

**Colorado Domestic Violence
Fatality Review Board**

**Local DV Fatality Review Team Manual
2018**

GUIDELINES FOR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

Definitions:

Coding Manual: Data collection tool approved by the Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board (CDVFRB). When completing the coding manual, victim and perpetrator information should refer to the parties determined to be the victim and perpetrator of domestic violence within an intimate partner relationship, even if the deceased is not the primary domestic violence victim (e.g., primary domestic violence victim kills the perpetrator in self defense and/or the deceased is a collateral death and primary DV victim/perpetrator survive).

Collateral Death: The death of a person, other than the person with whom the perpetrator was involved in an intimate relationship, which occurred in the context of domestic violence.

DOI: Date of incident. This is the date that the incident resulting in a domestic violence related fatality occurred. The date of any related death(s) may differ from this (e.g., perpetrator dies by suicide at a later date and/or victim is kept alive on life support and dies at a later date).

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT): A local or regional group of professionals who review incidents that occurred in the context of an intimate partner relationship and result in death (e.g., murder, murder/suicide, collateral death). Refer to [C.R.S. § 24-31-703](#) for more information on membership.

Domestic Violence Perpetrator: The party within an intimate partner relationship determined to be the predominant aggressor or person inflicting abuse on their intimate partner. This may not always be the person listed as the offender in a domestic violence fatality case; some victims may use self-defending behavior against the person who is abusing them.

Domestic Violence Victim: The party within an intimate partner relationship determined to be/have been experiencing abuse by intimate partner. This may not always be the person listed as the victim in a domestic violence fatality case; some victims may use self-defending behavior against the person who is abusing them.

Familicide: a type of murder or murder/suicide in which a perpetrator kills multiple close family members in quick succession, most often children, spouse, siblings, or parents.

Fatality: The death of any person resulting from an incident determined to be an act of, or in the context of, domestic violence or intimate partner abuse.

Murder: The death of one person resulting from the deliberate actions of another person in the context of an intimate partner relationship.

Murder/Suicide: An event resulting in the death of a person from the deliberate actions of another person who subsequently takes their own life, in the context of a current or former intimate partner relationship.

Near Death: An injury to a person at the hands of an intimate partner whereby that injury could likely result in the death of that person. A near death case could also include any of the above listed types of fatalities (e.g., attempted murder/suicide, attempted murder/collateral death).

GUIDELINES FOR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

Red Flags Check List: A list of factors, many of which have been proven by research to represent risk factors in intimate partner violence that results in death.

Suicide: The death of a person who takes their own life in the context of intimate partner abuse/domestic violence (e.g., abusive partner takes their own life in front of non-abusive partner during an argument or with the intention of the non-abusive partner discovering them. This could also include cases where a victim takes their own life to escape abuse).

Local DVFRT Members: DVFRTs should include individuals with expertise or experience in the field of intimate partner abuse and should reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the city, county or judicial district. The local DVFRT makeup should follow the recommendations specified in the [C.R.S. § 24-31-703](#) as closely as possible.

Purpose:

The purpose of a DVFRT is to review and analyze domestic violence related fatalities and/or near death incidents. The information is compiled and presented to a multidisciplinary team in order to identify red flags present, interventions utilized, and possible interventions missed. This data is compiled, analyzed and used to develop reports and recommendations that will potentially improve risk assessment and safety planning for victims, their families and friends, and the community. Findings can also influence policies and practices related to perpetrator containment and accountability. This work enhances advocacy efforts to effectively leverage the civil and criminal legal systems to help victims achieve long-term safety for themselves and their families. The success of a statewide domestic violence fatality review process will necessitate the most varied expertise of the DVFRT members, as well as drawing on the most current research and practices regarding risk assessment and management.

Procedures:

Each DVFRT may select a closed case, with no pending civil actions, that is recommended by a team member in that community and/or included on the statewide list, to review (if your DVFRT identifies a case that is not included on the statewide list for the year in which it occurred, please submit case information at <https://ddvcc.org/fatality-review>). Case information is compiled with the cooperation of respective law enforcement agency and/or prosecutors' office, as well as any other entities authorized to release information related to the case. It is also helpful to complete a Google search on the parties involved in case review, as well as looking them up on social media to gather supplemental information that may provide more context for the review. A PowerPoint presentation should be created and presented to the multi-disciplinary DVFRT, followed by discussion about risk factors, interventions used and interventions missed and gaps that may have been present in the incident. Keep in mind that this is a very time and resource consuming; preparation for a case review presentation can take 10-12 hours, possibly more.

When possible, it is helpful to invite anyone who was involved in the case, or has knowledge of the victim and/or perpetrator, to be present for the review (i.e., detectives, prosecutors, victim advocates). If there is a member of the team who has the authority to access criminal background

GUIDELINES FOR A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

and/or child or adult protective services information, send them the names and birthdates of the parties involved prior to the case review meeting. They may not be able to provide that information directly the parties presenting the case review, but may be able to attend the meeting and share such information with the group during the discussion. It is also helpful to assign a note-taker for case reviews, in order to capture information that comes up in the discussion, which may not be recorded elsewhere. All participants are required to sign a confidentiality agreement, pursuant to [C.R.S. 24-31-704](#) and case review materials are not to be shared outside of this meeting, unless identifying information has been redacted.

The group should use a consensus process to complete a Red Flags Checklist, which is based on a large body of research, as well as common factors that have been observed and recorded over the past twenty+ years. DVFTRs should use the Red Flags Checklist and Coding Manual (modeled after instruments established and utilized by the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Review) selected by the Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board (CDVFRB), pursuant to [C.R.S. § 24-31-703](#). A master Red Flags Checklist will be created with factors compiled from all Red Flags checked during the review. The case review PowerPoint, Red Flags Checklist, and any additional meeting notes are then used to complete the Coding Manual for each case reviewed. The completed Coding Manual, Master Red Flags Checklist, and case review PowerPoint should then be submitted via email to the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DMDVFR), to be entered into a research database and analyzed by Dr. Joanne Belknap, University of Colorado, and her research assistants. The resultant findings will be used to produce an annual report and incorporated into the current body of research. To view past reports and published research, please visit <https://ddvcc.org/fatality-review>.

If questions or concerns arise at any time during the process of forming a local DVFRT, selecting or conducting a case review, and/or completing the coding manual, you may contact the DMDVFR at denverdvcouncil@gmail.com or 720-337-4470. This team has over 20 years of experience related to domestic violence fatality reviews, has consulted with DVFRs nationwide and presented at national conferences on the topic. The DMDVFR has been referenced as the most research based domestic violence fatality review process in the country and has been designated by the CDVFRB as the official provider of training and technical assistance for DVFRTs in Colorado.

Basic information on domestic violence fatality cases (reviewed by a DVFRT or not) should be submitted for inclusion in the statewide DV fatality list online at <https://ddvcc.org/fatality-review> or by contacting the DMDVFR at denverdvcouncil@gmail.com or 720-337-4470.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM (DVFRT)
COMMUNITY READINESS CRITERIA FORM

Suggested members for a local DVFRT: Representation may vary by case and/or community
(See legislation for additional detail).

SYSTEM	CONTACT PERSON	CONTACT NUMBER
1. Law Enforcement		
2. Advocates (Community & Criminal Legal System)		
3. Prosecutor		
4. Judge/Magistrate		
5. Corrections (e.g., Probation, Parole Officers)		
6. Domestic Violence Program Representative		
7. Department of Human Services (CPS, APS)		
8. Faith Leaders		
9. Sexual Assault Service Provider		
10. Medical professional		
11. Mental Health Provider		
12. Offender Treatment Provider and/or Advocate		
13. Substance Abuse Treatment Provider		
14. School staff or representative		
15. Coroner/Medical Examiner		
16. Animal Control and/or Animal Shelter		
17. Immigrant and Refugee Service Providers		
18. Department of Public Health representative		
19. Child Fatality Review Representative		
20. Clerk of the County or District Court		
21. Criminal Defense Attorney		
22. Intimate Partner Abuse Survivor		

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM (DVFRT)
COMMUNITY READINESS CRITERIA FORM

Time Commitment: The time commitment of individuals involved in a DVFRT will vary depending on the frequency of case reviews and the process adopted by a community.

DVFRT Primary Contact Person:

There should be a primary contact person who will systematize the process and materials, represent your committee and work with the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DMDVFR) and Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board (CDVFRB) for training, technical assistance, data reporting.

Primary Contact: _____ **Organization:** _____

Contact Information: _____

Primary Contact Responsibilities:

- Serve as primary contact and organizer for DVFRT meetings.
- Help recruit potential members (in particular, those who will help the DVFRT affect necessary policy and practice change).
- Consider a volunteer note taker for meetings.
- Inform members on the fatality review process.
- Help identify cases for review and sources of information for data collection.
- Review case information, write the chronology and, if appropriate, conduct family and friend interviews.
- Be a networking agent or liaison to other DVFRTs and the Colorado Office of the Attorney General.
- Assist team in identifying missing key players and inviting them to the table.

Member's Role:

- Honor confidentiality and group agreements.
- Commit to the agreement of not 'pointing fingers' but rather identify interventions missed and interventions used.
- Attend a majority of meetings.
- Identify gaps in services and formulate recommendations to help improve systemic and over-all community response to domestic violence.
- Participate in implementation strategies or ideas that come out of the reviews.
- Identify, recruit and cultivate potential fatality review committee members.
- Promote collaboration amongst agencies to increase safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence.

For questions about anything contained in this document, sample job descriptions, and/or requests for training and technical assistance, please contact the staff of the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review via email at denverdvcouncil@gmail.com or by phone at 720-337-4470.

**CHECKLIST FOR SUGGESTED INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN
CASE REVIEW PRESENTATION/CODING MANUAL (AS AVAILABLE)**

- Victim name, date of birth and age
- Perpetrators name, date of birth and age
- Relationship status of the intimate partner (married, divorced, separated, dating etc.)
- Location (city, county) of incident
- Victim and/or perpetrator's children (even if they were not present)- names and ages
- City and county of victim and perpetrator residence at date of incident
- Victim and perpetrator employment information (if/where they work)
- Citizenship status of victim or perpetrator
- Veteran status of victim or perpetrator
- Disability status of victim or perpetrator
- Victim's and perpetrator's criminal history (detailed charges, convictions, and dates)
- Relationship history (when did they meet, start dating, length of relationship, etc.)
- Disclosure of abuse (when and to whom)
- Victim's and perpetrator's human services involvement, if applicable
- Victim's attempts to leave relationship and/or other protective actions
- Abuse history (including non-physical and unreported abuse)
- Significant changes in victim or perpetrator's life (job loss, relocation, etc.)
- Incident information including exact location(s) and events leading up to incident
- Information on perpetrator suicide, if applicable
- Autopsy information for any deceased parties
- Information on child witnesses, if applicable
- Information on collateral victims, if applicable
- Case disposition, if applicable
- Post conviction offender evaluation/treatment information related to prior DV offenses
- Medical records/intervention information, if available
- Photo of victim, comments from obituary/memorial page (use Google and/or Facebook to find this type of information)

Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review: Red Flags Checklist

Red Flags Validated By Research

- Access to a firearm
- Prior threats with a firearm
- Whirlwind courtship/relationship
- Perpetrator unemployed or underemployed
- Stepchildren in the home
- Escalated threats of suicide
- Estrangement/Separation from victim
Amount of time: _____
- Separation imminent
- Prior strangulation attempts
- Violation of protection orders
- Stalking/Monitoring
- Perpetrator's possessiveness of victim
- Threats to kill victim
- Threats to kill victim's children, family members, friends, etc.
- Significant Losses
 - loss of housing loss of employment
 - loss of contact/custody regarding children
 - perceived loss of control
 - loss of coping mechanisms
- History of drug/alcohol use/abuse
- Believes/knows victim is pregnant
- History of d.v. or non d.v. assaults
(circle one or both)
- Pending legal actions _____
- Perpetrator believes or knows victim is in a new relationship (circle one)
- Perpetrator has a history of animal cruelty

Red Flags Under Review by DMDVFR

- Indications of obsession with weapons
- Known to carry a weapon
Type of weapon: _____
- Known to use a weapon
Type of weapon: _____
- Perpetrator seems to be experiencing feelings of abandonment or betrayal (circle one or both)
- Death of a close friend/family member
Amt of time since death: _____
- "Parasitic Lifestyle":
 - perpetrator appears to exploit victim's tendency to "caretake"
 - perpetrator dependant on victim
 - emotionally financially
 - for social interaction & support
- Unusual or remarkable enmeshment w/mother (perp may also be controlling her)
- Perpetrator & victim meet or have an encounter "one last time" (post-separation /appears to precede homicide) Reason for meeting: _____
- Indications of decompensation
- Changes in perpetrator's activities in daily living: _____
- Known mental health issues/diagnosis: _____
- Financial struggles Gambling

Atypical Considerations/Other:

This checklist features "red flags" that have been identified by the DMDVFR through the case review process. The checklist is **not** intended to be used as an instrument to predict lethality or risk and the CDVFRB reminds all those using this checklist that there are recognized *validated tools and research** to use for the purposes of risk assessment. Please be aware of the limits regarding the use of this checklist. We do urge any professionals who may work with, or come in contact with, victims or offenders, to use this tool to help in their assessment, safety planning and response to concerning situations.

*References: Jacqueline Campbell, Ph.D., R.N., Joanne Belknap, Ph.D., David Adams, Andrew R. Klein, Angus Nurse, Gavin DeBecker, Edward Gondolf, Dobash & Dobash, Barbara Hart, et al.

CASE NAME:

REVIEW DATE:

Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review: Red Flags Checklist

Interventions Used

Potential Interventions Missed

COLORADO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

Guest and Member Confidentiality Agreement

The goal of a Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT) is not to place blame, but to better understand the complicated dynamics of domestic violence when death, and/or near death, incidents occur, in order to potentially prevent future fatalities. The process is a quasi-scientific, (in that we are gathering relevant data), intellectually based discussion for the purpose of a more thorough understanding of the complicated and tragic issue of domestic violence fatalities.

DVFRT meetings are closed meetings. Due to the sensitive nature of the information being shared, outside visitors are discouraged, but will be considered on a case by case basis, for one-time attendance. Requests from visitors should be made in advance of a DVFRT meeting and approved by the appropriate representative. A potential member, visitor or a guest of a DVFRT should have a professional interest or reason to observe that will be beneficial to the committee.

The effectiveness of a DVFRT’s work is contingent upon the confidentiality of the review process and the information shared. I therefore agree to keep confidential any information obtained through the review process. Pursuant to **C.R.S. 24-31-704** (a) all review board and review team meetings; activities of the review board and review teams, including activities of any issue specific panel or ad hoc subcommittee formed by the review board or by review teams; review board and review team meeting notes and statements; health information and medical records obtained by the review board or by review teams; and any information obtained by the department in connection with the review board or review teams are confidential and are not subject to: (I) The open meetings provisions of the "Colorado Sunshine Act of 1972" set forth in section 246402; (II) The "Colorado Open Records Act", part 2 of article 72 of title 24; or (III) Subpoena, discovery, or introduction into evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding, unless the information was obtained from another source that is separate and apart from the review board or review teams. However, if a conflict arises and/or information from a DVFRT meeting is requested from me, I will immediately notify the respective DVFRT.

I agree that information will only be released or discussed in the aggregate form outside of the committee meetings. No case identifying material will be taken or shared from a review meeting by any person other than whose agency provided the data. I hereby agree to keep confidential all case related information discussed at the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee. I also agree to abide by the confidentiality procedures pursuant to C.R.S. 24-31-704. _____ Initial

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Email

Agency/Affiliation

Telephone

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The Colorado Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board is working in partnership with the Denver Metro Domestic Violence Fatality Review team on compiling an annual list of domestic violence related fatalities in Colorado. This information collected is distributed and made available to anyone in our state that has an interest in intimate partner abuse prevention. An earnest attempt is given to compiling the most accurate information possible and in that spirit we welcome (rely on) feedback from law enforcement, prosecution, victim service and any other agencies, or individuals statewide, to help ensure our research is accurate and complete. Thanks to the dedicated professionals who assist us in keeping this tally accurate. Please forward this document to any and all that may have information or knowledge of a domestic violence related death of which we may not be aware.

The number of fatalities compiled may differ from those released by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation due to the fact that *all fatalities in the context of domestic violence* are counted, including collateral deaths and suicides. There is always the potential to add to any list. If you see information on any list that is inaccurate, please make a call to 720-337-4470 or send an email to denverdvcouncil@gmail.com. If you have knowledge of any fatal incidents in your communities that we have not included and appear to be in the context of intimate partner abuse (domestic violence), please send this form to denverdvcouncil@gmail.com or submit case information online at www.ddvcc.org/fatality-review.

Victim's Name: _____ **Victim's DOB/Age:** _____

Perpetrator's Name: _____ **Perpetrator's DOB/Age:** _____

Victim's Race/Ethnicity: _____ **Perpetrator's Race/Ethnicity:** _____

Date of incident: _____ **Incident location (City, County)** _____

Children involved? If yes, indicate how they were involved **List names/ages of children involved:**

YES NO Witness Injured Fatality _____

Brief circumstances surrounding incident (Names/ages of witnesses, links to any related media articles)

Type(s) of fatality Murder Murder/Suicide Suicide Collateral/Bystander

Other _____

Were weapons used? YES NO **If yes please indicate type of weapon(s) used** _____
