
If you become a victim of domestic violence

- Call 911. Ask the responding officer to issue an Emergency Protective Order. Take evidence or proof with you, whether you are going to have charges filed at that time or not-or you may go to court and file a Temporary Restraining Order. Take whatever proof you have to fully inform the judge of the situation.
- If you are hurt, seek medical care immediately.
- Reach out for support. Call your local battered women's shelter, women's support group or victims' witness assistance center. Tell your friends and family.
- Develop a safety plan. The greatest risk to a victim often occurs immediately after the separation.

Help available

Victim compensation is also available through the California Victim's of Crime Program. Support for domestic violence victims and their children can include emergency relocation services, medical and mental health services. The local victim witness assistance center can help you to gain access to these funds or contact the State Victim's Compensation and Government Claims Board at 1-800-777-9229 or www.boc.ca.gov

A confidential address program is also available through the California Office of Secretary of State. The Safeathome

program provides a post office box directly to the Secretary of State to prevent the abuser from knowing your home address. Their number is 1-877-322-5227. www.sss.ca.gov/safeathome/

For further information on this program and other crime prevention material, write to:

Crime and Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General's Office
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

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www.safestate.org



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Crime and Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General's Office

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Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is more than just a “family problem” — it is a crime!

In California, it is a crime for any person to threaten, beat, sexually assault or otherwise harm another person, even if they are married.

Although most assaults are made against women, others, including men, teenagers, and same-sex couples can be victims of domestic violence. It also cuts through all socioeconomic layers - it can happen to anyone. For purposes of convenience, however, and because women are the prime victims, we will use “her” when referring to the victim.

Acts of domestic violence are often unreported, however studies have indicated that:

- Approximately 30 percent of female homicide victims in the United States are killed by their husbands or boyfriends.
- Females are much more likely than males to be killed by their spouse.
- Domestic violence affects at least one out of every four American families.

Why do they stay?

The most frequently asked question concerning a domestic violence situation is why does she stay? While reasons range from love, children, financial dependence, threats of suicide and/or homicide, lack of support from family or friends —

or a combination thereof — it is very possible the victim may be locked into a cycle of violence.

Three-phase theory of domestic violence

❑ Tension-Building Phase

During this phase, the victim senses her partner’s increasing tension. He is “edgy” and may challenge her or tell her she is stupid, unattractive, incompetent, etc. The victim often describes it as “walking on egg shells” and is always ready for the proverbial shoe to drop. An incident as minor as a late dinner or child crying may result in a serious abusive situation.

❑ Acute-Battering Incident

The tension-building phase ends in an explosion of violence. The abuser decides to teach her a lesson as a result of a perceived incident and may become physically abusive. The victim’s behavior cannot change the outcome and she feels helpless in stopping the attacks.

❑ Honeymoon Phase

During the last phase of the domestic violence cycle, both parties have a sense of relief that “it’s over.” The abuser is often sorry for what has happened and appears genuinely apologetic. He may ask for forgiveness and promise that the violence won’t happen again. The victim wants to believe the promises and wants this to be the “real” person she fell in love

with. She may also take the blame for what led up to the abuse and feel guilty for her actions. She may feel that this time will be different.

Increasing spiral of violence

Once violence has begun, it continues to increase in both frequency and severity. Understanding the psychological consequences of the violent relationship can help the victim take control and choose positive alternatives, as well as aid those who intervene on her behalf.

A way out

Everyone has the right to be safe from threats and beatings — but *you* must take the first step. Recognize that it isn’t your fault and it is possible to change the situation.

If you need help, refer to your telephone directory under “Women’s Services and Organizations”. Numbers can also be accessed in the city or county departments of family services, social services, or health and/or welfare. You can also check in the white pages under “crisis”. Many areas have crisis hot lines that are answered 24 hours a day.

Remember that your local police and sheriff’s departments are there to help you. Keep their numbers handy for an emergency situation. The local district attorney’s office can also refer you to the victim witness assistance center. They will also have referrals for services.