

TASK FORCE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Need for a Consistent Statewide Model Policy for Law Enforcement Response to Family Violence Incidents

Speaker: Patricia Froehlich, State's Attorney, Windham Judicial District

The state will benefit from having a consistent statewide Model Policy regarding the procedures to be utilized by officers responding to family violence incidents.

1. Currently, each police department in the state is in charge of the creation and maintenance of standard family violence procedures, which take the form of general orders issued by the department.
2. While these general orders usually comply fairly strictly with Connecticut law, when a legislative or policy change is made, it can occasionally take some time for the general orders to be updated. Therefore, by requiring that all law enforcement in the state meet the requirements of Connecticut's Model Law Enforcement Policy as a minimum standard, we can ensure that incidents in all jurisdictions across the state will be handled in accordance with the most current laws and policies.
3. In order to retain appropriate oversight, the creation of a Family Violence Model Policy Governing Council, who will be tasked with reviewing state domestic violence laws annually and reporting to the Judiciary Committee, is paramount.

In order to maximize continuity with established principles, the foundation of the Model Policy should be based on the 2006 Police Officer Standards and Training Council Policy, with modifications for changes in legislation and policy since that time.

1. The drafting team of the Model Policy should include individuals who have an excellent understanding of Connecticut family violence laws and policies.
2. The Model Policy should address and settle issues which have consistently come up during discussions among stakeholders, including, but not limited to:
 - a. The establishment of consistent procedures for the enforcement of protective orders;
 - b. Procedures for "officer-involved" domestic violence cases;
 - c. Protocols for police seizure of weapons at the scene of a domestic violence incident;
 - d. The designation of domestic violence liaisons within each police department;
 - e. Standardized arrest procedures.

The Task Force has laid out some excellent recommendations regarding the creation and maintenance of a statewide Model Policy, and we fully support the proposed initiatives.