

# SPECIAL ORDER



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

<b>Subject:</b> <b>Domestic Violence Assessment Tool (DVAT) Pilot Program in PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708</b>
<b>Number</b> <b>SO-12-14</b>
<b>Effective Date</b> <b>April 30, 2012</b>
<b>Rescinds:</b> SO-10-05 [Domestic Violence Assessment Tool (DVAT) Pilot Program in PSAs 504, 602, 604, and 706], Effective Date July 19, 2010
<b>Related To:</b> GO-OPS-304.11 (Intrafamily Offenses), Effective Date November 7, 2003

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## I. BACKGROUND

In October 2003, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) was awarded a grant to develop a lethality assessment to assist victims of domestic violence. The resulting Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) was based on research conducted by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell of The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. Dr. Campbell's research, spanning 25 years, found that:

“1) only 4% of domestic violence murder victims nationwide had ever availed themselves of domestic violence program services; 2) in 50% of domestic violence-related homicides, members had previously responded to a call on the scene; and 3) the re-assault of domestic violence victims in high danger was reduced by 60% if they went into a shelter. The goal of the LAP is to prevent domestic violence homicides, serious injury, and re-assault by encouraging more victims to utilize the support and shelter services of domestic violence programs.” (Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Protocol for First Responders 2009, MNADV [www.mnadv.org](http://www.mnadv.org).)

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) began the Domestic Violence Assessment Tool (DVAT) Pilot Program on January 1, 2010, in PSAs 504 and 706. In July 2010, MPD expanded the program into PSAs 602 and 604 and implemented a revised version of the DVAT used in the MNADV model to accommodate the Department's larger size and the population of the District.

Effective with the publication of this order, MPD is expanding the DVAT Pilot Program to include additional PSAs and to accommodate the recent PSA realignment implemented by MPD.

Members in PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 will make a mandatory request, by telephone, that an On-Call Advocacy Program (OCAP) advocate administer the Risk Assessment Screen to the victim for the purpose of making a referral to enhanced domestic violence services from OCAP while the officer remains on the scene of the event.

The goal of the DVAT Pilot Program is to attempt to identify victims of domestic violence in potentially high risk or lethal situations and assist victims in obtaining services with domestic violence service providers. The DVAT Pilot Program is being implemented in addition to the OCAP currently in place and does not replace it.

## II. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meanings designated:

1. Domestic Violence Assessment Tool (DVAT) – List of questions asked by an OCAP Response Line Advocate based on research that has identified factors that indicate a higher risk of serious assault or homicide for victims of intimate partner violence. The DVAT, also referred to as the “Risk Assessment Screen,” consists of eleven (11) questions that are asked of the victim. Some factors weigh more heavily than others in determining the level of risk.

NOTE: The Risk Assessment Screen questions are as follows:

- a. Has he/she ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- b. Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?
- c. Do you think he/she might try to kill you?
- d. Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily?
- e. Has he/she ever tried to choke you?
- f. Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities?
- g. Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?

- h. Is he/she unemployed?
  - i. Has he/she tried to kill himself?
  - j. Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers?
  - k. Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?
- 2. Intimate Partner – Person to whom the offender is, or was married; with whom the offender is, or was in a domestic partnership; or with whom the offender is, or was in a romantic, dating, or sexual relationship [D.C. Official Code § 16-1001 (7)].
  - 3. Intimate Relationship – Sexual or emotional relationship involving heterosexual or homosexual partners.
  - 4. Member – Sworn MPD employee or MPD Reserve Corps member.
  - 5. On-Call Advocacy Program (OCAP) – Program operated by Survivors and Advocates for Empowerment (SAFE) where trained staff and volunteers serve as advocates and assist and support domestic violence victims to protect them from abuse by discussing safety concerns, providing resources, and providing referrals to legal and social services. The advocates are also available to answer questions for all MPD members.
  - 6. OCAP Service – Assistance provided by OCAP to the victim including:
    - a. Providing immediate crisis intervention;
    - b. Finding a shelter;
    - c. Creating a safety plan;
    - d. Providing resource referrals and information about the legal system, both civil and criminal, and educating the victim about the cycle of violence;
    - e. Assisting with Crime Victim's Compensation Program (CVCP) applications to include obtaining hotel placement until the next business day when the family can be placed in a shelter or other shelter resources become available;
    - f. Providing small amounts of transportation assistance and supplies for infants and small children as appropriate;

- g. Assigning a SAFE Advocate at the court for the duration of a case, and providing assistance in obtaining a Temporary Protection Order; and
- h. Providing an emergency 911 cellular phone when needed.

### III. REGULATIONS

- A. Members assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 shall participate in the DVAT Pilot Program including when responding to a call for service in another PSA.
- B. Only calls for service involving an intrafamily incident between **intimate partners** are eligible for the DVAT Pilot Program.
- C. Members assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 shall continue to adhere to:
  - 1. GO-OPS-304.11 (Intrafamily Offenses) as it pertains to the proper handling of intrafamily incidents and offenses; and
  - 2. Patrol Services and School Security Bureau (PSSSB) Division Order 08-01 (On-Call Advocacy Program and Emergency Temporary Protection Order Project) as it pertains to OCAP Services and emergency Temporary Protection Orders.

### IV. PROCEDURES

- A. General OCAP Service Procedures
  - 1. Members are advised that the OCAP Service Response Line is available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, to members assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 as part of the DVAT Pilot Program.

**NOTE:** The OCAP Service Response Line is available for all other members as outlined in PSSSB Division Order 08-01.

The OCAP Service Response Line is 1-800-407-5048.
  - 2. Members are reminded that the OCAP Service Response Line is for MPD use only. The number shall not be given to the public.
  - 3. Members on the scene of an intrafamily incident or offense shall inform the complainant that an OCAP advocate is available to speak with them.

4. Members shall call OCAP for **all** alleged intimate partner violence offenses while they are on the scene.
5. Members shall tell the complainant about the services that may be available to them through OCAP, but are reminded not to guarantee any specific service.

NOTES: (1) OCAP advocates are available to speak with all complainants regardless of gender or age. (2) OCAP advocates are available to speak with victims over the telephone while at the event location or to meet victims at the police district station, at a hospital, or at the District of Columbia Superior Court.

6. Members shall not call an OCAP advocate when a victim is intoxicated, under the influence of a controlled substance, or suffering from a severe mental illness. In such cases, members may contact the advocate with information about the case and OCAP will attempt to follow up with the complainant the following business day.

#### B. DVAT Procedures

1. Regardless of the incident location, members assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 shall initiate a **mandatory** call to the OCAP Response Line regardless of the victim's request when they respond to an intrafamily situation between intimate partners, **and:**
  - a. There is reason to believe that an offense or an act that constitutes domestic violence has occurred, whether or not there is an arrest; **or**
  - b. There is a belief or sense on the part of a member that once the victim is no longer in the care or presence of the first responder the potential for assault or danger is high; **or**
  - c. A member has personal knowledge or dispatch (communications) information that there have been repeat calls for service to this family; **or**
  - d. A member believes a Risk Assessment Screen should be conducted.
2. Members shall not contact OCAP in cases where the Watch Commander has approved a dual arrest unless one of the parties requests assistance from an Advocate.
3. Risk Assessment Screens Conducted by OCAP Advocates

- a. Members assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708, after completing their preliminary investigations, shall advise the victim that the member is contacting an OCAP advocate who will conduct a risk assessment screening on the victim to attempt to identify if he/she is in a potentially high risk or lethal situation and if the victim needs the services of a domestic violence service provider.
- b. When the victim agrees to the screening and will speak with an advocate, members shall:
  - (1) Contact the OCAP Response Line and advise the advocate that they are assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708, and are on the scene of an intrafamily situation between intimate partners, and one (1) or more of the criteria listed in Part IV.B.1 of this order has been met;
  - (2) Provide the advocate with the following information:
    - (a) Intimate partner relationship;
    - (b) District and PSA of the intimate partner incident or offense;
    - (c) Victim's name;
    - (d) Suspect/defendant's name;
    - (e) Whether an arrest was made on the scene;
    - (f) Brief summary of the event;
    - (g) Member's name, badge number, and assigned PSA; and
    - (h) CCN.
- c. In the event that there are no telephone(s) available to a member or victim, the member shall provide the victim with a SAFE 911-Only Cellular Phone.

NOTE: These phones will be maintained in the District Stationhouse or in each PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 patrol vehicle. The member shall make arrangements to have the phone delivered to his/her location when a phone is not available in his/her patrol vehicle.

- d. The member shall call the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) by calling 911. When the OUC communications operator answers, the member shall request the call to be transferred to the OCAP Response Line, 1-800-407-5048.

NOTE: The services of OUC will cease once the call is transferred.

- e. In the event that there is no SAFE 911-Only Cellular Phone available, the member shall notify the Watch Commander to request that the Watch Commander respond to the member's location to use the Watch Commander's cellular phone.
- f. The Watch Commander shall respond to the scene when practicable.

- 4. When a victim initially declines to speak with an OCAP advocate, members shall:

- a. Inform the victim that he/she would like the victim to reconsider speaking with a advocate.
- b. After the member concludes the conversation with the advocate, ask the victim if he/she has reconsidered and if he/she would speak with the advocate at this time.

- 5. When, after advising the victim about the services of OCAP and the victim continues to decline to speak with an advocate and does not want to receive OCAP services or to participate in the screening, members shall:

- a. Advise the victim that intimate partner domestic violence is dangerous, and sometimes fatal.
- b. Advise the victim to watch for the behaviors listed in the Risk Assessment Screen described in Part II.1 because they may convey to the victim that he/she is at increased level of danger.
- c. Refer the victim to the Domestic Violence Intake Centers (DVIC), and provide him/her with a completed PD Form 378A (Metropolitan Police Department Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault). When the victim wishes to speak to an advocate during hours when the DVIC is closed, the member shall give the victim the number to SAFE, which is 202-879-7857.

- d. Review some basic safety steps and advise the victim not to let his/her abuser know about these steps because it may provoke the abuser to further violence. Such steps may include any of the following when members believe they are appropriate for the situation:
  - (1) Suggest that the victim consider filing for a Emergency Temporary Protective Order or a Temporary Protective Order;
  - (2) Advise the victim to consider staying at another location if the abuser has been arrested or not apprehended because the abuser will usually be released from custody in a matter of hours and may return to the scene;
  - (3) When the victim wishes to leave the home:
    - (a) Advise the victim to remove necessary documents and items such as birth certificates, social security cards, insurance cards and policies, passports or visas (as applicable), money/credit cards, checkbooks, bankbooks, food stamps, copy of a protective/peace order, vehicle registration, copy of the lease/deed to home, medical and school records, custody papers, power of attorney/will, medications, prescriptions, keys to the home and vehicles, address book, telephone cards, and clothes;
    - (b) When the victim does not have a vehicle or other means of transportation:
      - (i) Advise the victim that OCAP can arrange for transportation for the victim to a hotel, or other safe location, or
      - (ii) The member can provide transportation for the victim to the district station with authorization from a sergeant or above; and
- e. Inform the victim that a detective will be contacting him/her regarding any criminal offense if no arrest had been made; and if the victim allows it, a representative from OCAP can follow up with them the next day.



6. When preparing the reports, members shall indicate in the narrative section of the PD Form 251 the name of the advocate they spoke to and what occurred concerning OCAP referral. Examples are:
  - a. "OCAP Advocate (name) completed DVAT;" or
  - b. "DVAT not completed - C-1 refused to speak with OCAP Advocate (name)."

7. Practical Considerations for Conducting Risk Assessment Screens

- a. Members shall consider the immediate circumstances in determining whether to make a call to OCAP from the scene. Such a consideration may occur when the abuser is present, the victim is inebriated, the victim goes to the hospital, or there is no telephone or direct communication available between the victim, the on-scene member, the CIC member and the OCAP advocate.
- b. When the circumstances do not permit, or members believe that initiating a call to OCAP may place a victim in immediate danger, or members are unable to ensure the victim's immediate safety, members shall not initiate a call to the OCAP Response Line at that time.
- c. When the circumstances will not permit a call to OCAP to be conducted, but members believe there is a risk or danger to the victim, the member shall contact OCAP and request that the victim be contacted at a later time or under other circumstances.
- d. Members shall document on the PD Form 251 (Incident Based Event Report) whenever they are unable to initiate a call to the OCAP Response Line when on the scene of an intimate partner call for service.

C. Response by OCAP

1. Upon being advised by a member assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708 that a victim needs to be assessed for being in high danger, the advocate will:
  - a. Speak with the victim when the victim agrees, counsel the victim as appropriate, and determine immediate safety planning measures with the victim.

- b. When necessary, ask the victim if she/he may discuss the victim's situation with the member in order to coordinate safety plans.
- c. When it appears to the advocate that the advocate will likely be on the phone with the victim for **longer than eight (8) minutes** and that the member's assistance or presence does not seem to be required any longer, the advocate will ask to speak with the member.
  - (1) The advocate will explain to the member that his/her assistance or presence or assistance does not seem to be required any longer and that, if the victim agrees, the member may consider leaving.
  - (2) When the member chooses to do so, the member shall speak with the victim to assure himself/herself that the member's assistance or presence is no longer required.
  - (3) When the victim agrees, and the member believes that the situation on the scene is stable and safe and is otherwise a situation where he/she would normally return to service, the member shall return to service.

## 2. Intake

When a victim who has received a high risk assessment after speaking with an advocate during the initial phone call or who goes to either DVIC, OCAP will:

- a. Process the victim according to its administrative intake procedures.
- b. Provide enhanced services to victims referred as high risk cases by providing immediate crisis intervention services.

## 3. Risk Assessment

As part of the administrative intake procedures, primarily in cases where the victim has gone to OCAP for assistance, an advocate will:

- a. Administer a Risk Assessment Screen after explaining to the victim why she/he is conducting it.
- b. Advise the victim of the final results of the Risk Assessment Screen and explain the degree of danger that the victim is in.

- c. Coordinate with other agencies for immediate services available to the victim and family.

D. Responsibilities

1. The Domestic Violence Coordinator, Investigative Services Bureau, shall be responsible for monitoring compliance of this directive.
2. Check-off officials shall be responsible for ensuring that proper notification is made to OCAP for any intrafamily incidents involving intimate partner violence by a member assigned to PSAs 506, 507, 602, 604, 608, 706 and 708.

**V. CROSS REFERENCES**

- A. Patrol Services and School Security Bureau (PSSSB) Division Order 08-01 (On-Call Advocacy Program and Emergency Temporary Protection Order Project)
- B. GO-OPS-304.11 (Intrafamily Offenses)
- C. D.C. Official Code § 16-1001 (Definitions)



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