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NEWSLETTER

LAP's Strangulation Question Protects More Than the Victim

We've repeatedly emphasized the following: the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) is a tool designed to connect victims with victim service providers. While this is the primary purpose of law enforcement using the assessment in the field, there is another significant purpose of LAP that we must also consider.

LAP is a tool that supports officer safety.

The risk extends beyond the victim. It also affects anyone who many come into contact with the perpetrator, especially law enforcement officers.

In May, our team had the opportunity to attend the Conference on Crimes Against Women. One of the key topics discussed this year was the seriousness of strangulation in intimate partner violence cases. We discuss this statistic in our LAP training: when non-fatal strangulation is present, a victim is 750% more likely to be killed by their partner. That is why the strangulation question is one of the automatic high-risk questions in the assessment. **The risk of homicide is undeniable.**

However, that risk extends beyond the victim. It also affects anyone who may come into contact with the perpetrator, especially law enforcement officers. The FBI reports that approximately 7-10% of officers who are feloniously killed die while responding to domestic violence-related calls. Between 1988 and 2016, 136 officers were killed while responding to domestic disturbance calls.



Bring LAP Training to Your Community

Partner with Us to Strengthen Your Response to IPV

Our Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) Training is CLEET-Approved for two (2) hours of continuing education or mental health. 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](#)

In 2022, the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention published an article highlighting the dangers of strangulation not only to victims and law enforcement, but also to the public as a whole:

"Research has now made clear that when a man puts his hands around a woman's neck, he has just raised his hand and said, 'I'M A KILLER.' He is more likely to kill police officers, to kill children, and to later kill his partner. So, when you hear 'He choked me,' now you know... You are at the edge of a homicide." (Gwinn, C., Strack, G., & Kingsbury, C. (2022, November). From stranglers to cop killers: A dangerous link. Police Chief, 89(11), 54–58.)

Recognizing Strangulation

The Oklahoma LAP strangulation question is worded as follows:

"Has the person ever tried to choke the victim? (such as ligature or manual strangulation, chokeholds, or cutting off breathing)"

If you have attended our training, you may remember that we cover several key points regarding this question.

First, the statutory language uses the word "choke" rather than "strangle." Why? Professionals in the field may understand what strangulation encompasses, but a victim or other layperson may not. "Choke" is more commonly understood and reflects the language victims are more likely to use when describing their experience.

Attend the Partners for Change Conference

The annual Partners for Change Conference will be held September 2–3 at the Embassy Suites in Norman. This multidisciplinary event brings together professionals across Oklahoma to strengthen coordinated community responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking. The registration deadline is August 15th. Register using the link or QR code.



[Register for the
Partners for
Change
Conference](#)

Submit a Workshop Proposal

The Planning Committee is seeking workshop proposals that strengthen criminal justice responses and enhance victim services. Topics may include stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, trafficking, and culturally specific responses. The proposal deadline is May 31st. Apply using the link or QR code.



[Submit a
Workshop
Proposal](#)

Second, in October 2025, we expanded the language within the question to help officers better understand what choking may include. This can involve ligature strangulation, manual strangulation, chokeholds, cutting off breathing, positional asphyxiation, compressive asphyxia, chemical asphyxiation, or even drowning.

Importantly, strangulation is not limited to pressure applied to the neck. Victims may also experience positional or compressive asphyxia when pressure is applied to the chest, abdomen, or back, preventing normal lung expansion and restricting movement of the diaphragm. Even when the airway itself is not obstructed, this mechanical restriction of breathing can quickly become life-threatening for victims, officers, and bystanders alike.

So What Now?

When an officer is completing a LAP and the victim answers "yes" to Question 3, officers should consider taking additional precautions to ensure their safety throughout the remainder of the response.

There are many ways this can be accomplished. Officers may request backup when resources are available. Notes can be added to the CAD system to ensure future responding officers are aware of the heightened risk. Scene security can be enhanced through increased observation of the perpetrator, strategic positioning, or ensuring that the officer and victim remain in a secure location that is inaccessible to the perpetrator.

The opportunities to improve safety and preparedness are nearly endless. By recognizing the significance of strangulation and the risks it presents, we can take proactive steps to protect victims, fellow officers, public servants, and our communities.

Call for Vendors

We are also seeking vendors whose work supports victim services, public safety, and community response efforts. Space is limited and assigned first-come, first-served. Each booth includes a table, two chairs, and electricity. Additional needs can be arranged with the venue.



[Submit a
Vendor
Proposal](#)



LAP Officer of the Year Nominations Open

The LAP Officer of the Year Award recognizes law enforcement officers who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to victim safety, the accurate and trauma-informed implementation of the LAP screening tool, meaningful collaboration with victim service providers, and continued efforts to strengthen the LAP initiative across Oklahoma.

This award serves as an opportunity to recognize the officers who go above and beyond in their response to domestic violence by prioritizing survivor safety, building connections to critical resources, and embracing a coordinated community response. Their dedication reflects the heart of the LAP mission and reminds us why this work matters, because every interaction is an opportunity to provide support, increase safety, and make a lasting impact.

We invite you to nominate an officer who exemplifies the qualities of this award and whose work has made a difference in the lives of victims, survivors, and their communities. Nominations must be submitted by July 30th.

If you have any questions or would like to provide additional documentation in support of a nomination, please contact lap.training@oag.ok.gov.

[Submit Your Nomination Here](#)

Numbers to Know

Oklahoma has consistently ranked in the Top 10 in women being murdered by men in single victim/single offender incidents since 1996. The most recent state rankings ranked Oklahoma as 2nd in the nation when analyzing 2020 homicide data.

Violence Policy Center. (2023). When men murder women: A review of 25 years of female homicide victimization in the United States. Retrieved from: <https://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2023.pdf>



The Lethality Lens

Breaking down each LAP question to better understand indicators of high danger.



The Question

Has the person ever threatened to kill the victim or the children of the victim?



The Lens

Threats of homicide are highly predictive of actual homicide, especially when directed at the victim or their children. The presence of direct threats to kill was associated with substantially increased homicide risk in multiple studies, including the Danger Assessment and DV fatality reviews.



The Study

"Placing stalking and threats at a higher level of severity of outcomes than low level physical abuse may actually be a more accurate placement given the associations of stalking and threats to kill with intimate partner femicide."

Roehl, J., O'Sullivan, C., Webster, D., & Campbell, J. C. (2005). Intimate partner violence risk assessment validation study: Final report. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. "That finding is simple to interpret: use of a weapon facilitates murder, but is not necessary to assault."

OFFICE OF THE OKLAHOMA ATTORNEY GENERAL
LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL (LAP) TEAM



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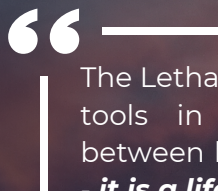
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The Lethality Assessment Protocol represents one of our most critical tools in protecting vulnerable Oklahomans. This partnership between law enforcement and victim advocates isn't just procedure - **it is a lifeline that saves lives.**



GENTNER DRUMMOND
Oklahoma Attorney General