killed or seriously injured.
 - b. Advise the victim that you would like to call the WRC Hotline and invite the victim to speak with a hotline advocate. If the victim initially declines to speak with the hotline advocate, the officer shall:
 - 1) Tell the victim that the officer will still contact the domestic violence hotline to receive guidance on how to proceed with the situation;
 - 2) Tell the victim that she/he may decline to speak with the hotline advocate, but that the officer would like the victim to reconsider speaking with the hotline advocate; and
 - 3) While the officer is still on the phone with the hotline advocate, the officer asks the victim if she/he has reconsidered and would now like to speak with the hotline advocate.
 - 4) If the victim continues to decline to speak with the hotline advocate, the officer should do the same thing he/she would do for a victim who was not assessed as High-Danger, including conveying information that the hotline advocate has suggested about safety planning and requesting a safe phone number for an advocate to follow up with the victim.
 - c. If the victim agrees to speak with a hotline advocate, the officer shall call the hotline number, introduce him/herself, and advise the hotline advocate that he/she has made a High Danger assessment. The officer shall provide responses to a brief set of questions prompted by the hotline advocate.

- d. During the conversation between the hotline advocate and the victim, the officer shall stay on the scene and allow the victim privacy while the victim speaks with the hotline.
- e. At the appropriate time during the conversation between the victim and the hotline advocate, the hotline advocate will ask to speak with the officer to conclude the call.
4. During the whole process, the officers should protect the victim's safety by avoiding any situation that will allow the subject to get the victim's safety plan. This includes avoiding recording the call to the hotline.
5. **Filing of the Lethality Screen**
 - a. Primary Officer will complete the Lethality Screen in Questions and Answer (QA) tab in the Phoenix Incident report.
 - b. Primary Officer will email Lethality Screen to LAP Distribution List at PS_LAP@cityofphoenix.org.
6. Document the use of the Lethality Screen in your summary, but do not include the safety plan details.

SUPERVISOR/SHIFT COMMANDER

1. Verify that the Lethality Screen is done when circumstances justify its use.
2. Review the Lethality Screen in the Phoenix Case File for completeness.

PATROL SECRETARY

1. Enter the statistics, in the WI Lethality Assessment Program at <http://www.wilap.org>.
2. At the request of Department Commanders, print reports from the data base.

DIVISION COMMANDERS

1. Provide initial LAP training during roll call.
2. Provide any updated training as needed.

LAP COORDINATOR

1. Coordinate and ensure communication between WRC, DA's Office (Victim Witness) and RAPD.
2. Coordinate with the National Lethality Program Managers.

RELATED PROCEDURES

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