

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTOCOLS LINKING
CALGARY POLICE SERVICE
AND ROCKY VIEW CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES - CHILD WELFARE**

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**Domestic Violence Protocol Development Committee
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Staff Sergeant Luch Berti	Communications Unit, Calgary Police Service
Detective Lynne Cunningham	Domestic Conflict Unit, Calgary Police Service
Jane Eddison	Crisis Unit, Calgary Police Service
Sandra Klashinsky	Rocky View Child and Family Services
Melanie McAleer	Rocky View Child and Family Services
Colleen McCord	Rocky View Child and Family Services
Val Naslund	Rocky View Child and Family Services
Detective Bob Reid	Child at Risk Response Team, Calgary Police Service
Chris Tortorelli	Rocky View Child and Family Services
D. Gaye Warthe	Calgary Domestic Violence Committee
Aileen Weldon	Rocky View Child and Family Services
Staff Sergeant Bob Wiltshire	Child Abuse Unit, Calgary Police Service

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Detective Lynne Cunningham	Domestic Conflict Unit, Calgary Police Service
Pat Gilbert	Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services
Colleen McCord	Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services
Detective Bob Reid	Child at Risk Response Team, Calgary Police Service
Ann Rowbotham	Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services
D. Gaye Warthe	Calgary Domestic Violence Committee
Aileen Weldon	Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTOCOLS LINKING
CALGARY POLICE SERVICE (CPS)
AND
CALGARY ROCKY VIEW CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES (CRVC&FS) - CHILD
WELFARE**

1.0 Introduction

In Calgary, 58% of domestic violence incidents that the Calgary Police Service respond to have children under the age of eighteen present in the home (Calgary Police Service, 1998). The Child Welfare Act (1985) identifies children as being in need of protective services if there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the survival, security and development of a child is endangered because the parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to protect the child from injury which may be the result of exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony. The need for improved communication between the Police and Child Welfare comes from a recognition that the majority of child abuse occurs in the context of domestic relationships and the high correlation between spousal abuse and child abuse.

The development of domestic violence linking protocols between the Calgary Police Service (CPS) and Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services (CRVC&FS) provides the opportunity for increased collaboration and improved communication. At present, the best example of collaboration is the Child At Risk Response Team (CARRT), which combines the expertise of both a Police Officer and a Child Welfare Worker. The intention of linking protocols is to build on the existing collaborative efforts and provide formalized guidelines for both systems to achieve the goal of improved communication and increased safety for families and children affected by violence.

2.0 Calgary Police Service (CPS) Referrals to Child Welfare

The **purpose** of the CPS referring to CRVC&FS - Child Welfare is to inform Child Welfare of children witnessing or present in a home where domestic violence is an issue. The anticipated outcome of the referrals to Child Welfare is earlier recognition and intervention. The role of the Police is to refer children who may be at risk, in a timely fashion. The role of Child Welfare is to screen referrals and respond as required.

Circumstances requiring an **immediate referral** to Child Welfare by the Police Officer include:

- Children/adolescents are identified as being at immediate risk due to the seriousness of the assault

Most referrals to Child Welfare originate from the CPS - Domestic Conflict Unit (DCU) and CARRT. These units review all police reports identified as child abuse and/or domestic violence. From those reports, the following **require a referral** to Child Welfare:

- Reasonable grounds to believe a child is at risk
- Physical injury to the child
- Children aged 6 years and under are present in the home or have witnessed domestic violence
- Domestic incidents when drugs, alcohol or weapons are contributing factors
- A child/adolescent is identified as the victim in the domestic assault
- A child/adolescent is charged in domestic incident where a sibling is assaulted

- A domestic assault with children under the age of 18 in the home where force was used (e.g. damage to person or property), the assault was physical and/or required medical attention
- A complaint regarding an access order or verbal abuse where there has been repeated police attendance and/or a history of assaultive behaviour (In this circumstance the reason for the referral will be noted.)
- The child/adolescent currently has an open Child Welfare file

Questions about the referrals should be directed to the DCU and/or CARRT.

Domestic incidents that do not require a referral to Child Welfare include the following. It is important to **consult with Child Welfare** if the information is unclear.

- Stand-by/Drive-by (e.g. victim requires police escort while removing her/his clothing from the home)
- Access orders (except in circumstances identified above)
- Verbal altercations where there is no evidence of force, physical assaults and/or injury requiring medical attention

When responding to a domestic incident, the CPS will collect the following information for all children under the age of 18:

- Names, date of birth, age, name of the school the child attends, name of guardian and home address (if different than the location indicated in the police report) of children and adolescents exposed/involved in a domestic incident
- Interpreter required
- Referral to Aboriginal services required (when this information is available)
- History of domestic incidents/charges
- Risk factors which would warrant a police escort for the child welfare worker:
 - Weapons
 - History of violence
 - State of sobriety

Documentation

All information forwarded to CRVC&FS from the CPS will be stamped:

CPS REPORT NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED FURTHER

3.0 Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services (CRVC&FS) - Child Welfare Referrals to Calgary Police Service (CPS)

Child Welfare Workers will contact the CPS with any **new information** which may **contribute to a Police investigation** or which would cause an investigation to be initiated. Information to be reported includes:

- Name, date of birth, address of all individuals involved
- Time frame of incident (historical, current, 1-2 weeks, etc.)
- Nature of injury, assault, abuse
- Name of the family doctor
- Pattern of abuse
- Risk factors which would affect the safety of the investigating officer and individuals in the residence, including:
 - Weapons
 - History of violence
 - State of sobriety.

4.0 Contact Numbers for the Calgary Police Service

The following are different entry points for Child Welfare to consult with the CPS, report new information, or request a Police escort.

911

Emergency

CPS Non-Emergency

266-1234

Request for non-emergency Police escort or assistance, to report new information or to contact the investigating officer.

Procedure for requesting a police escort:

- a) Child welfare workers will first consult with their immediate supervisor.
- b) Contact the CPS at 266-1234. Identify yourself, the agency you are employed by and your position.
- c) Request the name of the officer to whom you are speaking, note the date and the time of the call.
- d) Identify the service required, i.e. escort for an apprehension.
- e) Identify the name(s) and date of birth for all subjects involved.
- f) Provide information on the history of violent behaviour, safety concerns for the child or the child welfare worker, weapons present in the home. Be specific and clear when describing the reason that a police escort is required.
- g) Request the priority given to the call and the complaint number for future reference. Priority is assigned based upon urgency and demonstrated need. A priority 1 is typically assigned to emergency calls and when there is a crime in progress. The police, on average, will arrive within 6 to 10 minutes. For priority 2, the police will arrive within 45 minutes to 1 hour and priority 3, within 3 to 5 hours.

If the Child Welfare Worker believes that a higher priority should be given to the call, this can be discussed with the Communications Officer. The worker may also ask that the assigned field officer make telephone contact to arrange an approximate time for the escort.

If circumstances change, the worker should contact the CPS who may reassess the priority given.

Child Abuse Unit

206-8390

All sexual abuse of children aged 13 and under, or life threatening physical abuse.

Sex Crimes Unit

206-8390

Sexual abuse/assault when the victim is 14 years or older.

Extra familial sexual assaults of children aged 14 to 17, when there is no child welfare involvement and the victim/guardian does not wish for police involvement, can be reported to the Sex Crimes Unit through a third party referral. Include the date and location of the assault, the circumstances of the assault and the name of the perpetrator as identified by the victim. **The name of the victim is not required.** Forward this information to the Sex Crimes Unit.

Domestic Conflict Unit**206-8339**

Sexual assault of adolescents or adults, which occurs in a domestic relationship, physical abuse of a child or adolescent that is not life threatening, and incidents of domestic violence.

Victim Assistance Unit**206-8398**

The Victim Assistance Unit (VAU) provides support, information and referrals to victims of crime. Trained volunteers contact victims as soon as possible after a police report is submitted. Hospital or home visits are available for victims who are unable to attend the VAU because of transportation and/or health issues but who require assistance in completing applications or statements.

Priority status is given to **victims of family violence** who will be contacted as soon as possible after a police report is filed. Special safety procedures are followed in providing information to victims of family violence to protect the victim. Victims are notified and advised of the conditions of release of an offender after the Justice or Judge has seen them and victims may access information on sentencing by contacting the VAU directly.

The following programs may be accessed through the VAU, in addition many referral agencies are offered who provide counselling, financial assistance, legal advice, child services, shelters, and other services as required by the victim.

- Court Preparation Program (CPP)
- Victim Impact Statement Program
- Court Accompaniment Program
- Restitution Request Program
- Robbery Trauma Program