



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure			
	APD.SOP.3083 – Family Violence Effective Date: July 22nd, 2025		
Chief Darin Schierbaum	Signature by: DS	Date Signed: 7/22/2025	Renewal: 2029

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

APD.SOP.3083 – Family Violence has been completely updated to reflect both department best practices as well as state law. Please read the policy in its entirety and pay special attention to the new sections included such as:

- Updated Officer Response Procedures, including officers having victims positively identify the suspect using a photo from Axon Now /State Federal Search and/or Omnix to view a government issued ID photo. ([Section 4.3](#))
- It is prohibited for an officer to make any statement(s) or act in a manner that can be viewed as condescending or would discourage victims from reporting or prosecuting an act of domestic violence. **This includes statements that threaten, suggest, or indicate the possible arrest of all parties in an attempt to discourage prosecution or from calling the police in the future.** ([Section 4.3.5](#))
- Factors to determine who the Predominant Aggressor is. ([Section 4.6](#))
- Officers are required to serve a TPO if a valid order is presented to them, and the subject is still on scene. ([Section 4.4](#))

Thank you and stay informed!

Policy and Standards Section
Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit



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1. PURPOSE

To establish consistent procedures for the response, investigation, and documentation of Family Violence incidents, including those involving law enforcement personnel. This policy is designed to promote victim safety, ensure officer safety, accountability, and support thorough, lawful investigations in accordance with Georgia law and Department standards.

2. POLICY

It is the policy of the Atlanta Police Department to maintain a proactive, victim-centered response to all incidents of Family Violence. Officers will thoroughly investigate each case, ensure that victims are informed of their rights and available services, and take appropriate enforcement action in accordance with the law and Department protocols.

Domestic violence will be treated as a serious criminal offense. Officers shall not base enforcement decisions on the relationship of the parties, the victim's wishes, or the presence of conflicting statements. Arrests shall be made when probable cause exists, with a focus on identifying the **PREDOMINANT AGGRESSOR** and reducing risk of future harm.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Unit Commanders will ensure officers under their command are trained annually on family violence procedures and victim-centered investigations.
- 3.2 Watch Supervisors are responsible for monitoring family violence calls for service occurring on their shift, respond when necessary and ensure reports are complete, accurate, and submitted promptly for DV Unit review.
- 3.3 Communications Personnel are responsible for prioritizing calls for domestic violence service, dispatching a minimum of two officers when available, and providing officers with up-to-date information such as threats, weapons, suspect location, and if any known protection orders are in place.
- 3.4 Domestic Violence Unit Investigators are responsible for responding to high-priority or complex domestic violence calls for on-scene investigation and assisting officers in the field with calls.
- 3.5 Responding Officers are responsible for understanding and following this directive as outlined.

4. ACTION

4.1 GENERAL

- 4.1.1 Family Violence as outlined in O.C.G.A. § 19-13-1:

Any felony; or commission of the offenses of battery, simple battery, simple assault, assault, stalking, criminal damage to property, unlawful restraint, or criminal trespass occurring between one of more of the following relationships:

- Past or present spouses
- Persons who are parents of the same child
- Parents and children
- Stepparents and stepchildren
- Foster parents and foster children
- Other persons living or formerly living in the same household



- 4.1.2 The term “family violence” shall not be deemed to include reasonable discipline administered by a parent to a child in the form of corporal punishment, restraint, or detention.
- 4.1.3 **Siblings and “family violence”:** Given the language in O.C.G.A. § 19-13-1, and given that it is common for siblings to live or have lived in the same household at some point in their lives, it has been concluded that “family violence” was intended to include the commission of certain acts between siblings within the scope of the Family Violence Act, O.C.G.A. § 19-13-1

4.2 COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

When a caller reports a domestic violence incident, communications personnel should follow standard agency protocols. In addition, communications personnel will:

1. Dispatch a minimum of two officers whenever possible.
2. Assign a priority response whether or not the suspect is known to be on the premises.
3. Document the call and action taken for the call, including those that involve or appear to involve a law enforcement officer.
4. Attempt to obtain any and all information from the caller that may help the responding and investigating officer(s) assess the situation, including the following:
 - a. The immediate safety of the caller and those at the scene
 - b. Other persons involved or witnesses at the scene, including children
 - c. The suspect’s relationship to the victim
 - d. Whether law enforcement has been called before because of this suspect and the number of times
 - e. Previous history of domestic violence
 - f. Presence of firearms or other weapons
5. When requested, advise the officers if the suspect or victim has any outstanding warrants or is on probation or parole.
6. Whenever possible and when it will not jeopardize the individual’s safety, keep the caller on the line in an effort to relay ongoing information to the responding officer(s). An alternative may be to ask the caller to place the phone down but leave the line open if possible and safe to do so.
7. If a call is canceled by the reporting party, officers will still respond and conduct a welfare check.

4.3 ON-SCENE RESPONSE & INVESTIGATION

- 4.3.1 When responding to a report of domestic violence, officers will follow their training and response procedures. Due to the higher risk for violence on a Domestic call, officers should follow the below steps to increase safety of all individuals on scene:
1. Avoid parking law enforcement vehicles in front of the residence or other site of the disturbance when possible.
 2. Request entry if the incident occurred in a private residence.
 - a. A warrantless entry is permitted if the officer(s) establishes exigent circumstances at the time of the entry and believes that there is an emergency at hand that requires an immediate need for police assistance for the protection of life. (APD.SOP.3020 – Search and Seizure)



3. Make contact with all individuals present, including potential witnesses, victims, or perpetrator(s); separate all parties, keeping all individuals out of sight and hearing range of one another as safety permits.
 4. Restrain and remove the suspect if necessary.
 5. Assess for physical injuries, including inquiry about strangulation or possible internal, nonvisible injuries, and sexual violence; if any injuries are advised, or are apparent, EMS must be contacted immediately.
 6. Inquire about weapons in the area or access to weapons; identify and take temporary custody of firearms or weapons in plain sight.
 7. Determine whether there are any potential language barriers and request an interpreter where necessary. Ensure that the victim's language is indicated in the report.
- 4.3.2 Once the scene is secured, the investigating officer will conduct interviews with the victim and/or any witnesses. All verbal statements must be captured on the officers Body Worn Camera or by using the AXON capture app, as well as in written form (if time and safety allow).
1. Interviews should be conducted in a location away from others and include the following questions:
 - a. If there were any acts of intimidation or methods preventing victim for calling for help.
 - b. Have there been recent or previous stalking behaviors from the suspect?
 - c. Did the suspect use any physical objects during the incident?
 - d. Was there unwanted contact by the suspect that made the victim feel frightened or threatened?
 2. Interviews with children may be conducted by the on-scene officer. Interview questions should be limited to basic questions (i.e. "Are you ok" "What did you see", etc), as a forensic interview may be needed depending on the severity of the incident.
- 4.3.3 Officers should have the victim complete a positive identification of the suspect while on scene by using a photo from Axon Now /State Federal Search and/or Omnixx for a government issued ID photo. If access is not available, other pictures are permitted but should be explained thoroughly in the officer's report. All information obtained will be documented with the Body Worn Camera or through Axon Capture.
- 4.3.4 Any evidence of violence on the scene must be documented and recorded by officers. Photographs of injuries to all parties, including any healing or old injuries should be recorded via body camera and the Axon Capture App. If injuries are substantial, ID should come to the scene to take photos.
- 4.3.5 Officer(s) are strictly prohibited from making any statement(s) or act in a manner that can be viewed as condescending or would discourage victims from reporting or prosecuting an act of domestic violence. This includes statements that threaten, suggest, or indicate the possible arrest of all parties in an attempt to discourage prosecution or from calling the police in the future.
- 4.3.6 Information for local domestic violence victim advocacy organizations should be provided to the victim, along with a case number upon completion of the call.



4.4 PROTECTION ORDERS

- 4.4.1 If a Temporary Protective Order (TPO), Family Violence Order or Bond Conditions is said to be active, the Officer will request a copy of the TPO signed by a judge or a copy of the bond conditions of the suspect.
- 4.4.2 When a physical or electronic copy of a Protective Order or bond conditions is presented to the Officer, the Officer will verify through GCIC / ACIC / Odyssey or their MDT, that the document is valid, and visually confirm that the document has been signed by a judge, not expired and that the individuals written in the court order are the individuals involved in the call.
- 4.4.3 If the caller does not have a copy of the Protective Order, the Officer will contact GCIC, or the Domestic Violence Unit, and confirm if a valid order has been issued and continue as follows:
1. If the Protection Order is valid and has been served to the defendant with a serve date, the Officer will make the arrest, or if the subject is not on scene, the Officer will notify their supervisor and the Domestic Violence Unit and complete a detailed report.
 2. If the Protective Order is valid, but does not have a serve date, **the Officer cannot serve the TPO or make an arrest.** The Officer will advise the caller that they must have a copy of the Protective Order for law enforcement to be able to serve the defendant. The Officer is responsible for ensuring that the caller and subject/defendants' information is accurate in the report. The caller/Plaintiff can request additional copies through Family Violence Court of Fulton County.
 3. If GCIC advises that there is no TPO on file for either the caller or the subject, the Officer will instruct the caller/plaintiff to return to Family Violence Court to follow up on their TPO application and its status.
- 4.4.4 In instances when GCIC is down or unavailable, and the Officer is unable to confirm the validity of a TPO, or if the Officer believes the protective order may be fake (i.e. formatting issues, spelling errors, white-out or scratch throughs, missing information) the Officer will contact the Fulton County Sheriff's Office or Family Violence Court to seek verification. If the Officer cannot reach outside support to verify the validity of the protective order, and/or it is outside normal business hours, the officer will notify the Domestic Violence Unit or overnight General Investigation to assist. When all reasonable efforts have been exhausted, and the Officer is still unable to validate the TPO, a detailed report explaining the circumstances that prevented the TPO from being served is required. The Officer will not make an arrest for violating a TPO on a Protective Order that is not confirmed as valid, nor will they serve the unvalidated protective order.
- 4.4.5 Protective Orders and Bond Conditions identify restrictions for the defendant on the order, such as:
1. Required distance that must be kept from the Plaintiff/complainant.
 2. Who is covered under the Protective order such as children, co-workers, employers, other family members.
 3. The limitations of contact through phone, email, a 3rd party, social media, or require no contact to be made.
- 4.4.6 If the defendant/suspect has been served and is on scene, **a physical arrest must be made for violating the TPO (Violation of a Protective Order O.C.G.A. 19-13-6.)** If the suspect has NOT been served, the officer will be required to serve the individual, so long as the officer has been provided a valid TPO.



- 4.4.7 When the TPO indicates that the recipient has been served and is no longer on scene, but the officer has established proof that contact was established by the suspect and the TPO was violated, the Domestic Violence Unit should be notified and a detailed report, to include the TPO court number and serve date, must be completed by the end of the tour
- 4.4.8 In instances when a TPO is not in place but there is a Bond Order or probation/parole conditions established that prohibits contact with the victim/petitioner/complainant/plaintiff, and **the officer is able to establish evidence that the conditions were violated, then the violator should be arrested under 16-5-91 Aggravated Stalking.**
- 4.4.9 A Supervisor notification will be made in instances where a TPO has been violated, and the complainant is in danger.
- 4.4.10 Once the TPO has been served and acknowledge, the recipient/defendant of the Court Order must be removed from the residence immediately.
1. The Individual will be permitted to take personal items such as clothing and toiletries prior to the call ending.
 2. No community property such as TV's, Phones or furniture may be removed at the time of being served, unless specified within the order.
- 4.4.11 Temporary Protective or Family Violence Orders or Bond Conditions that are issued from outside of Fulton County or an out-of- state court, but have already been served, will be honored as though it is a local order, and if on scene, the offender should be arrested. However, if the Order has not been served, the complainant must go to Fulton County Courts to have the document "Domesticated and converted" prior to the document being a valid document in Georgia.
- Officers are not permitted to serve a subject with an out-of-state protection order.*
- 4.4.12 After the Protective Order has been served, and the call has been safety resolved, the officer will pull the call in "5A – Protective Order Served."
- 4.4.13 The Serving Officer will complete and email a [TPO Service for Entry Form](#) to the Domestic Violence Unit at ServedTPO@atlantaga.gov.
- 4.4.14 The DV Unit will be responsible for confirming receipt of the email and updating Odyssey or Fulton County Civil Process Unit with the details and confirmation that the TPO has been served.
- 4.4.15 A detailed report from the serving officer is required and should include, at a minimum all parties involved, who was served, the date and the time the Order was served, along with the Protective Order number from the court, and which judge signed the order

4.5 SUPERVISOR NOTIFICATION

- 4.5.1 Officers responding to family violence calls for service will notify their supervisor when one or more of the following conditions exist:
1. A repeat call for police services to the same location involving the same disputants within a 24-hour period, regardless of whether or not the original call for service was handled by the responding officer.
 2. An individual involved is a City of Atlanta employee, and/or a family member thereof.



3. The aggressor has left prior to police arrival, and the officer believes the victim remains in imminent danger of serious physical harm.

4.6 FAMILY VIOLENCE ARRESTS

4.6.1 If probable cause is established on scene that a person committed a crime involving domestic violence, an arrest must be made.

4.6.2 When complaints of Family Violence are received from two or more opposing parties, the officer will evaluate each complaint separately to attempt to determine who **THE PREDOMINANT AGGRESSOR** is.

4.6.3 As outlined in OCGA 17-4-20.1:

a. Whenever a law enforcement officer responds to an incident in which an act of family violence, as defined in Code Section 19-13-1, has been committed, the officer shall not base the decision of whether to arrest and charge a person on the specific consent of the victim or on a request by the victim solely or on consideration of the relationship of the parties. No officer investigating an incident of family violence shall threaten, suggest, or otherwise indicate the arrest of all parties for the purpose of discouraging requests for law enforcement intervention.

b.

1. As used in this subsection, the term “predominant aggressor” means the individual who poses the most serious, ongoing threat, which may not be the initial aggressor in a specific incident.

2. When complaints of family violence are received from two or more opposing parties, or if both parties have injuries, the officer shall evaluate each complaint separately to attempt to determine who was the predominant aggressor. Such officer shall not threaten, suggest, or otherwise indicate that all parties will be arrested. If such officer determines that one of the parties was the predominant physical aggressor, that person may be arrested. Such officer shall not be required to arrest any other person believed to have committed an act of family violence during the incident. In determining whether a person is a predominant physical aggressor, an officer shall consider all of the following:

PREDOMINANT AGGRESSOR FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

- History: Prior family violence involving either party.
- Injuries: Defensive? Which party used self-defense, and which party initiated the physical dynamic? Strangulation?
- Severity/Location of Injuries?
- Threats?
- Potential for future serious injuries: Who can do more harm?
- Self Defense? Reasonable belief that such threat or force was necessary to defend himself, herself or a third party against
- other's imminent use of unlawful force
- Prior complaints of family violence; and
- Fear: Whether the person had reasonable cause to believe he or she was in imminent danger of becoming a victim of any act of family violence.



Other Important Factors

- Who has the greatest ability and inclination in an ongoing manner to inflict physical injury?
- Misidentification of the victim, may cause harmful consequences, including the denial of custody of children, housing rights, immigration rights access to shelter, and many other services.
- What did the perpetrator intend when using violence? Power and control?

4.6.4 Once the predominate aggressor has been identified and arrested, the other parties do not need to be arrested, unless additional crimes not equivalent to self-defense exist.

4.7 DOCUMENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

4.7.1 Officers will complete a thorough, detailed report following response to, or investigation of, a report of family, dating, or domestic violence, whether or not an arrest is made, or the victim wishes to prosecute.

4.7.2 In addition to standard information added into a report, Reports regarding family violence need to include the following information:

1. Observations upon approach, including the demeanor of on-scene parties
2. Relationship and history of parties involved
3. Whether children were involved or if the act of family violence was committed in the presence of children.
4. All threats and intimidation tactics used by the suspect.
5. Existence of substance abuse.
6. Number and types of weapons involved.
7. Existence of any prior court orders.

4.7.3 Officers are required to detail their response on scene to include:

1. Actions taken while on scene.
2. How the predominant physical aggressor was determined.
3. Why an arrest was not made.
4. Whether the victim was apprised of available remedies and services.

4.7.4 If the primary language of the parties involved is not English, and/or if an interpreter was used, the Primary language must be identified and included in the report. If an interpreter was used, the Interpreters contact information must be included in the report as well.

4.7.5 When reporting a strangulation, the incident report will include the following:

1. The use of "strangulation" instead of choke, except when recording the victim's exact words.
2. The victims' exact words and/or detailed description when describing visual or testimonial evidence.
3. All signs and symptoms observed, relating to a complaint of being choked/strangled.
4. Record victim's description of injury even if there are no visible signs:
 - a. Include all complaints of pain.



b. Document the type and location of all injuries.

4.7.6 Incidents involving family violence in origin must be identified by the following pull-in codes:

1. Code 5A - Report has been made; or
2. Code 5B - Report and arrest have been made.

4.8 RECOGNIZING AND INVESTIGATING STRANGULATION

4.8.1 Strangulation is difficult to identify. Below is a list of common visual signs that can assist the officer identifying strangulation:

1. Head- pinpoint red spots (petechiae) on scalp, hair pulled, bump(s), skull fracture, concussion.
2. Face- red or flushed, petechiae, scratch marks.
3. Eyes and Eyelids- petechiae to the left or right eyeball, bloodshot eyes.
4. Ear- petechiae (external and/or ear canal), bleeding from ear canal.
5. Nose- bloody nose, broken nose, petechiae.
6. Mouth- bruising, swollen tongue, swollen lips, cuts/abrasions.
7. Under the chin- redness, scratch marks, bruise(s), abrasions.
8. Neck- redness, scratch marks, fingernail impressions, bruise(s), abrasions, swelling, ligature marks.
9. Chest and Shoulders- redness, scratch marks, bruise(s), abrasions.

4.8.2 Other symptoms that could be present as a result of a strangulation will not always be observable by the investigating officer. The victim will have to be asked if they are experiencing any of these symptoms, which are listed below:

1. Voice changes- raspy and/or hoarse voice, coughing, unable to speak, complete loss of voice.
2. Swallowing changes- trouble swallowing, painful swallowing, neck pain, nausea/vomiting, drooling.
3. Breathing changes- difficulty breathing, hyperventilation, unable to breathe.
4. Behavioral changes- restlessness or combativeness, problems concentrating, amnesia, agitation, Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome, hallucinations.
5. Vision changes- complete loss or black & white vision, seeing 'stars', blurry, darkness, fuzzy around the eyes.
6. Hearing changes- complete loss of hearing, gurgling, ringing, buzzing, popping, pressure, tunnel-like hearing.
7. Other changes- Memory loss, unconsciousness, dizziness, headaches, involuntary urination or defecation, loss of strength, going limp.



4.9 VICTIM NOTIFICATION

- 4.9.1 Investigating officers will explain to victims and witnesses the procedures involved in the prosecution of their cases as well as their role in those procedures.
(CALEA 6th ed. Standard 55.2.4b)
- 4.9.2 Investigating officers will notify victims of their rights pursuant to the Georgia Crime Victim's Bill of Rights, § 17-17-5 Notification to victim of accused's arrest, release, judicial proceedings, escape, and violations of electronic release and monitoring program.

4.10 VICTIM-WITNESS ADVOCATES

- 4.10.1 Investigating officers will refer to APD.SOP.3100 – Victim / Witness Assistance for procedures pertaining to referrals and follow-up with the victim.
- 4.10.2 Victim-Witness Advocates may be available to follow up on referrals, participate in the training of officers and provide liaison with regard to the outcomes of their referrals.

4.11 PRIMARY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT INVESTIGATOR

The primary Domestic Violence Unit Investigator will continue their preliminary investigation or review the investigation initiated by the first responding officer and make a determination if additional investigation is needed as set forth in APD.SOP.5010 Criminal Investigations Divisions.

5. DEFINITIONS

Asphyxia: A condition caused by inadequate intake of oxygen.

Dyspnea: Shortness of breath. Difficult or labored breathing.

Family Violence: The occurrence of one or more of the following acts between past or present spouses, persons who are parents of the same child, parents and children, step-parents and step-children, foster parents and foster children, or other persons living or formerly living in the same household: OCGA § 19-13-1 "Family Violence Defined"

1. Any felony; or
2. Commission of offenses of battery, simple battery, simple assault, assault, and stalking, criminal damage to property, unlawful restraint, or criminal trespass.

The term "Family Violence" will not be deemed to include reasonable discipline administered by a parent to a child in the form of corporal punishment, restraint, or detention.

Predominant Aggressor: Individual who poses the most serious, ongoing threat, which may not be the person who started the altercation.

General property damage: is the result of an altercation and may result in broken or displaced items as well as overturned furniture. General property damage is a great probable cause that something has happened even when everyone is saying that nothing has.

Systematic property damage: involves the destruction of one person's property by the other. Normally these will be things that have some sentimental or emotional attachment. Pets often fall into this category. Systematic property damage may not only be a good probable cause indicator but may also make the identification of the **predominant physical aggressor** easier.



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3083 – Family Violence
Effective Date: July 22, 2025



Strangulation: The act of strangling or the state of being strangled. (Medical) Inordinate compression or constriction of a part of the throat that causes a suspension of breathing of the passage of contents, or of the circulation.

Stridor: The harsh sound heard on inhalation caused by air passing through a constricted passage (raspy breathing).

Trachea: The windpipe. A fibrocartilaginous tube lined with mucous membrane passing from the larynx to the bronchi.

6. **CANCELLATIONS**

APD.SOP.3083 – “Family Violence” dated June 4, 2019.

7. **REFERENCES**

[O.C.G.A 17-4-20.1, “Investigation of Family Violence; preparation of written report; review of report by defendant arrested for Family Violence; compilation of statistics”](#)

[OCGA § 17-17-5, Georgia Crime Victim’s Bill of Rights](#)

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies CALEA 6 th ed. Standard 55.2.4b



STRANGULATION ASSESSMENT CARD

v.10.12.18

SIGNS	SYMPTOMS	CHECKLIST	TRANSPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red eyes or spots (Petechiae) Neck swelling Nausea or vomiting Unsteady Loss or lapse of memory Urinated Defecated Possible loss of consciousness Ptosis – droopy eyelid Droopy face Seizure Tongue injury Lip injury Mental status changes Voice changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neck pain Jaw pain Scalp pain (from hair pulling) Sore throat Difficulty breathing Difficulty swallowing Vision changes (spots, tunnel vision, flashing lights) Hearing changes Light headedness Headache Weakness or numbness to arms or legs Voice changes 	<p>S Scene & Safety. Take in the scene. Make sure you and the victim are safe.</p> <p>T Trauma. The victim is traumatized. Be kind. Ask: what do you remember? See? Feel? Hear? Think?</p> <p>R Reassure & Resources. Reassure the victim that help is available and provide resources.</p> <p>A Assess. Assess the victim for signs and symptoms of strangulation and TBI.</p> <p>N Notes. Document your observations. Put victim statements in quotes.</p> <p>G Give. Give the victim an advisal about delayed consequences.</p> <p>L Loss of Consciousness. Victims may not remember. Lapse of memory? Change in location? Urination? Defecation?</p> <p>E Encourage. Encourage medical attention or transport if life-threatening injuries exist.</p>	<p>If the victim is Pregnant or has life-threatening injuries which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty breathing Difficulty swallowing Petechial hemorrhage Vision changes Loss of consciousness Urinated Defecated <p>DELAYED CONSEQUENCES</p> <p>Victims may look fine and say they are fine, but just underneath the skin there would be internal injury and/or delayed complications. Internal injury may take a few hours to be appreciated. The victim may develop delayed swelling, hematomas, vocal cord immobility, displaced laryngeal fractures, fractured hyoid bone, airway obstruction, stroke or even delayed death from a carotid dissection, blood clot, respiratory complications, or anoxic brain damage.</p> <p>Taliaferro, E., Hawley, D., McClane, G.E. & Strack, G. (2009). Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence. <i>Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective</i>. Oxford University Press, Inc.</p> <p><small>This project is supported all or in part by Grant No. 2014-TA-AX-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Dept. of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.</small></p>

ADVISAL TO PATIENT

- After a strangulation assault, you can experience internal injuries with a delayed onset of symptoms. These internal injuries can be serious or fatal.
- Stay with someone you trust for the first 24 hours and have them monitor your signs and symptoms.
- Seek medical attention or call 911 if you have any of the following symptoms: difficulty breathing, trouble swallowing, swelling to your neck, pain to your throat, hoarseness or voice changes, blurred vision, continuous or severe headaches, seizures, vomiting or persistent cough.
- The cost of your medical care may be covered by your state's victim compensation fund. An advocate can give you more information about this resource.
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline number is **1-800-799-SAFE**.

NOTICE TO MEDICAL PROVIDER

- The Medical Advisory Board of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention has developed recommendations for the radiologic evaluation of the adult strangulation victim. In patients with a history of a loss of consciousness, loss of bladder or bowel control, vision changes or petechial hemorrhage, medical providers should evaluate the carotid and vertebral arteries, bony/cartilaginous and soft tissue neck structures and the brain for injuries. A list of medical references is available at www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com
- Life-threatening injuries include evidence of petechial hemorrhage, loss of consciousness, urination, defecation and/or visual changes. If your patient exhibits any of the above symptoms, medical/radiographic evaluation is strongly recommended. Radiographic testing should include: a CT angiography of carotid/vertebral arteries (most sensitive and preferred study for vessel evaluation) or CT neck with contrast, or MRA/MRI of neck and brain. Strangled patients with arterial injuries can present with strokes months or years post-strangulation.
- ED/Hospital observation should be based on severity of symptoms and reliable home monitoring.
- Consult Neurology, Neurosurgery and/or Trauma Surgery for admission.
- Consider an ENT consult for laryngeal trauma with dysphonia, odynophagia, dyspnea.
- Discharge home with detailed instructions to return to ED if neurological signs/symptoms, dyspnea, dysphonia or odynophagia develops or worsens.



StrangulationTrainingInstitute.com