



Together we can end relationship abuse

SUPPORT HB26-1009

Colorado Mandatory Lethality Assessment Act
Sponsored By: Majority Leader Duran & Representative Gonzales
and Senator B. Pelton & Senator Michaelson Jenet

Saving lives by standardizing an evidence-based response to domestic violence calls.

Domestic violence homicides are often preceded by recognizable warning signs. A brief, validated lethality screening at the scene helps officers identify the highest-risk situations and quickly connect victims to safety resources.

What HB26-1009 does

Beginning July 1, 2027, when responding to a domestic violence incident, a peace officer must:

- Conduct a validated, evidence-based lethality assessment and include the results in the incident report.
- Immediately connect a high-risk victim to a victim's advocate, by phone or in person, when the assessment indicates high risk or when the officer determines high risk based on the totality of circumstances.
- The Attorney General, coordinating with a Colorado-based domestic violence survivor coalition, will develop mandatory training for peace officers.
- Training must be available by January 1, 2027, and completed by July 1, 2027.

Evidence Colorado Can Build On

- As of September 2025, 44 law enforcement agencies across 64 counties use a lethality assessment process (LAP).
- In 2024, agencies conducted 654 screenings, and more than half screened as "high danger," with additional cases identified as high risk based on officer judgment.
- This bill takes proven results and standardizes training, reporting, and statewide consistency for all law enforcement agencies.
- A small but growing number of states have made lethality assessment a standard part of law-enforcement response to domestic or intimate partner violence, either by statute or through statewide policy and implementation. **Florida, Utah, Oklahoma, and Arkansas** require officers to conduct a lethality assessment in qualifying cases, while **Connecticut** embeds lethality screening in statewide law-enforcement family-violence response policy. Beyond formal mandates, several states have **statewide, widely implemented LAP-style programs** supported by statewide partners and training infrastructure, including **Maryland** (the original LAP model), **North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin**, demonstrating that statewide adoption is both feasible and operationally practical when paired with standardized training, clear referral pathways to advocates, and basic reporting/accountability.

For more information, please contact: Katie Wolf, Howes Wolf – (720)365-3990 or
katie@howeswolf.com

How the Lethality Assessment Works

When certain danger indicators are present, the officer asks **11 standardized questions** that capture both physical and nonphysical risk factors. The purpose is to identify high-risk situations and offer immediate connection to an advocate to offer services and safety planning.

- **Scoring and next steps (example)**
 - “High Danger” if the victim answers **Yes** to **any of Questions 1–3**, or **4+** of Questions **4–11**.
 - Officer **immediately contacts** an on-call hotline/advocate to connect the victim to services.
 - Victim participation is **always voluntary**.
 - Officer judgment still applies and can trigger a connection even if the threshold is not met.
- **Risk factors often captured**
 - Jealous or controlling behavior – 61%
 - Recent separation – 50%
 - Stalking – 38%
 - Prior strangulation – 34%
 - Threats to kill – 25%

Cost and Reporting

- **Cost:** low dollar, one-time state cost to update incident reporting fields; no projected ongoing state costs in out years. Training is developed and given with the assistance of grant money.
- **Reporting:** starting January 2028 and annually, the Attorney General reports statewide totals for domestic violence incidents, assessments conducted, high-risk victims identified, and referrals made.
- **Evaluation:** by January 31, 2030, the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board evaluates effectiveness and reports to House and Senate Judiciary committees. The Fatality Review Board can also make policy recommendations based on their findings, to improve future outcomes.

Most Asked Questions

1. **Does this require victims to engage with an advocate?**
 - a. No. Connection is offered immediately for safety, and participation is voluntary.
2. **Is this a new, untested approach?**
 - a. No. A lethality assessment approach is already used by many agencies in Colorado. This bill standardizes training, reporting, and statewide consistency.
3. **What changes for law enforcement?**
 - a. It creates a consistent statewide expectation to use a validated assessment tool during domestic violence incident response and document the results.

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