

Domestic Violence

320.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidelines necessary to deter, prevent and reduce domestic violence through vigorous enforcement and to address domestic violence as a serious crime against society. The policy specifically addresses the commitment of this department to take enforcement action when appropriate, to provide assistance to victims and to guide officers in the investigation of domestic violence.

320.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Court order - All forms of orders related to domestic and dating violence, that have been issued by a court of this state or another, whether civil or criminal, regardless of whether service has been made.

Dating violence - Any criminal offense involving violence or physical harm, threat of violence or physical harm, or any attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation by a person to commit an offense involving violence or physical harm, when committed by a person against a dating partner of the person who is either 18 years of age or older or is emancipated.

Domestic violence - Includes any crime involving the actual, threatened, or attempted violence or physical harm of a cohabitant. Domestic violence also includes committing or attempting to commit any crime listed in Utah Code 77-36-1 by one cohabitant against another.

320.2 POLICY

The East Carbon Police Department's response to incidents of domestic violence and violations of related court orders shall stress enforcement of the law to protect the victim and shall communicate the philosophy that domestic violence is criminal behavior. It is also the policy of this department to facilitate victims' and offenders' access to appropriate civil remedies and community resources whenever feasible.

320.3 OFFICER SAFETY

The investigation of domestic violence cases often places officers in emotionally charged and sometimes highly dangerous environments. No provision of this policy is intended to supersede the responsibility of all officers to exercise due caution and reasonable care in providing for the safety of any officers and parties involved.

320.4 INVESTIGATIONS

The following guidelines should be followed by officers when investigating domestic violence cases:

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- (a) Calls of reported, threatened, imminent, or ongoing domestic violence, and the violation of any court order are of extreme importance and should be considered among the highest response priorities. This includes incomplete 9-1-1 calls.
- (b) When practicable, officers should obtain and document statements from the victim, the suspect, and any witnesses, including children, in or around the household or location of occurrence.
- (c) Officers should list the full name and date of birth (and school if available) of each child who was present in the household at the time of the offense. The names of other children who may not have been in the house at that particular time should also be obtained for follow-up.
- (d) When practicable and legally permitted, video or audio record all significant statements and observations.
- (e) All injuries should be photographed, regardless of severity, taking care to preserve the victim's personal privacy. Where practicable, photographs should be taken by a person of the same sex. Victims whose injuries are not visible at the time of the incident should be asked to contact the Investigations in the event that the injuries later become visible.
- (f) Officers should request that the victim complete and sign an authorization for release of medical records related to the incident when applicable.
- (g) If the suspect is no longer at the scene, officers should make reasonable efforts to locate the suspect to further the investigation, provide the suspect with an opportunity to make a statement, and make an arrest or seek an arrest warrant if appropriate.
- (h) Seize any firearms or other dangerous weapons in the home, if appropriate and legally permitted, for safekeeping or as evidence.
 - 1. This applies to both investigations involving domestic violence or dating violence (Utah Code 77-36-2.1; Utah Code 78B-7-408).
- (i) When completing an incident or arrest report for violation of a court order, officers should include specific information that establishes that the offender has been served, including the date the offender was served, the name of the agency that served the order, and the provision of the order that the subject is alleged to have violated. When reasonably available, the arresting officer should attach a copy of the order to the incident or arrest report.
- (j) Officers should take appropriate enforcement action when there is probable cause to believe an offense has occurred. Factors that should not be used as sole justification for declining to take enforcement action include:
 - 1. Whether the suspect lives on the premises with the victim.
 - 2. Claims by the suspect that the victim provoked or perpetuated the violence.
 - 3. The potential financial or child custody consequences of arrest.
 - 4. The physical or emotional state of either party.
 - 5. Use of drugs or alcohol by either party.

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6. Denial that the abuse occurred where evidence indicates otherwise.
 7. A request by the victim not to arrest the suspect.
 8. Location of the incident (public/private).
 9. Speculation that the complainant may not follow through with the prosecution.
 10. Actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability, or marital status of the victim or suspect.
 11. The social status, community status, or professional position of the victim or suspect.
- (k) If the offense is alleged against an intimate partner, the officers shall conduct a lethality assessment as required by Utah Code 77-36-2.1. The lethality assessment shall be recorded on the appropriate form and the results submitted to the Department of Public Safety while on scene or as soon as reasonably practicable (Utah Code 77-36-2.1).

320.4.1 IF A SUSPECT IS ARRESTED

If a suspect is arrested, officers should:

- (a) Advise the victim that there is no guarantee the suspect will remain in custody.
- (b) Provide the victim's contact information to the jail staff to enable notification of the victim upon the suspect's release from jail.
- (c) Advise the victim whether any type of court order will be in effect when the suspect is released from jail.

320.4.2 IF NO ARREST IS MADE

If no arrest is made, the officer should:

- (a) Advise the parties of any options, including but not limited to:
 1. Voluntary separation of the parties.
 2. Appropriate resource referrals (e.g., counselors, friends, relatives, shelter homes, victim witness unit).
- (b) Document the resolution in a report.

320.5 VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Because victims may be traumatized or confused, officers should be aware that a victim's behavior and actions may be affected. The following applies to domestic violence and dating violence (Utah Code 77-36-2.1; Utah Code 78B-7-408):

- (a) Victims shall be provided with the Department's domestic violence information handout, even if the incident may not rise to the level of a crime.
- (b) Victims shall also be alerted to any available victim advocates, shelters, and community resources and advised of the results of the lethality assessment if applicable.

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- (c) When an involved person requests law enforcement assistance while removing essential items of personal property, officers shall stand by for a reasonable amount of time.
- (d) If the victim has sustained injury or complains of pain, the officer shall seek medical assistance for the victim as soon as practicable.
- (e) Officers should ask the victim whether the victim has a safe place to stay and assist in arranging transportation to an alternate shelter if the victim expresses a concern for the victim's safety or if the officer determines that a need exists.
- (f) Officers should make reasonable efforts to ensure that any children or dependent adults who are under the supervision of the suspect or victim are being properly cared for.
- (g) If appropriate, officers shall seek or assist the victim in obtaining an emergency order.
- (h) When applicable, the victim should be provided with the required information from the Department of Public Safety regarding the right to voluntarily turn over a firearm to a law enforcement agency for safekeeping.

320.6 DISPATCH ASSISTANCE

All calls of domestic violence, including incomplete 9-1-1 calls, should be dispatched as soon as practicable.

Dispatchers are not required to verify the validity of a court order before responding to a request for assistance. Officers should request that dispatchers check whether any of the involved persons are subject to the terms of a court order.

320.7 FOREIGN COURT ORDERS

Various types of orders may be issued in domestic violence cases. Any foreign court order properly issued by a court of another state, Indian tribe or territory shall be enforced by officers as if it were the order of a court in this state. An order should be considered properly issued when it reasonably appears that the issuing court has jurisdiction over the parties and reasonable notice and opportunity to respond was given to the party against whom the order was issued (18 USC § 2265). An otherwise valid out-of-state court order shall be enforced, regardless of whether the order has been properly registered with this state.

320.8 VERIFICATION OF COURT ORDERS

Determining the validity of a court order, particularly an order from another jurisdiction, can be challenging. Therefore, in determining whether there is probable cause to make an arrest for a violation of any court order, officers should carefully review the actual order when available, and, where appropriate and practicable:

- (a) Ask the subject of the order about his/her notice or receipt of the order, his/her knowledge of its terms and efforts to respond to the order.

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- (b) Check available records or databases that may show the status or conditions of the order.
- (c) Contact the issuing court to verify the validity of the order.
- (d) Contact a law enforcement official from the jurisdiction where the order was issued to verify information.

Officers should document in an appropriate report their efforts to verify the validity of an order, regardless of whether an arrest is made. Officers should contact a supervisor for clarification when needed.

320.9 LEGAL MANDATES AND RELEVANT LAWS

Utah law provides for the following:

320.9.1 STANDARDS FOR ARRESTS

- (a) Officers responding to a domestic violence call shall arrest or issue a citation to a domestic violence offender if there is probable cause to believe an offense has occurred. The offense need not occur in the officer's presence (Utah Code 77-36-2.2). Any citation issued shall note that the offense involved a domestic violence offense (Utah Code 77-7-20).
- (b) An officer shall arrest an alleged perpetrator whenever there is probable cause to believe that the alleged perpetrator has violated any of the provisions of a court order or condition of release agreement and there is evidence the order has been served. The offense need not occur in the officer's presence (Utah Code 77-36-2.4; Utah Code 78B-7-119).
- (c) If an officer has probable cause to believe there will be continued violence against the victim or if there is evidence that the perpetrator has either recently caused serious bodily injury or used a dangerous weapon in the domestic violence offense, the officer may not utilize the option of issuing a citation (Utah Code 77-36-2.2). Factors that may support the likelihood of a continuing offense include:
 - 1. A prior history of arrests or citations involving domestic violence.
 - 2. The alleged perpetrator is violating a court order.
 - 3. The alleged perpetrator has a prior history of other assaultive behavior (e.g., arrests or convictions for assault and battery or aggravated assaults).
 - 4. The victim states that the alleged perpetrator has a history of physical abuse toward the victim.
 - 5. The victim expresses fear of retaliation or further violence should the alleged perpetrator be released.
 - 6. Any other evidence that would indicate the victim may be subjected to continued violence or abuse.
- (d) In responding to domestic violence incidents, officers should generally be reluctant to make dual arrests. If an officer receives complaints of domestic violence from two or more opposing persons, the officer shall evaluate each complaint separately to identify

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the predominant physical aggressor. If the officer determines that one person was the predominant physical aggressor, the officer need not arrest the other person alleged to have committed domestic violence. In determining the predominant aggressor, the officer shall consider (Utah Code 77-36-2.2):

1. Any prior complaints of domestic violence.
 2. The relative severity of injuries inflicted on each person.
 3. The likelihood of future injury to each of the parties.
 4. Whether one of the parties acted in self-defense.
- (e) An officer may not threaten, suggest, or otherwise indicate the possible arrest of all parties in order to discourage any party's request for intervention by law enforcement (Utah Code 77-36-2.2).
- (f) Whenever an alleged perpetrator is arrested or issued a citation and subsequently released by this department, the releasing officer shall then make a reasonable effort to notify the victim of that release and shall transmit that information to the statewide domestic violence network (Utah Code 78B-7-802).
- (g) An officer who does not make an arrest shall notify the victim of his/her right to initiate a criminal proceeding and of the importance of preserving evidence (Utah Code 77-36-2.2).
- (h) Whenever a complainant advises of the existence of a court order, the officer shall determine if a valid court order exists and use every reasonable means to enforce the order. The officer should determine whether the order is in the statewide domestic violence network (Utah Code 78B-7-113) and/or:
1. Whether a court order is on file with a law enforcement agency or whether the complainant has a copy of the court order in his/her possession.
 2. Whether proof of service or prior notice exists, whether the alleged perpetrator was in court when the order was made, or it was provided by a court ex parte.
 3. The terms of the court order that may be enforced against the alleged perpetrator.
- (i) In the event the alleged perpetrator is no longer at the scene, officers shall document the incident for follow-up investigation.
- (j) If an arrest is made or a citation is issued, the arresting officer shall provide the individual with written notice containing the following information (Utah Code 78B-7-802):
1. The individual may not telephone, contact, or otherwise communicate directly or indirectly with the victim before being released.
 2. The individual may not be released except by court order or a written jail release agreement.
 3. Notification of the penalties for violation of the court order or any jail release agreement executed and that the individual must appear in court on the next business day after arrest.

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320.9.2 REPORTS AND RECORDS

- (a) Reports on all incidents of domestic violence shall include (Utah Code 77-36-2.2):
 1. The officer's disposition of the case.
 2. The appropriate crime classification for domestic violence.
 3. If no arrest was made, the report shall detail the grounds for not arresting.
 4. If two parties are arrested, the report shall detail the grounds for arresting both parties.
 5. The results of a lethality assessment when required by Utah Code 77-36-2.1. The report, however, shall not reflect information about a referral to a domestic violence organization if one is made as a result of the lethality assessment.
- (b) The officer creating the report should provide the victim with the case number of the report. The case number may be placed in the appropriate space on the victim information handout provided to the victim. If the case number is not immediately available, the officer should explain to the victim how the victim can obtain the information at a later time.
- (c) The report shall be made available to the victim, upon request, at no cost (Utah Code 77-36-2.2(6)(d)).
- (d) The Police Chief shall forward a copy of the incident report to the appropriate prosecuting attorney within five days after the complaint of domestic violence occurred (Utah Code 77-36-2.2(6)(c)).
- (e) The officer completing a domestic violence report should include information regarding whether the victim would like the court to impose release restrictions upon the arrestee, including prohibiting the arrestee from having personal contact with the victim or from entering the victim's residence or other premises temporarily occupied by the victim (Utah Code 78B-7-802).
- (f) The Police Chief or the authorized designee shall update the statewide domestic violence network when a person is released upon a written jail release agreement (Utah Code 78B-7-802; Utah Code 78B-7-113).

320.10 SERVICE OF COURT ORDERS

When an officer serves an individual with a protective order which causes the individual to be a restricted person under Utah Code 76-10-503, the officer shall verbally provide the individual with the appropriate firearm restriction notifications in accordance with Utah Code 76-10-503.1 and request the individual's signature on the acknowledgment contained within the protective order document.