

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW ENFORCEMENT CHECK LIST



## ARRIVING AT THE SCENE...

- ✓ Establish control of the situation.
- ✓ Separate the parties and identify all occupants on the premises.
- ✓ Assess the language needs of the parties and the need for an interpreter.
  - Do not allow one of the parties to interpret for the other or use children to interpret.
  - Obtain an interpreter, if needed.
- ✓ Do not reveal the identity of a 9-1-1 caller.

## CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION...

- ✓ Seize all weapons.
- ✓ Interview parties separately, without children present, and document their statements.
- ✓ Interview any children at the scene separately and without adults present, and document their statements.
- ✓ Look for signs of strangulation, and seek **immediate** medical attention if they are present. Some signs are:
  - Difficulty breathing.
  - Short, choppy sentences.
  - Raspy voice.
  - Redness or slight bruising.
  - Tiny red spots around the eyes, neck, or behind the ears.
  - Neck pain; sore throat.
  - Difficulty swallowing.
  - Light-headed; head rush; fainting.
  - Nausea or vomiting; coughing up blood.
  - Scratches, abrasions, scrapes, or ligature marks around the neck.
- ✓ Ensure the appropriate medical attention is provided.
- ✓ Collect all evidence, such as torn or bloodstained clothing, or damage to property or furniture.
- ✓ Take photographs of the scene, any injuries or damages, and the victim's face, for identification purposes.
- ✓ Interview other witnesses, such as neighbors and co-workers, and

obtain written statements when possible.

- ✓ Identify the existence of protection orders.
- ✓ Determine the primary physical aggressor.
  - Check for a history of domestic violence or any violent acts.
  - Observe signs of self-defense.
  - Assess each person's fear of physical harm.
  - Compare the severity of the injuries suffered by each party.
  - Consider any other relevant circumstances.

### **MAKING AN ARREST...**

- ✓ Complete the police report.
  - Document all evidence collected and other pertinent observations.
  - Document the existence and severity of injuries or any other indication of physical harm.
  - Document if the perpetrator had a weapon at the time of the offense.
  - Document the history of the use of weapons or access to weapons.
  - State if you believe the perpetrator poses a credible threat of serious physical harm to the victim or any other family or household member.
  - Document any history of violence, or violation of a protection order.
  - Document any history of substance abuse, mental health issues, or threat of homicide or suicide.
  - Document any history of stalking, surveillance, or other obsessive behavior.
  - Document if the 9-1-1 call was collected as evidence.
  - Document if violence took place in the sight or within hearing range of children.
- ✓ If no arrest is made due to lack of probable cause, the report **must** state the reasons for not arresting anyone. Continued:

### **BEFORE LEAVING THE PREMISES...**

- ✓ Provide information of local resources for victims of domestic violence.
- ✓ Ensure that the victim and children have a safe place to go.
- ✓ Obtain alternate contact information for the victim.