

Domestic Violence Screening Instrument (DVSI)

Scoring Guide

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The **Domestic Violence Screening Instrument (DVSI)** was developed to assess the risk of future, repeat domestic violence based on information available at the time of the offense. It is designed as a brief, straightforward criminal records review that can be completed soon after the offense and made available to judicial officers, prosecutors, pre-trial officers, and others to support early decision-making. The DVSI is a copyrighted instrument originally developed by the Colorado Judicial Department with funding from a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. For permission to use the DVSI, please use the link provided in the footer.

When completing the DVSI, staff should draw upon all available information. The instrument's 12 items can generally be scored through a review of state and national databases, police reports, and prior court or criminal justice records. **All items must be scored based on the individual's status at the time of the offense, regardless of the date the DVSI is completed.**

This guide outlines how to investigate the relevant information, interpret each item, and score the instrument accurately. Before completing a DVSI for a new case, it may be useful to review any previously completed screens for the individual. Prior DVSI's may help inform the investigation; however, previous scores should be verified independently rather than copied.

Item Description	Investigation Guide	Scoring
<p>1. Prior non-domestic violence convictions?</p> <p>Prior convictions reflect anti-social cognitions and attitudes.</p> <p>Prior criminal history has been associated with increased risk of reoffense.</p>	<p>Access criminal justice records to review history in local jurisdiction.</p> <p>Utilize the NCIC and/or state rap sheet to obtain arrest history. These reports include arrests, so verify convictions.</p> <p>Records for municipal cases should be verified by contacting the municipality directly.</p>	<p>Count all adult non-domestic violence (DV) convictions, including deferred judgments.</p> <p>Misdemeanor impaired driving should be counted, such as DUI/DWI.</p> <p>Misdemeanor level municipal cases should be included in the total number of convictions.</p> <p>Do not count petty offenses or prior traffic offenses, except impaired driving.</p> <p>Do not include juvenile cases.</p>
<p>2. Prior arrests for assault, harassment, or menacing?</p> <p>Prior criminal behavior is a predictor for future criminal behavior.</p> <p>Increased frequency of violence is associated with increases in lethality and recidivism risks.</p>	<p>Access criminal justice records to review history in local jurisdiction.</p> <p>Utilize the NCIC and/or state rap sheet to obtain arrest history. These reports include arrests and may reflect multiple arrests for the same case.</p> <p>Records for municipal arrests should be verified by contacting the municipality directly.</p>	<p>Adult <u>arrests</u> for the qualifying offenses should be counted in this score, regardless if they were DV-related.</p> <p>Do not include a summons for any of the above as an arrest.</p> <p>Do not include juvenile arrests.</p> <p>If multiple arrests occurred in one case, only count the arrest one time.</p>

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<p>3. Prior Domestic Violence treatment(s)?</p> <p>Past domestic violence is a predictor of future domestic violence.</p> <p>Failing to complete treatment elevates risk.</p>	<p>Review minute orders in cases for any indication that the defendant was ordered to attend DV treatment or education.</p> <p>Review probation and/or parole records to determine if the defendant was ever referred to DV treatment.</p>	<p>Count any court ordered or voluntary DV treatment, even if the defendant never attended or completed.</p> <p>If the defendant was in treatment more than once for the same offense, this only counts as one prior DV treatment.</p> <p>Include DV education programs.</p> <p>Do not include marriage counseling or any therapy that is not specifically DV treatment or education.</p>
<p>4. Prior drug or alcohol treatment?</p> <p>Drug and/or alcohol use is a risk factor for criminal behavior.</p> <p>The use of some illegal drugs has been associated with increased risk of lethality and recidivism.</p>	<p>Review criminal history for prior impaired driving convictions. Typically, impaired driving cases include mandatory treatment, therapy, and/or education.</p> <p>Review the minute orders of any impaired driving case.</p> <p>Review probation and/or parole records to determine if the defendant was ever referred to treatment.</p> <p>Convictions for drug-related charges may also require the defendant to participate in treatment. Review the minute orders of any drug-related case.</p>	<p>Count all voluntary or court-ordered drug/alcohol treatment provided by a licensed agency, regardless of completion.</p> <p>Count any treatment, therapy, and/or education ordered as part of a criminal case, such as impaired driving or drug-related offenses.</p> <p>Do not count religious counseling or other treatment not offered by a licensed agency or professional.</p> <p>Do not count support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.</p>

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<p>5. Any history of domestic violence related protection orders?</p> <p>Prior DV protection orders show a history of DV.</p> <p>Prior protection orders have been associated with a risk to reoffend.</p>	<p>Check the NCIC and/or state rap sheets for <i>any</i> arrests, not limited to the present victim, for violation of a DV-related protection order. If a violation exists, a protection order must also exist.</p> <p>Review the minute orders in all cases for protection orders.</p> <p>Consider domestic relations cases for civil protection orders issued. Some defendants have partners who may secure protection orders against the defendant, without pressing charges.</p> <p>Review dependency and neglect cases for protection orders that may have been entered to prevent family violence.</p> <p>In cases that include a Violation of a Protection Order charge, review the police report or minute orders to determine if the charge is the result of a <i>DV-related</i> protection order.</p>	<p>Count all civil and criminal protection orders that are related to domestic violence; at the time of the offense and in the past. Any of the following, if entered as a result of domestic violence, should be counted: civil protection orders, criminal no contact orders, domestic relations protection orders.</p>
<p>6. Any history of violation(s) of domestic violence protection orders?</p> <p>Violation of protection orders is a risk factor.</p>	<p>Review all cases identified in item number 5.</p> <p>Review minute orders, as well as probation and/or parole records to locate violations that did not result in a new charge but resulted in some type of formal sanction.</p>	<p>This item pertains only to the protection orders identified in item number 5.</p> <p>Count all DV-related civil and criminal orders; at the time of the offense and in the past.</p> <p>Count any violations of protection orders, regardless of whether the victim was present or not. This includes alcohol violations.</p> <p>In order to count, the violation must have led to a formal sanction (arrest, new charge, revocation, placement on electronic monitoring, etc.). To count, the violation does not have to result in a new arrest or charge.</p>

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<p data-bbox="163 191 468 289">7. Any evidence of object used as a weapon in commission of a crime?</p> <p data-bbox="163 326 468 418">Use of weapons elevates the defendant’s lethality risk.</p>	<p data-bbox="541 191 1455 289">Review all available documentation, such as police reports, victim advocate reports, victim impact statements, etc., involving the past and/or current offense(s). Include any evidence from any crime that included a weapon.</p> <p data-bbox="541 318 1455 383">Weapons may vary in nature, and it is important to consider the perception of the victim and their perceived harm from the object being used.</p> <p data-bbox="541 407 1455 472">Closely review any first and second degree assault cases, as they often include a weapon.</p> <p data-bbox="541 496 1455 626">“Object” is interpreted loosely to include items such as bats, phones, dishes, tools, etc. Although many objects may be present during the crime, they are only considered as a weapon for scoring this item if <i>actually used</i> in an offense.</p>	<p data-bbox="1497 191 1896 289">Actual weapons, such as guns or knives, are considered as objects and should be scored.</p> <p data-bbox="1497 318 1896 415">Hands are not considered weapons, unless the defendant is trained in military or martial arts.</p> <p data-bbox="1497 440 1896 643">Do not score if there was threatened use of a weapon (but it was not present), the defendant had access to weapons (but they weren’t present), or prior possession of weapons charges.</p>

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<p>8. Were children present during the domestic violence incident?</p> <p>Children being present during the offense is associated with increased recidivism risk.</p> <p>Having a child present, who is not the defendant’s own child, increases risks of lethality and recidivism.</p> <p>Assaults during pregnancy increase the risk of lethality.</p>	<p>Review police reports and/or other documents to determine if children were present during the current offense or previous DV-related cases.</p> <p>Consider victim impact statements or reports from victim advocates.</p>	<p>Score if children were in the vicinity, <i>and</i> the defendant was aware of them or should have been aware of them.</p> <p>Include all children under the age of 18, regardless of their relationship to the victim and/or defendant.</p> <p>Score if the victim was pregnant at the time of the incident, and the defendant knew or should have known that the victim was pregnant.</p> <p>If the offense occurred in a location where children are typically present, but documentation does not clearly indicate their presence, still score the item. For example, the offense occurred at a school during day time hours.</p> <p>Mark “None” if no children were present or children were present, but the defendant did not have knowledge of their presence.</p> <p>Only mark “Unknown” if there is no clear or reasonable indication of children present.</p>

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<p>9. Current employment status</p> <p>Lack of employment is associated with increased risk of recidivism.</p>	<p>Review all documents related to the current case. Employment status may be included in the arrest affidavit, citation, or police reports.</p> <p>If unemployed, review documents to determine the defendant’s means of support or structure of their personal time. For example, is the defendant a student, retiree, or homemaker?</p>	<p>Score this item as “None,” if the defendant is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending school full-time (12 credit hours or more) • Attending school and working, when the combined schedule equals 30 hours or more per week • Receiving disability or worker’s compensation • Receiving retirement benefits • Working full time caregiver <p>Score this item as “Unemployed” if the defendant is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working less than 30 hours per week • Employment is day or temporary labor • In between assignments • Not on the current payroll of a legitimate employer • Not working and only attending school part-time (less than 12 credit hours)

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<p>10. Has victim separated from defendant within last 6 months?</p> <p>Each time a victim initiates a separation from the defendant, risk increases.</p> <p>Separation increases the defendant’s risk of lethality and recidivism.</p>	<p>Separation refers to physical separation that appears permanent. This item is not referring to temporary separations, such as leaving the home for the evening because the defendant is intoxicated.</p> <p>Read documents related to the current offense. Police reports, victim statements, and witness accounts may include this information.</p> <p>Review criminal history for recent protection orders that may indicate separation from this victim.</p> <p>Review court records for recent divorce or legal separation petitions, which might indicate that there was separation within the last 6 months.</p> <p>If appropriate, contact the victim and/or victim advocate for clarification on this item.</p>	<p>The timeframe for scoring this item is 6 months from the time of the offense, not from the date of completing the DVSI.</p> <p>Indicate “Yes,” if there was a separation, where the victim physically moved and took belongings.</p> <p>Indicate “Yes,” if the separation appears permanent. It may include entering a shelter for the purpose of separation, moving from the residence, moving in with friends, or eviction of the defendant.</p> <p>Mark “No,” if the couple was in the process of separating at the time of the current offense.</p> <p>Mark “No,” if a separation was the result of the current offense.</p>

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<p>11. Did victim have a protection order in place against defendant at time of offense?</p> <p>Violation of protection order is a risk factor.</p>	<p>Do not automatically assume that there was a protection order associated with this victim, if the defendant has been charged with a protection order violation.</p> <p>Review the police report to confirm the protection order was in place due to the victim and that it was active at the time of the current offense.</p> <p>Read all documents related to the current case. It is possible to violate a protection order without being charged, so do not assume there was no order in place because the defendant was not charged with a violation or a protection order.</p>	<p>Include both civil and criminal protection orders.</p> <p>Score the item “Yes” regardless of whether the defendant was charged with Violation of a Protection Order.</p>
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<p>12. Was defendant under any form of community supervision at the time of offense?</p> <p>If the defendant was on supervision and committed a new crime, this factor suggests that criminal behaviors are persistent and likely to re-occur.</p>	<p>“Community supervision” includes any community-based supervision ordered by the court. This would include pre-trial, unsupervised probation, probation (regardless of supervision status), community corrections, parole, etc. Additionally, community supervision includes any form of juvenile supervision, such as probation or parole.</p> <p>Include any community supervision that was the result of convictions and/or deferred judgements, regardless of the jurisdiction (municipal, state, federal, interstate compact, etc.).</p>	<p>Indicate “Yes,” if the defendant was being supervised in the community for any court-order.</p> <p>Mark “Yes,” if the defendant was under warrant status for a community-based sentence. For example, the defendant was absconded from supervision, and there was an active warrant.</p>