


PBP FORM 290  PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF POLICE <i>"...accountability, integrity and respect."</i>		SUBJECT: "LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM"		ORDER NUMBER: 40-12.2
		PLEAC STANDARD: N/A		PAGE 1 OF 5
ISSUE DATE: 6/17/2016	EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/16/2013	ANNUAL REVIEW DATE: DECEMBER	RESCINDS: NONE	AMENDS: NONE

1.0 POLICY OR PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish protocol and implement the use of a Domestic Violence Lethality Screen at domestic violence calls for service.
- 1.2 It is the policy of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police to attempt to identify victims of domestic violence in potentially lethal situations and place those victims in immediate and direct contact with a domestic violence program counselor. The Domestic Violence Lethality Screen shall be used at the scene of a domestic violence incident to assist officers in identifying high risk situations and follow the established protocol Officers conducting a Domestic Violence Lethality Screen will ask the victim the eleven questions included in the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen. When a victim is assessed as being in danger, the Officer shall contact the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh and request that the victim to speak with a counselor.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Intimate Partners- Individuals who are spouses or living together as spouses (either presently or in the past); current or former sexual/intimate partners; and/or those who share a child together.
- 2.2 Intimate Partner Violence- The officer must have probable cause to believe that one of the following crimes has been committed:
 - 2.2.1 Section 2504 (relating to involuntary manslaughter);
 - 2.2.2 Section 2701 (relating to simple assault);
 - 2.2.3 Section 2702(a)(3), (4) and (5) (relating to aggravated assault);
 - 2.2.4 Section 2705 (relating to recklessly endangering another person);
 - 2.2.5 Section 2706 (relating to terroristic threats); or
 - 2.2.6 Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking);

AND the relationship between the victim and the actor must be one of the following (with NO requirement of living together):

 - 2.2.7 Spouses or persons living as spouses (now or in the past);
 - 2.2.8 Current or former sexual or intimate partners; and/or
 - 2.2.9 Persons who share biological parenthood (have a child together).
- 2.3 Cellular Phone Application- Lethality Assessment program that is an app based program. The app collects the data and transfers it to APRS and the Woman's Shelter.

3.0 INITIATING A LETHALITY ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 In addition to the investigative procedures outlined in this policy, the investigating officer will complete the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen on an Investigative Report in APRS when he/she responds to a domestic complaint involving intimate partners **and** one or more of the following conditions exist:

- 3.1.1 There is probable cause that an assault or an act that constitutes domestic violence under Title 18 section 2711 has occurred, whether or not there is an on scene arrest or warrant to be obtained;
 - 3.1.2 There is a belief or sense on the part of the investigating officer that once the victim is no longer in the presence of the responding officer, then the potential for assault or danger is high;
 - 3.1.3 The investigating officer believes one should be conducted based on his/her training, experience, and/or instinct;
 - 3.1.4 There is Indirect Criminal Contempt violation of a Protection From Abuse Order;
 - 3.1.5 There have been repeated calls for domestic complaints at the same location or involving the same parties **and** a Domestic Violence Lethality Screen has previously been completed.
- 3.2 The Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment is not required for instances of domestic violence where there are mutual combatants and both parties are arrested.

4.0 LETHALITY SCREENING QUESTIONS

- 4.1 When one or more of the criteria outlined in Section 3.1 are met, the officer shall ask the questions listed on the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen
- 4.2 The investigating officer should:
- 4.2.1 Advise the victim they will be asked a series of questions to help the officer determine if there is an immediate potential for danger to the victim;
 - 4.2.2 Ask the questions in the order in which they are listed on the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen; and
 - 4.2.3 Ask all the questions.
- ** It should be noted that the more questions that the victim responds to positively, the clearer and more immediate the potential for danger is to the victim.

5.0 ASSESSING THE RESPONSE TO THE LETHALITY QUESTIONS

- 5.1 After the responding officer asks the questions on the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen, he/she will interpret the information as follows:
- 5.1.1 A **single** "yes" or positive response by the victim to questions #1, 2, or 3 indicates that a high danger situation exists and automatically triggers the protocol referral.
 - 5.1.2 If the victim gives negative responses to questions #1-3, but positive responses to four or more on questions #4 thru 11, indicates that a high danger situation exists and triggers the protocol referral.
 - 5.1.3 "No" or negative responses to all of the assessment questions or positive responses to less than four of questions #4 thru #11 may still trigger the referral if the investigating officer believes it is appropriate. The officer should ask the victim the following question; "Is there anything else that worries you about your safety?" If the victim replies in the affirmative, then the officer should ask the victim, "What worries you?" The response to the question may aid in officer's decision.
 - 5.1.4 Trust your instincts. Use of the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen takes into account the opinion, instinct, and/or belief of an Officer. It is flexible and it relies on the investigating officer acting on his/her instincts. If the victim's responses don't trigger the referral, but the officer's "read" of the situation indicates high danger, then the officer should trigger the referral.

6.0 REFERRAL-NOT TRIGGERED

- 6.1 If the referral is not triggered or victim does not answer the questions on the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen, the officer will:
- 6.1.1 Advise the victim that domestic violence is dangerous and sometimes fatal;
 - 6.1.2 Inform the victim to watch for the signs listed in the assessment because such signs may convey to the victim that he/she is at an increased level of danger;
 - 6.1.3 Refer the victim to the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh; and
 - 6.1.4 Provide the victim with a copy of the Crime Victim Notification Pamphlet. The Officer shall write his/her name and badge number, phone number for the his/her Zone, and the CCR number for the case.

7.0 REFERRAL-TRIGGERED

- 7.1 If a high danger assessment is made or the officer believes it is appropriate, the referral will be implemented as follows:
- 7.1.1 Advise the victim that his/her situation has shown that he/she is at an increased level of danger and that people in such situations have an increased potential of being killed or seriously injured.
 - 7.1.2 Advise the victim that an officer will call the Women's Center and Shelter and recommend that the victim speak with a counselor.
 - 7.1.2.1 If the victim initially declines to speak with the counselor, the officer will:
 - 7.1.2.1.1 Tell the victim that the officer will contact the domestic violence hotline to receive guidance on how to proceed with the situation;
 - 7.1.2.1.2 Tell the victim that he/she would like the victim to reconsider speaking with the hotline counselor; and
 - 7.1.2.1.3 After the officer concludes the conversation with the counselor, ask the victim if they have reconsidered and if he/she would now like to speak with the counselor.
 - 7.1.2.2 If the victim continues to decline to speak with the counselor, the officer should do the same thing he/she would do for a victim who did not trigger the referral, including conveying information that the counselor has suggested and going over some safety tips (provided by the counselor).
 - 7.1.2.3 If the victim agrees to speak with a counselor, the officer will advise the counselor that he/she has made a high danger assessment, or believes that the victim is in danger, and would like the counselor to speak with the victim.
 - 7.1.2.4 At the appropriate time during the conversation between the victim and the counselor, the counselor will ask the victim to speak with the officer about the situation.
 - 7.1.2.5 The officer will then be guided by the discussion with the counselor for further assistance. Officers will provide reasonable assistance to the victim if the victim wants to leave the residence.

8.0 LETHALITY ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENTAL FORM

- 8.1 When completing the PBP form 3.0 Investigative Report, officers will be prompted to answer the following question: "Is this a domestic violence incident?"
- 8.2 If the officer answers yes to the question noted in Section 8.1, then there will be a second prompt of the following question: "Does the incident involve intimate partner violence?", as defined in Section 2.1.
- 8.3 When the officer answers yes to the above noted questions in Section 8.1 and 8.2, then the lethality assessment supplement form will automatically open and require completion by the reporting officer.

8.4 Supervisors and Warrant Office personnel will ensure that this report is completed prior to approving the officer's report.

8.5 When available the screening should be completed on the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police LAP App.

9.0 VICTIM IS UNABLE TO SCREEN IN

9.1 If a lethality screen of the victim cannot be completed due to victim being injured, ill, or intoxicated, then the officer shall take the following steps:

9.1.1 The officer will check the "Victim Unable to Screen In" box;

9.1.2 The officer will list the reason for the victim not being able to complete the screen;

9.1.3 The supervisor approving the report will have the final determination as to the victim's suitability for the screening process;

9.1.4 Domestic Violence Lethality Screens to be completed in this manner will be automatically be sent electronically to the Domestic Violence Unit for further investigation; and

9.1.5 A Detective from the Domestic Violence Unit shall contact the victim for screening within seven days, if feasible, based upon the victim's condition.

10.0 REPORTING RECORDS

10.1 The Domestic Violence unit will maintain statistics and publish a quarterly and annual report of Domestic Violence in the City of Pittsburgh

10.1.2 This Report shall contain the following:

10.1.2.1 Number of domestic violence incidents;

10.1.2.2 Number of "Intimate Partner Violence Incidents";

10.1.2.3 Number of Arrests For Domestic Violence; and

10.1.2.4 Number of Lethality Screens completed.

10.1.3 The Domestic Violence unit will provide a copy of each completed Domestic Violence Lethality Screen to the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) in a manner prescribed by that organization.

11.0 PROCEDURES – CITY OF PITTSBURGH ISSUED CELLULAR PHONES

11.1 All Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Operations Branch Supervisors will be issued a PBP owned cellular telephone and shall comply with *General Order # 67-2 Cellular Phones*.

11.2 All telephone calls to the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, required as dictated by this policy, shall be made from a PBP owned telephone, either landline or cellular. Officers shall not use the victim's landline or cellular telephone; nor shall the officer use his/her own personal cellular telephone.

11.3 In the event that the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen indicates that the victim is in a high danger situation (i.e. he/she "screens in"), then a Supervisor shall be notified and he/she will make arrangements to get the City issued cellular telephone to the location of the incident in order to call the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.

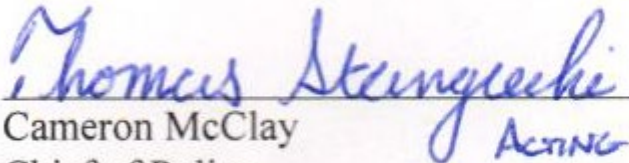
11.4 Officers also have the option of taking the victim to any duty location to use a landline telephone owned and operated by the City of Pittsburgh.

11.5 I & P and Computer Operations are to be notified if the phone or app malfunctions.

12.0 EOC NOTIFICATION

12.1 Upon completion of any Domestic Violence Lethality Screen, the officer shall notify EOC that the Screen has been completed.

Approved By:


Cameron McClay
Chief of Police

ACTING CHIEF