

Appendix 2I

Training Memo—Suspect on the Line

Why is it important for call takers to be prepared to respond to domestic abuse–related calls where the suspect is on the line?

- Contribute to a safety-oriented response.
- Determine the nature of the emergency and the response priority.
- Provide information to responding officers about events at the scene and the level of danger.
- Help de-escalate the situation by talking with the suspect while police are on their way.
- In some situations, occupying the suspect by talking with him/her may give the victim(s) an opportunity to go to a safer location.

What is involved?

- **Recognition**
 - On all calls: stay alert for clicks, breathing, talking and other sounds that suggest that someone other than the initial caller is on the line.
 - In some situations, caller may hand over the phone to the suspect; e.g., “He’s standing right next to me. Here, you talk to him.”
 - In situations where the callers says it is not safe to speak openly or freely, or it appears that the caller cannot speak openly or answer questions, ask a question such as “Would you like me to talk with the other person there?” Or, “Would you like me to talk with the person who has threatened you?”
- **Response**
 - Communicate in ways that are most likely to de-escalate the situation and keep the suspect preoccupied and talking:
 - Remain calm and respectful
 - Avoid arguing
 - Refrain from language that appears to take sides
 - Attempt to keep the person on the line and allow time for the squad to respond.
 - Do not share information about what others have said or why police were called.
 - Inform dispatch and responding officers that call taker is speaking with possible suspect.
 - Document in CAD exactly what the person is saying to the call taker; provide specific details and quotes.
 - Use *Appendix 2B: Protocol 1—Card 2* to guide the response.