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NEWSLETTER

Missed Signs, Missed Chances:

Using LAP When IPV Hides Behind Other Crimes

While it may seem like common sense, the eleven (11)-question Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) is intended specifically for use in cases of intimate partner violence (IPV), and not automatically in all cases of domestic violence (DV). So, what's the difference?

Think of domestic violence as an umbrella term—it encompasses abuse between individuals who live in the same household, such as parents, siblings, cousins, grandparents, or roommates. In contrast, intimate partner violence falls under this umbrella but is limited to abuse between **current and/or former** romantic partners.

The LAP statute is clear:

“Upon the preliminary investigation of a domestic violence crime involving intimate partner violence...”

21 O.S. § 142A-3 (OSCN 2025)

This language highlights the "umbrella" distinction—LAP is only appropriate when the situation involves IPV.

IPV in Relation to LAP

IPV can take many forms, many of which are not physical. It often manifests through other types of criminal behavior that may not initially be recognized as IPV. Does that mean a LAP should still be completed in these situations?

Absolutely.

We discuss this frequently in cadet training: it's essential to evaluate each situation thoroughly and understand not just what crime occurred, but why it happened and whether someone is in danger because of the perpetrator's actions. Below are examples of crime types that may initially seem unrelated to IPV but often reveal deeper intimate partner connections:



Bring LAP Training to Your Community

Partner with Us to Strengthen Your Response to IPV

If your agency or community is interested in strengthening your response to intimate partner violence, we would be happy to provide a LAP training. Our team offers in-person and virtual sessions tailored to law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers. To request a training or learn more, please fill out the form below—we're here to support your team in implementing a proactive, coordinated approach to victim safety.

[Training Request Form](#)

Statistics

Most women killed by men know their killers. Among all homicides over the past 25 years, 92 percent of female victims knew their male killers. Among female victims who knew their male killers, 61 percent were murdered by an intimate partner. (Violence Policy Center, When Men Murder Women: A Review of 25 Years of Female Homicide Victimization in the United States)

Stalking

Research shows that 76% of completed intimate partner femicides were preceded by stalking in the year prior. Stalking can begin during a relationship and often escalates after a breakup. It frequently starts through technology: repeated calls from unknown numbers, social media monitoring, or threats to share personal information online.

While the original law enforcement contact may appear to involve digital harassment, further evaluation may reveal high-risk IPV behavior requiring a LAP. This type of manipulation is considered digital abuse, and Oklahoma law explicitly recognizes it:

“Contacting the victim by telephone, text message, electronic message, electronic mail, or other means of electronic communication; or causing the telephone or electronic device of the victim or any other person to ring or generate notifications repeatedly or continuously, regardless of whether a conversation ensues.”

21 O.S. § 1173 (OSCN 2024)

Vandalism

What seems like a simple vandalism call—such as slashed tires—can quickly reveal intimate partner connections. These acts often have intent and context behind them.

Other examples of IPV-related vandalism include:

- Defacing property with threats or messages (on walls, mirrors, or vehicles)
- Destroying or hiding important items like IDs or legal documents
- Damaging personal property such as phones, clothing, or furniture

These actions often point to control, intimidation, or retaliation. Once a connection to a **current and/or former** intimate partner is identified, a LAP must be completed..

Attend the Partners for Change Conference

The annual Partners for Change Conference will be held September 15th & 16th in Norman, Oklahoma. This conference brings innovative, multidisciplinary training to Oklahoma to support a coordinated community response to violence against women. The conference features a variety of breakout sessions covering a wide range of topics relevant to allied professionals, with continuing education (CEU) opportunities available. This event plays a vital role in enhancing victim safety and advancing efforts to end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking that involves these forms of abuse.

Multi-Disciplinary Training

Gain insights from experts across fields on innovative approaches to addressing violence against women.

Wide-Ranging Topics & CEUs

Choose from diverse breakout sessions tailored to your role, with opportunities to earn continuing education credits.

Collaborative Impact

Join a statewide network of professionals working together to strengthen Oklahoma's coordinate response and enhance victim safety.



Civil Standbys

During civil standbys—when an individual retrieves belongings from a shared residence—tensions can rise quickly. This is a key moment to assess for danger.

Frequently, violence or harassment escalates after the civil standby is over. Completing a LAP during the standby helps ensure the victim's safety and allows for proactive safety planning before anything escalates.

Trespassing

Unwanted reentry into a victim's home is a common post-separation behavior in IPV cases. What may appear to be a routine trespassing call can actually indicate high risk.

A perpetrator showing up uninvited—especially repeatedly—after a breakup is a red flag. A LAP should be completed to assess the situation properly and respond accordingly.

Conclusion

Many crimes that appear isolated or unrelated may actually be signs of escalating intimate partner violence. This is where your role becomes critical.

By asking the right questions and identifying IPV—even when it's not obvious—you help ensure that victims receive the proper legal protection, safety planning, and support services they need.

In your experience, what are some offenses that initially seemed unrelated but ultimately revealed intimate partner violence?

Offered Trainings

Lethality Assessment Protocol Training
(2 Hour Training)

Coming Soon! LAP 2.0 Training
(2 Hour Training)

Coming Soon! Evidenced Based
Domestic Violence & Lethality
Assessment (4 Hour Training)

Coming Soon! Protective Orders &
Lethality Assessment (4 Hour Training)

Resources

[LAP Form](#)

[LAP 2.0 Informational Video](#)

[OAG LAP Team Webpage](#)

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The Lethality Assessment Protocol represents one of our most critical tools in protecting vulnerable Oklahomans. This partnership between law enforcement and victim advocates isn't just procedure - **it is a lifeline that saves lives.**”



GENTNER DRUMMOND
Oklahoma Attorney General