
Police Officer Domestic Violence

Concepts and Issues Paper

April, 1999

181409

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Document

This paper supports the *Model Policy on Police Officer Domestic Violence* established by the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center. This paper conveys the philosophy and development of the policy along with the implementation requirements. As law enforcement executives tailor this policy to their specific agency, the policy will need to be redrafted in the context of existing local ordinances, department policy, provisions of union contracts and all other state and federal laws. Although the policy speaks to police officers, application to all department employees whether sworn or civilian is recommended.

B. Definitions

"Police Officer Domestic Violence" refers to any reported, founded, and/or prosecuted incident of domestic violence wherein a sworn police officer is the suspected offender. For the purposes of this policy, "domestic violence" refers to any act of violence (threatened or actual) perpetrated by a police officer (on or off duty) or any police department employee upon his or her intimate partner. "Partner" refers to any individual (opposite or same sex) the officer has dated, cohabitated with, married, and/or has a child in common. These definitions may be limited to the definitions in the laws of each state.

While not the focus of this policy, other forms of family violence (for example; child and elder abuse) should be addressed in a parallel manner.

C. Background

IACP/COPS/VAWO Collaboration. The model policy and this concepts and issues paper are the culmination of an effort by the IACP, with the support of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Violence Against Women Office (VAWO). Together, these agencies accomplished a series of tasks to develop the model policy. The IACP designed and developed the project, working closely with advisors and using grant funds from COPS and VAWO to support the completion of project tasks. The underpinning of the project was the strong agreement among IACP, VAWO, and COPS that the problem of police officer domestic violence is of paramount importance and requires a definitive policy response.

Nature and Extent of the Problem. Acts of domestic violence by a police officer against a partner are estimated to be at least as common as acts committed by the general population. Recent

limited research indicates the possibility of higher incident rates of domestic violence among law enforcement professionals. The IACP, while concerned with variations in assessed levels, takes the position that the problem exists at some serious level and deserves careful attention regardless of estimated occurrences.

Research also indicates that documentation of such incidents by departments varies dramatically, with some incidents reported in great detail, others handled through informal actions, and still others undocumented in any way. Departmental positions on police officer domestic violence also significantly differ: some departments have clear "zero tolerance" positions, other departments have less defined positions, and still others have no articulated position at all. The variations in departmental policies underscore the need for the IACP's model policy initiative.

Policy Development Approach. In order to craft a credible policy that could be reasonably implemented by police agencies nationwide, the IACP brought together for their expert input 1) police leaders, 2) victim advocates, and 3) victims of domestic violence.

To bring these constituencies together, the IACP held four national summits throughout 1997 on "Police Officer Domestic Violence" hosted by: The New York City, New York, Police Department, the Indianapolis/Evansville, Indiana, Police Departments, the Duke University, North Carolina, Police Department, and the Charleston, West Virginia, Police Department. Each summit was also co-hosted by the principal victim advocacy agency(s) in the geographic area where the summits took place.

Each summit expanded upon what was learned at the previous summits and culminated in a final "policy review" summit hosted by the Oakland, California, Police Department in April 1998. This final summit focused on review, reaction, and revision of a draft model policy crafted from information gained from the four prior summits.

The Continuum of Response. The single most compelling and repeated recommendation that emerged from the summits was a call for the development of a comprehensive policy on police officer domestic violence. Participants emphasized a need for the policy to be based upon the principles of community-oriented policing and address the problem of domestic violence in a multifaceted way that reflects a continuum of responses including prevention and intervention.

- Prevention, Education and Training
- Early Warning and Intervention
- Incident Response Protocols
- Victim Safety and Protection
- Post-Incident Administrative and Criminal Case Actions

Within the context of a single model policy, the practical suggestions and guidelines in each phase of the continuum become a seamless policy for departments to implement.

Potential Challenges to the Policy. As departments attempt to set a standard of zero tolerance for domestic violence through implementation of a policy to address past, present, and future incidents of police officer domestic violence, challenges will be launched. Even though departments are directed to observe and adhere to all necessary protocols to ensure that administrative and criminal investigations of an accused officer are conducted such that the officer's departmental and legal rights are upheld, departments may face legal challenges to the policy from individual officers or the unions that represent them. A copy of the legal review IACP conducted on the model policy is available upon request.

On the other hand, the absence of a clearly delineated policy and the training needed for implementation leaves a department at risk for charges of liability if violence occurs.

II. POLICY COMPONENTS

This policy applies to past convictions for domestic violence, as well as existing and future offenses. In the process of adopting this policy of zero tolerance, departments must review the records of all officers to ensure they are free of domestic violence convictions. Federal law prohibits police officers who have been convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes from possessing a firearm.

A. Prevention, Education, and Training

This component of the continuum focuses on prevention and is intended to exist separately from the specific responses to officers evidencing inclination to, or actually committing, domestic violence.

A policy of zero tolerance to police officer domestic violence must permeate the entire police agency as it may be the most crucial prevention strategy available. Zero tolerance is accomplished through a comprehensive baseline education and training campaign for all officers and civilians in the department upon implementation of the policy.

1. *Prevention Through Collaboration.* As a means of prevention, departments should establish an ongoing, and lasting, relationship with victim advocates and domestic violence program professionals in their community. These advocates, well-versed in the issues surrounding domestic violence, can serve as essential partners in effective community policing.

In addition to providing confidential counseling services, or referrals to such resources, these community-based agencies often provide advocates to work with victims on-scene and can assist departments with the actual training of officers.

Departments should look to neighboring departments and national law enforcement agencies for information on existing domestic violence curricula that can serve as a guideline for the development of training by the department. Experienced officers from these jurisdictions can train officers.

The policy details specific training/information topics and recommends that departments utilize the expertise of local domestic violence victim advocates to conduct trainings. Departments should work to maintain an ongoing relationship with local domestic violence victim advocacy organizations and coordinating councils. Such collaboration will further the community's understanding of the role police play in stopping domestic violence.

Departments should be prepared to train advocates in the community on police protocols and policies as they relate to domestic violence and law enforcement issues related to enhancing victim safety. The advocate community should receive training on police policies and/or how they can team effectively with police to respond to victim needs. Such training should focus on the respective concerns and needs of both organizations.

2. *Education.* Within the department, many different officers will be called upon to respond to domestic violence. Comprehensive training for officers of all ranks on their responsibilities is critical.

The department must be prepared to make a significant commitment of time to training on all the topics listed in the policy. The optimal time for baseline training is estimated at 40 hours.

All education and prevention initiatives should promote self-awareness. In addition, training on police officer domestic violence should be incorporated into use of force, ethics, evidence, and community policing trainings.

• *Recruit Education.* A recruit's perspective on law enforcement's attitudes and approaches to domestic violence, including police officer domestic violence, is formed early on by what is taught at the police academy. A specific curriculum on this topic must be created and implemented in academies nationwide, reflecting the essential elements of the model policy.

• *Communications Officer/ Dispatcher Education.* Communications officers/ dispatchers usually receive the first call-in information on a police officer domestic violence incident. They must be carefully trained to respond quickly, notify the right individuals, and document the incident for command personnel. Their actions at the 911 juncture are essential to proper police response and victim safety.

• *Field Training Officer Education.* Once academy training is completed, new officers learn their "street smarts" from the FTO. How FTOs are selected and how they present information on both domestic violence and the department's policies are pivotal in helping new officers form positions on the issue. In-depth training of those officers poised to influence future generations of officers is critical to the elimination of domestic violence within the ranks and community. FTOs should receive specific instruction on how to train on domestic violence and victim issues.

• *Administrative Command/ Supervisor Education.* Commanders within a department must agree upon a proper and coordinated response to police officer domestic violence. Their leadership on the issue of domestic violence and the tone they set in the department will determine the success of the policy's implementation. A training curriculum that details their duties and responsibilities is essential.

3. *Training.* Adopting a comprehensive training and implementation strategy ensures all department employees have a working knowledge of the dynamics and issues involved in domestic violence. The training, once completed, should be updated and evaluated regularly using roll-call and in-service opportunities as well as other systems for on-going information dissemination.

• *In-Service Training.* Initial academy and FTO training must be reinforced through ongoing and timely in-service training on the topic. The training should ensure that officers comprehend the complexities of domestic violence in order to be most effective at the scene.

• *Roll-Call Training.* The most intense and shortest in duration, roll-call training is an extremely effective way to keep a department's domestic violence policies at the forefront. To be

innovative and informative, roll-call training should use video, news clips, advocate presentations, or senior/command officer presentations. Roll-call training should be designed to refresh officers on the broader policy information they learned through academy and in-service training initiatives.

- *Ongoing Information Dissemination.* Formal policies of the department, once adapted from the IACP model policy, should be printed and distributed to all officers and civilians in the department. This information should also become part of the department's written policies and procedures, as well as a core component of the training curriculum at the academy. Other information (new research, advocate program brochures, etc.) should be regularly disseminated to officers whenever such information reinforces the existing policy or provides additional resources to strengthen the policy.

- *Program Evaluation.* There are a variety of ways to measure the effectiveness of the training being provided. For their own benefit, departments are encouraged to work with internal or external research resources to evaluate the training of officers.

B. Early Warning and Intervention

Of critical concern to departments is how to screen and select new officers and minimize the risk of hiring officers who may engage in domestic violence. To understand the connection between the various forms of family violence, it is essential to investigate whether a recruit has a history or likelihood of engaging in child abuse, domestic violence, or elder abuse. The process of investigating recruits must be handled in two stages: pre-hire screening and investigation, and post-conditional offer of employment.

1. *Pre-Hire Screening and Investigation.* All candidates should be asked about any history of perpetrating child abuse, domestic violence, or elder abuse, past arrests or convictions for such crimes and whether they have ever been the subject of a civil protective order. If the candidate answers positively to any of these questions or the department uncovers any information in the background check that indicates a history of violence, the candidate should be screened out of the hiring process.

During the background investigation, a check should be made for restraining orders issued in any jurisdiction where the candidate has lived.

2. *Post-Conditional Offer of Employment.* If the candidate's background investigation does not indicate a history of child abuse, domestic violence, or elder abuse, the department should proceed with a psychological examination, which should include indicators of violent or abusive tendencies and be conducted by an experienced psychologist or psychiatrist.

3. *Post-Hire Intervention.* Departments must be clear with all officers about the zero tolerance policy and create opportunities to share this information with their families. Departments should look to develop a line of communication directly with the partners of recruits and officers. For example, a department can hold a family orientation day prior to graduation. Family members should be provided with instructions on whom to contact within the department if any problems arise. The dual purpose of establishing such contact is to underscore the department's zero tolerance policy and to provide victims with an avenue for direct communication with a department employee who is trained in handling such calls.

4. *Department Responsibilities.* An individual or family member of an officer may recognize early indicators of a police officer's potential violence such as issues of power and control. The

power and control may take the forms of restricting contact with family and friends, or requiring the partner to turn over his/her paycheck, or limiting activities outside the home. Victims may communicate their concerns "informally" at first, such as calls to an officer's supervisor. These informal contacts must be treated with care, since this is a critical opportunity for a department to provide intervention utilizing early intervention/prevention strategies. The model policy calls for a formal system of documenting, sharing and responding to information from concerned partners and family members.

Departments need to provide officers and their families with non-punitive avenues of support and assistance before an incident of domestic violence occurs. Departments must establish procedures for making confidential referrals to internal or external counseling services with expertise in domestic violence. These referrals can be made upon the request of an officer or family members, or in response to observed warning signs.

An officer will not be entitled to confidentiality anytime he/she or a family member discloses to any member of the department that the officer has engaged in domestic violence. Confidentiality should be extended to partners or family members who report an officer as a matter of safety. A report of such criminal conduct must be treated as an admission/report of a crime and investigated both criminally and administratively.

Departments must understand that other officers may become involved in an officer's domestic violence situation by engaging in inappropriate activities that serve to interfere with cases against fellow officers, such as stalking, intimidation, harassment or surveillance of victims, witnesses, and/or family members of victims or witnesses. If this occurs, these officers must be investigated and sanctioned and/or charged criminally where appropriate.

5. *Supervisor Responsibilities.* Typically, an abusive person engages in a pattern of behavior: repeated actions of increasing control directed at his/her partner preceding an incident of physical/criminal violence.

The early indicators of potential violence are not limited to home life and the department may detect warning signs in an officer's behavior prior to a domestic violence incident. Supervisors must receive specific training on warning signs and potential indicators of violent or controlling tendencies. Warning signs that may indicate a likelihood of violent behavior include increased use of force in arrest situations, drug/alcohol problems, frequent tardiness or absences, verbal disputes, physical altercations, and other aggressive behavior.

As a supervisor becomes aware of a pattern of controlling or abusive behavior exhibited by an officer, the supervisor is to document the information and notify his/her immediate ranking supervisor, who will inform the chief in accordance with the department's chain of command. The officer's supervisor should, after making proper notification, inform the officer that the behaviors have been documented. A recommendation can be made to the officer that he/she participate voluntarily in a counseling/support program to address the identified issue or behavior.

In cases where behavior violates departmental policy, a department can seize the opportunity to mandate participation in a batterer intervention program in addition to any appropriate sanctions.

Early prevention/intervention strategies employed by a department at this phase of the continuum have tremendous potential not only to reduce future violence, but also to save victim lives and officer careers. The range of services that can be

made available includes the following:

- Employee assistance program referral
- Internal professional counseling (police psychologist)
- External professional counseling (contract/referral)
- Advocacy support from local agencies
- Peer support program (with clear reporting and confidentiality guidelines)

The department will need to ensure that the quality and expertise of these resources are sound. Collaboration with local domestic violence victim advocacy organizations is recommended.

6. *Police Officer Responsibilities.* As part of the department's zero tolerance policy, all officers need to understand their responsibility to report definitive knowledge they have concerning domestic violence on the part of an officer. Departments must be prepared to investigate and possibly sanction and/or charge criminally any officer who fails to report such knowledge or cooperate with an investigation.

In addition, all officers need to know that they will be investigated and sanctioned and/or charged criminally if they engage in activities such as stalking, surveillance, intimidation, or harassment of victims or witnesses in an attempt to interfere with investigations of other officers accused of domestic violence.

In the event that an officer is the subject of a criminal investigation and/or a protective or restraining order, the officer is responsible for informing his/her supervisor and providing copies of the order and timely notice of court dates, regardless of the jurisdiction.

C. Incident Response Protocols

A department's response to 911 calls involving police officer domestic violence immediately sets the tone for how a situation will be handled throughout the remainder of the continuum. Further, the unique dynamics between the offending and responding officers (for example, collegiality and rank differential) often make on-scene decisions extremely difficult.

1. *Department-Wide Response.* A department must take the following actions, all of which are critical steps prescribed in the model policy.

2. *Communications Officer/ Dispatcher Documentation.* When a call or report of domestic violence involves a police officer, the dispatcher should have a standing directive to document the call and immediately notify both the on-duty patrol supervisor and the chief of police. This directive ensures that key command personnel receive the information and prevents the call from being handled informally.

3. *Patrol Response.* Any officer arriving at the scene of a domestic violence call/incident involving a police officer must immediately request the presence of a supervisor from the responding department on the scene regardless of the involved officer's jurisdiction.

4. *On-Scene Supervisor Response.* The on-scene supervisor has responsibilities for the following:

- Securing the scene and collecting evidence
- Ensuring an arrest is made where probable cause exists
- Removing weapons in the event of an arrest
- Considering victim safety
- Notifying chief in accused officer's jurisdiction

The on-duty supervisor must respond to the call and assume all on-scene decision making. Leaving call response to officers of lesser or equal rank to the suspect officer puts the responding officer in a difficult situation. The presence of a ranking officer on the scene resolves this problem. The policy recommends that in

police officer domestic violence cases no fewer than two officers, with at least one of senior rank to the accused officer, be present. This is also the case when serving arrest warrants and civil protective orders.

• **Crime Scene Documentation.** Recanting or reluctant witnesses and victims are not uncommon when domestic violence occurs. Police on the scene of a 911 call must take specific actions to document all evidence, including color photographs/video-tape of injuries, overturned/damaged furniture, interviews of neighbors and family members, and documentation of threats from the officer. Documentation of this evidence will be essential to the successful prosecution of the case with or without the victim's presence in court.

• **Arrest Decisions.** Policies on arrest for domestic violence incidents vary among state, county, and local jurisdictions. In all cases, responding officers should base arrest decisions on probable cause. When a crime has been committed, an arrest shall be made, as in all other cases. The on-scene supervisor is responsible for determining whether probable cause exists ensuring an arrest is made if probable cause exists, or submitting written documentation to explain why an arrest was not made. All officers need sufficient training to enable them to determine which party is the primary (i.e., dominant) aggressor in domestic violence situations. Every effort should be made to determine who is the primary aggressor in order to avoid unwarranted arrest of victims.

Arrest warrants charging officers with domestic assault and civil protective orders issued at a later time should be served by no fewer than two officers with at least one officer being of senior rank to the officer being served.

• **Weapon Removal.** If an arrest is made, the on-scene supervisor shall relieve the accused officer of his/her service weapon. Some police officers may have several weapons at their home. Where multiple weapons are present, removing only the service weapon of the officer leaves the victim entirely vulnerable to further violence. While federal, state, and local laws vary on how and when such weapons can be removed, police have broad powers to remove weapons in certain circumstances, particularly if an arrest is being made. Where application of law is questionable, the on-scene supervisor should suggest that the officer in question voluntarily relinquish all firearms. The supervisor can also simply ask the victim if he/she wants to remove any weapons from the home for safekeeping by the department.

In situations where no arrest has been made, the on-scene supervisor should consider removing the accused officer's weapon as a safety consideration.

After weapons are removed, decisions will need to be made about how long they will or can be held. Where court orders of protection are in place, these orders may also affect decisions on gun removal/seizure.

5. *Additional Critical Considerations.* When the accused officer is the chief/ director/ superintendent of the department, a specific protocol must be in place to document and report the incident to the individual who has direct oversight for the chief/director/ superintendent position.

When police respond to a domestic violence incident involving an officer from another jurisdiction, all responding officers, investigators, and supervisors shall follow the same procedures to be followed if responding to a domestic violence complaint involving an officer from their own department. The on-scene supervisor shall notify the chief of police from the accused officer's department verbally as soon as possible and in writing within 24 hours of the call.

Departments may be faced with domestic violence situations where the victim is a police officer. If this occurs, standard domestic violence response and investigation procedures should be followed. The department should take steps to protect the privacy of the officer and make referrals to confidential counseling services. The department should not allow the reported incident to impact negatively upon the assignments and evaluation of the victimized officer.

If both the victim and offender in a domestic violence situation are police officers, the protocols established by the department should remain substantially the same. Safety of the victim should be the paramount concern. In the event that an order of protection has been issued, a department will need to make careful decisions concerning work assignments for accused officers pending administrative and criminal investigations. Gun removal in this situation becomes extremely complex. In the development of the policy, individual departments should seek legal guidance to ensure the rights of all concerned are protected.

6. *Department Follow Up.* The department or supervisor should require a debriefing of all officers involved in a response to the scene of a police officer domestic violence case and may include communications officers. At the debriefing, the department's confidentiality guidelines should be reviewed. In addition, a command-level critical incident management review of every domestic violence case involving an officer should be conducted.

The department must take responsibility for conducting an assessment to determine the potential for further violence on the part of the accused officer. A specifically trained member of the command staff should review a checklist of risk factors with the accused officer. In addition, the evaluation should be supplemented by interviews with the victim, witnesses, and family members. Information gained from the assessment should be used to determine appropriate sanctions, safeguards, and referrals. The command officer assigned as the victim's principal contact should discuss the risk factors with the victim as part of safety planning.

D. Victim Safety and Protection

IACP efforts within this project have clearly identified victims of police officers as some of the most vulnerable victims of any crime. They face formidable obstacles when seeking police assistance in breaking free from the violence. A police officer is usually well known to other members of the justice system and often well respected in justice and law enforcement circles. Victims in these circumstances feel powerless and often fear that justice will not be realized if they bring charges against an officer. To respond to victims effectively, the department must ensure that an array of resources is made available to the victim.

1. *The victim is offered the support of available advocacy/counseling resources.* The presence of a domestic violence victim advocate can help the victim increase his or her safety. While at the scene, the supervisor is to ensure that the victim receives written information about community resources and local domestic violence organizations.

2. *Victim safety is a priority.* The command officer serving as the victim's principal contact must create a safety plan with the victim and discuss stalking. Information learned through the risk assessment should be incorporated into the development of a safety plan created by the victim and officer together or with the assistance of an experienced domestic violence victim advocate. Both the safety planning and lethality assessment tools are critical for alerting the department and victim to the potential for

additional violence and for developing prevention strategies. Departments must recognize that the threat of the loss of his/her job coupled with the loss of control over his/her partner may cause a batterer to take extreme action such as abducting the victim, taking hostages, and committing homicide or suicide.

3. *Confidentiality for victims is a matter of safety.* The whereabouts of a victim and any communication with victims must be kept confidential. During the post-incident debriefing of the responding officers, it must be emphasized that information be shared only on a need-to-know basis. The command officer assigned to the victim must inform victims of department confidentiality policies and their limitations.

4. *The victim is informed about all applicable policies and laws.* Informing the victim of his/her rights and the procedures for obtaining a restraining order or civil protective order is the responsibility of the on-scene supervisor. Providing information on the laws, particularly orders of protection, in a timely manner will enable victims to make informed decisions.

5. *The victim has a direct link to a command officer in the department for case information.* Promptly following the report of the incident, the department shall assign a command officer as the victim's principal contact for case information. This information link is essential to maintain victim safety and confidence in the system. The victim must be informed about all aspects of departmental protocols and policies and applicable laws to ensure that he/she takes advantage of all opportunities for safety and appropriate prosecution.

E. Post-Incident Administrative and Criminal Decisions

Once an arrest has been effected or an incident has otherwise been documented, careful attention must be devoted to the proper handling of the police officer incident. The department should conduct two separate but parallel investigations. The administrative investigation, to be conducted by the Internal Affairs Division of the department, and the criminal investigation, to be handled by the department's domestic violence unit, should be kept completely separate. If a department does not have an internal affairs or domestic violence unit, the investigator should be appointed by the chief. Simultaneous investigation will bring about a complex situation, but is critical to a zero tolerance policy. In order to ensure that an accused officer's departmental and legal rights are upheld during the administrative and criminal investigations, the department must seek legal guidance.

1. *Administrative Investigations and Decisions.* In cases where an arrest was not made, but sufficient concern exists, the department should conduct an independent administrative investigation.

Regardless of whether an arrest was made, the administrative investigation should be handled by an investigator in the Internal Affairs Division of the department. The investigating officer appointed must have experience to conduct an exhaustive analysis, authority to make decisions regarding arrest, and access to all pertinent information that may relate to the case.

At this juncture, a department must exercise its authority to make sanctioning and assignment decisions regarding the officer in question. Decisions about possible administrative actions should be made in a timely manner and should not be contingent on anticipated outcomes of the criminal proceedings. These decisions are pivotal to victim and/or community safety, as well as the well-being of the officer.

Administrative action including suspension with or without pay, reassignment, or termination should be considered based

upon factors such as the outcome of the lethality assessment of the officer, previous written or verbal threats, and history of the officer's compliance with department rules.

When an investigation of an incident uncovers that other officers had definitive knowledge of an incident or an officer's intent prior to an incident and they failed to notify the department, those officers should be investigated and sanctioned.

If an arrest was not made at the scene and if all weapons were not removed at the scene, they can be removed at this point. After weapons are removed, decisions will need to be made about how long they will or can be held. Where court orders of protection are in place, these orders may also affect decisions on gun removal/seizure.

2. *Criminal Investigations and Decisions.* An investigator within the department's domestic violence unit should be appointed by the chief to conduct the criminal investigation. If a department does not have a domestic violence unit, the investigation should be handled by the criminal investigations unit or the detective division.

A thorough criminal investigation should be conducted and the case prepared for presentation to the prosecuting attorney. Where an arrest is made, successful prosecution requires close collaboration between the police and the prosecutorial agencies involved. The department should establish a liaison who will work with the prosecuting attorney's office on each case to support the department's interest in having the case processed in a timely manner.

Where the victim recants previous testimony or chooses not to pursue the case, the prosecutor may determine that the case should proceed with the state as the complainant (where applicable laws allow) based on the quality of evidence. In these cases, the role the police play in gathering evidence and investigating the charges will be critical for successful prosecution.

If an arrest was made, then all information pertaining to the incident and all necessary charging paperwork must be forwarded immediately to the prosecutor's office. The quality and quantity of information transferred will be substantial, including documentation of early calls to the agency, information on related

officer behavior concerns, communications officer/ dispatcher documents, on-scene damage/injury photos, etc.

Any subsequent incidents reported by the victim or any additional criminal activity, which might involve fellow officers engaging in surveillance or intimidation for example, should be documented in separate incident reports, assigned a case number, and investigated thoroughly.

3. *Criminal Conviction.* A plea of *nolo contendere* by an accused officer does not restrict the department from the full range of administrative sanctions if an officer has violated department policies.

If an officer is found guilty of domestic violence through the administrative investigation, the officer's police powers must be revoked.

In the event of a conviction for a domestic violence crime, a police officer is no longer eligible to possess or purchase a firearm under federal law and shall have his/her police powers revoked.

Every effort has been made by the IACP Research Center and the Police Response to Violence Against Women Advisory Group to ensure that this model policy incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgement on the issue. However, law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no "model" policy can meet the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of federal court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions and collective bargaining agreements need to be considered.

This project was supported by Grant No.97-WT-VX-KOO3 awarded by the Violence Against Women Office, Office of Justice Programs and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office of Victims of Crime, and the Violence Against Women Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice.