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Domestic Violence Incidents Involving Law Enforcement Personnel:
Policy Development for the Lubbock Police Department

A Policy Research Project
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RESERVE

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ABSTRACT

Recently, law enforcement officials have mandated the participation of their personnel in comprehensive training regarding their agency's responsibility in the immediate protection of domestic violence assault victims. Federal and state laws grant an officer the authority to arrest offenders, without a warrant, when evidence of physical abuse is present. What happens when the offender is a police officer? Does a police department objectively investigate cases of domestic assault when the abuser is one of its own employees?

Random surveys of law enforcement agencies have examined existing policies or, more realistically, the lack of policies concerning administrative internal investigations of an employee involved in domestic violence assault. An alarming number of agencies do not address this problem.

This research paper examines the issue of domestic violence assault and the police officer's role as the suspected abuser. The author will review existing federal and state laws, definitions, departmental policies, journals, books, surveys, and other documents to address the absence of written policies.

There is a need for a written policy directing administrative investigations and involuntary employee assistance referrals in incidents of employee involved domestic violence assault. It is clear the Lubbock Police Department is not prepared to aggressively affect this issue from a written policy standpoint. This research paper focuses attention to these issues and needs and strongly recommends the Lubbock Police Department implement a written domestic violence assault policy for police offenders.

RESERVE

Table Of Contents

Section	Page
Abstract	
Introduction	01
Historical, Legal, and Theoretical Context	02
Review of Literature or Practice	05
Discussion of Relevant Issues	08
Conclusion/Recommendations	11
Bibliography	
Appendix	

RESERVE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research paper is to investigate and analyze the need for a written domestic violence assault policy covering police employee offenders within the Lubbock Police Department. This research paper examines the absence of Lubbock Police Department disciplinary guidelines and involuntary employee assistance program referrals for domestic violence among police. In addition to exploring the need for a written policy, several other issues were reviewed. These issues included policy compatibility with federal and state law; current domestic violence definitions; Chapter 143, the local government code; applicable case law; and current Lubbock Police Department policy concerning voluntary employee assistance referrals.

Historically, actions taken by officers responding to a request for service from a victim of domestic violence assault involving a police employee result in the negligent abandonment of any enforceable departmental policy or law violation. Frequently, the responding officer speaks with the police employee and dismisses the call without any formal investigation or, more importantly, a check of the complaining victim's welfare (Feltgen 42-49). Unfortunately, officers are expected to investigate the co-worker without written departmental guidelines. This overwhelming use of discretion and the responding officer's reluctance in filing an official report is directly responsible for the absence of documentation on injuries or abuse.

All information included in this research paper is available from books, police journals, police agency surveys, police department policy manuals, state and federal law manuals, case law summaries, newspaper articles, internet publications, and other documents.

RESERVE

The intended outcome of this research paper is to provide the Lubbock Police Chief with accurate information regarding the legality and compatibility of a written domestic violence assault policy with current Lubbock Police Department procedures and the necessity for administrative inquiries beyond criminal investigations. This research paper demonstrates an obligation to develop clear policy guidelines for investigation and intervention in cases of domestic violence assault where the abuser is a member of the law enforcement community.

HISTORICAL, LEGAL, and THEORETICAL CONTEXT

"Few occupations make as significant moral demands on their practitioners as policing. Yet no occupation has been as poorly prepared for the moral demands laid on it" (Kleinig 278). For many years, family violence and domestic violence assaults were viewed by law enforcement and the general public as private family matters, occurring only in poor or uneducated families (Jarrett 16-19). This view is responsible for generating a buffer, allowing negligence by those agencies required to act when police related domestic assaults occur. This belief may have caused situations where assault victims lost their rights and privilege of protection.

Like victims of sexual assault, domestic violence assault victims are forced to depend on a society that focuses the responsibility of the assault on the accuser rather than where it belongs -- on the abuser. Fortunately, an increase in public awareness and the position taken by the law enforcement profession has changed dramatically (Breci 53-68).

RESERVE

The law enforcement profession now views domestic violence assault as a prodigious problem. This change occurred because of comprehensive revisions to federal and state statutes requiring law enforcement intervention when a domestic violence assault occurs (Hamm 227-248). Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia now authorize or mandate warrantless probable cause arrests where an officer has a reasonable belief an assault occurred and there is reason to believe the assault will continue if there is no intervention (Gallagher 1-6).

Some believe this change process has taken too long. However, in reality, the response to this problem is in the beginning stages of development. The next natural step in this change process will be to address domestic violence assaults occurring in the law enforcement community. Police agencies must prepare for the next wave of attention focusing on this topic and the public's demand for greater accountability. The age of vicarious liability has arrived for the law enforcement profession for failing to inform, train, and act.

In 1996, an amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968 extended the existing ban on firearm possession by convicted felons, including domestic violence felons, to those offenders convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors. In August 1998, in response to a law suit filed by The Fraternal Order of Police, a federal appellate court ruled the law prohibiting the possession of firearms by a person convicted of domestic violence assault misdemeanors unconstitutional when applied to Peace Officers (Berkman 8). The application of the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994, or more specifically 18 U.S.C. S.922 (g) (8), which prohibits the possession of a firearm by anyone who is the subject of a domestic violence assault injunction or restraining order, is a greater concern for

RESERVE

the police administrator (Gallagher 1-6). These amendments mandate that all law enforcement agencies must initiate the appropriate response when a police employee is involved in domestic violence assault as the offender.

Investigating officer misconduct is the most difficult task a law enforcement administrator must face. Investigations of domestic violence assault involving police families are often the most sensitive. The depth of this problem and its impact on the law enforcement community is not known. The response from an agency administrator is usually very discretionary. The most common approach to this problem is to respond on a "case by case" basis. This may include informal counseling with officers and their families by a senior command officer. On other occasions, street officers handle these problems themselves in an effort to protect the police employee and the department. The second approach is also the most inappropriate. The common elements in either response are a lack of regard for resolution of the problem and protection of the victim. The absence of a written policy concerning police involved domestic violence assault directly affects this arbitrary use of discretion.

Domestic violence assaults occurring in the law enforcement community are more conspicuous now than at any other time in recent history. The public attitude towards family violence, generally, and a demand for higher standards for police agencies creates an opportunity for significant change. This issue is no longer a private family matter and must be recognized as inappropriate conduct when committed by a police employee.

The application of a written policy in all incidents of domestic assault will guarantee equal attention for every episode investigated by an agency. This written policy may

RESERVE

provide an opportunity to assist an employee and an employee's family when the administrative investigation is complete and criminal charges are not pending. The use of employee assistance programs, whether voluntary or involuntary, can give favorable options to a chief administrator regarding the future of an involved employee. The ultimate success of this policy will occur when an employee receives assistance and remains employed after the investigation is completed.

REVIEW of LITERATURE and PRACTICE

"When an organization wants you to do right, it asks for your integrity; when it wants you to do wrong, it demands your loyalty" (Anonymous). In 1995, the Southwestern Legal Foundation (SLF) and the Arlington Texas Police Department issued a special report on police involved domestic violence assault entitled Domestic Assault Among Police: A Survey of Internal Affairs Policies. The foundation for this report surfaced in 1994 when several Arlington Police commanders discussed the issue of domestic violence among police. The previous Internal Affairs officer's observations regarding the number of incidents within the Arlington Police Department were significantly different from those of the current officer assigned to this unit. This discussion revealed an observable increase in the frequency of domestic violence assault among Arlington police officers over a five-year period. The result of this discussion was a realization that the Arlington Police Department was not prepared for this trend from a policy standpoint.

In response to this realization, the Southwestern Legal Foundation and the Arlington Police Department conducted a nationwide survey on the number of occurrences and

RESERVE

responses to domestic violence assault within the police profession. The SLF mailed 151 survey questionnaires. Of those mailed, 123 were returned. This resulted in an 82% response rate. The survey solicited information concerning police administrators' perceptions on:

- (1) the scope of domestic violence within the department;
- (2) current policy response, if any; and
- (3) disciplinary action.

This initial step in studying domestic violence assaults among police is not definitive in establishing answers to this issue. This report is more informative, providing police administrators and Internal Affairs officers with a better understanding of the need for written policies. One important fact noted is only 28.4% of the respondents experienced an increase in police involved domestic violence assaults. However, of those reporting an increase, 25% viewed it as a significant increase. This finding is reinforced by the fact that 78.4% of respondents noted a decrease in public tolerance for domestic violence. It is also reported that at least 45% of the respondents do not have policy guidelines for domestic violence among police.

Two more general findings were reported as noteworthy. First, a large majority of the respondents discerned no pattern or frequency of abuse due to the age of the police offender or job tenure in the department. Secondly, most respondents relied on some type of counseling as part of the disciplinary process. Approximately 97% of the survey respondents made counseling available to their officers (SLF). This report provides important insight into domestic violence within the police profession. As a profession, we must view domestic violence among police as a meaningful issue requiring our immediate attention.

RESERVE

In November 1998, the Lubbock Police Department surveyed twenty-five Texas law enforcement agencies, questioning their policy and response to domestic assault among police officers. Ten agencies responded to this survey. All ten respondents noted an increase in their agency's awareness of this issue. All respondents noted a need for written policy regarding domestic violence among police. Of the ten survey respondents, the Arlington Police Department is the only agency with a written domestic violence assault policy for their employees. Of the responding agencies, 90% rely on a "case by case " response to these incidents. It was also noted that 40% of the agencies rely on employee assistance referrals for counseling. Of the 40% relying on some form of counseling as part of the disciplinary review process, 10% of these agencies make counseling mandatory as a condition of continued employment. None of the responding agencies noted any positive or negative effects from their own experiences with domestic violence policy issues.

When the 1995 survey conducted by SLF is compared to the 1998 survey conducted by the Lubbock Police Department, the following observations are clear. Both surveys received input from police agencies varying in size and location. Both reports indicate an increase in awareness of this issue. The Southwestern Legal Foundation survey noted a higher response than the Lubbock survey; however, the responses remain similar. The most important fact reported is a continued resistance by agencies to develop written policy to address domestic violence assault among police. The Arlington Police Department is the only responding agency addressing this issue with written policy.

RESERVE

The Lubbock survey addresses the issue of involuntary employee assistance referrals. The Southwestern Legal Foundation report does not indicate whether their respondents addressed the issue of involuntary compliance. Some agencies may utilize a direct order for compliance with the need for involuntary counseling. However, this is a poor practice when viewed from a policy standpoint. The Lubbock Police Department does not have a written policy for domestic violence assaults among police. Also, the Lubbock Police Department does not have an involuntary employee assistance referral program for domestic violence among police. Again, this absence of a written policy allows for a wide use of discretion. This leads to serious inconsistencies with administrative and disciplinary actions. This inconsistency reflects poorly on the agency's administration, internal investigations, and credibility.

DISCUSSION of RELEVANT ISSUES

"I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all...develop self restraint.... Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department" (Law Enforcement Code of Ethics). The most significant barrier preventing written domestic violence assault policy acceptance is a concern for the police employee's right to privacy. The distinction between public and private life has never been defined in practice or theory (Kleinig 188). This concern is magnified when viewed in situations occurring in off-duty activities. However, when these activities interfere with the employee's ability to perform required duties, it is the agency's responsibility to address this issue in an equitable manner. Public officials such as police officers, who are expected to foster

RESERVE

public confidence in their role as peacekeepers, are not at liberty to engage in conduct that might be tolerated in other professions. Police officers must sacrifice their privacy in return for the authority and public trust they command.

Police officers work in an environment that requires both compassionate and aggressive behavior -- sometimes simultaneously. Police work demands an officer possess the ability to work under varying conditions, with minimal direct supervision, while exercising wide discretion in the application of the law. This demand places a great deal of importance on police integrity. Few issues are as compelling as that of police integrity. Officers are expected to behave as if they are angels, treating criminals with respect while avoiding even the most meager temptation of a free cup of coffee (Barker 86). The only unilateral process allowing an administrator to reinforce police integrity and limit an officer's use of discretion is in the application of written policy.

The creation of written policy for police employees who commit family violence will revolutionize the way police managers view their responsibilities. There appears to be a growing dilemma facing administrators as they attempt to balance the rights of individuals against the demand from society to control individual behavior. Police administrators face the following responsibilities concerning this dilemma:

- (1) to protect any victim or family member from violence;
- (2) to prevent further incidents of family violence;
- (3) to prevent any further employee misconduct;
- (4) to enforce any applicable state law or department policy; and
- (5) when necessary, mandate the lawful arrest of the offender.

Regardless of the pressure brought on by the public, it is time to do the "right thing". To accomplish this task, managers must take the first step by writing a comprehensive domestic abuse policy. The next phase must include training all officers in this policy

RESERVE

followed by detailed analysis of the implementation process. Finally, the last step available to the manager is making an involuntary referral of the offender to an employee assistance program. By making this a mandatory condition in the disciplinary review process, the manager has the necessary "force" to ensure the participation of the offender. There is a tremendous amount of pressure on the police manager to balance the need for a domestic violence policy and the demands on the involved officer, the court, and the victim. We must "protect and serve". By utilizing a written domestic violence abuse policy we can truly protect the public by doing things right, and serve others by doing the right thing (Gallagher 1-6).

When applying written domestic abuse policy, it appears there are many potential benefits to the law enforcement agency, the domestic abuse victim, and the future employment status of the police employee offender. The law enforcement agency benefits through the consistent application of written policy. Any investigations conducted following this written policy will stand firm against allegations of preferential treatment for the police employee or neglect by the investigating agency. Also, the police administrator will have a greater number of options concerning counseling and disciplinary action at the end of this process. The victim will benefit by receiving the services required to document any physical injuries or abuse. This will create a more compassionate response and facilitate the ability of the victim to receive treatment and hopefully prevent any further family violence. Lastly, the police employee offender may realize the greatest benefit. The use of mandatory counseling, voluntary employee assistance referrals, and involuntary employee assistance referrals provides the police manager with many different resources to assist the police employee. Also applying

RESERVE

this policy during the disciplinary process will assist the police administrator in determining the future employment status of the offender. The police department manager who recognizes the complexity of personal relationships within the agency, prior to an incident occurring, will succeed in providing the appropriate assistance to its employees.

CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

"The perpetrator is a police officer, known to all in the justice system, familiar with the courts, and...if you are a victim, you are one of the most vulnerable victims in the system" (Firman 4). As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this research paper is to investigate and analyze the need for a written domestic violence assault policy concerning police employee offenders within the Lubbock Police Department. The research for this paper was conducted to determine the legality of a written domestic violence assault policy as well as its compatibility with current laws, domestic violence definitions, Lubbock Police Department policies and guidelines, and disciplinary proceedings concerning employee assistance referrals. In determining the need for this policy, several key issues were addressed. These issues include the history of domestic violence involving police offenders, inappropriate responses by police agencies to a domestic violence incident involving a police offender, the overwhelming absence of written policy governing officer discretion when assisting domestic violence assault victims, and vicarious liability for failing to act. An employee's right to privacy and the police administrator's need to understand the complexity of personal relationships were also examined.

RESERVE

Based on the research conducted for this paper, it is apparent there is a substantial lack of policies within the law enforcement arena governing domestic violence assault among members of the police community. The Lubbock Police Department is not prepared to aggressively affect this issue from a written policy standpoint. It is clear there is a need for a written policy to ensure consistency in disciplinary actions and employee assistance referrals when dealing with police offenders.

To effectively deal with the reality of domestic violence within the Lubbock Police Department, administrators must be willing to enforce all applicable laws when one of its employees is involved in domestic violence assault. The primary concern must be the protection of the victim, regardless of the fact the abuser is a Lubbock police officer, followed by intervention and assistance. The Lubbock Police Department must implement strict written policies governing administrative investigations of police employees, involved in domestic violence complaints, to meet this concern.

The implementation and strict adherence to a police involved domestic violence policy will enable the Lubbock Police Chief to act consistently and equitably in the use of disciplinary sanctions and employee assistance referrals. The current public opinion concerning domestic violence assault among police is emotionally charged, politically sensitive, and highly volatile. The adherence to strict written policy will provide the Lubbock Police Chief with the necessary weapons to respond to this sensitive and highly volatile issue.

RESERVE

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RESERVE

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RESERVE

APPENDIX 1

RESERVE

MODEL POLICY

PROCEDURE MANUAL CHAPTER

16.00 POLICE EMPLOYEE – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSAULT

16.01 PURPOSE AND POLICY

16.01.01 PURPOSE. To provide the Lubbock Police Department with guidelines for an appropriate response to incidents where police employees are involved in a domestic violence assault and the discipline of employees committing acts of domestic violence assault. All existing department policies and procedures, for dealing with domestic violence, are not affected by this policy and shall be followed.

16.01.02 POLICY. The guidelines contained herein set forth policy and procedures designed to provide the Lubbock Police Department with an appropriate response to employees involved in/or victims of domestic violence assault. This policy is consistent with the major objective of the Lubbock Police Department -- the protection of human life and property. This policy acknowledges the existence of employee involved domestic violence assault and establishes a position of absolute intolerance. This policy creates a response process by which Lubbock Police Department personnel facilitate achieving this objective. This policy will not prevent the Lubbock Police Department from taking more aggressive action when circumstances require it.

16.01.03 DEFINITION. Domestic Violence is defined as:

- A. An act by a member of a family or household, against another member of the family or household, that is intended to result in physical harm, assault, or sexual assault; or
- B. A threat that reasonably places the member of a family or household, in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself.

16.01.04 RESPONSIBILITIES. The Lubbock Police Department's primary responsibility is to protect the victims of domestic violence assault. However, the department recognizes the complexity of personal relationships and seeks to provide assistance to its employees as well as:

- A. Render emergency assistance to victims;

RESERVE

- B. Prevent any further employee misconduct;
- C. Determine if a criminal offense has occurred; and
- D. Take appropriate intervention action.

16.02 DISPUTE INCIDENT INTERVENTION

16.02.01 NON-VIOLENT DISPUTE INTERVENTION. In cases of non-violent domestic disputes involving a police employee, one patrol officer and two patrol supervisors will respond to the disturbance. The responding officer and supervisors will be notified by secure communications, i.e. (non-cellular) telephone, or MDT.

16.02.02 VIOLENT DISPUTE INTERVENTION. In cases of violent domestic assault involving a police employee, two patrol officers and two patrol supervisors will respond to the disturbance. All officers will be notified of the disturbance by secure means, if practical.

If exigent circumstances exist, where delay may result in physical harm; bodily injury; assault; sexual assault; or death; notification will be made in any manner available to expedite intervention.

16.02.03 DUTIES OF RESPONDING OFFICER (S). All responding officers shall take immediate intervention action to ensure the safety of the victim(s). The responding officer(s) will conduct a preliminary investigation of the incident to determine if a criminal offense occurred. The responding officer(s) will remain on the scene until relieved by a shift supervisor. Once relieved, the responding officer(s) will complete any supplementary reports prior to the end of shift.

16.02.04 DUTIES OF RESPONDING SUPERVISOR (S). The responding supervisor will respond to the scene and assume the responsibility of the investigation of any Lubbock Police employee involved in domestic violence assault. The responding supervisor will assess the actual and potential harm to the victim(s). The responding supervisor will complete the following tasks:

- A. Ensure the Shift Commander is notified of the domestic dispute incident.
- B. Ensure enforcement of any lawful court order involving the disputing parties;

RESERVE

- C. Ensure the responding officer(s) complete the duties required by written policy;
- D. Ensure the preliminary report is completed by the end of shift.

As soon as practical the shift supervisor will notify communications to preserve the tape of the 911 call or telephone call, received at the beginning of the incident, regardless of the outcome of the call.

16.02.05 DUTIES OF SHIFT COMMANDER. The Shift Commander shall:

- A. Ensure that a supervisor has responded to the incident and is actively involved in the investigation;
- B. Ensure enforcement of any lawful court order involving the disputing parties;
- C. Ensure appropriate notifications of departmental personnel are made in accordance with written policy and chain of command;
- D. Ensure the shift supervisor's report and documentation of the facts and circumstances of the incident are complete by the end of shift.
- E. In cases where probable cause exists, the Shift Commander shall ensure an arrest of the offender is made.
- F. When an arrest is made, involving sworn personnel, the Shift Commander shall take custody of the accused officer's service weapon. All other firearms owned or available to the accused officer shall be removed to further ensure the safety of all parties involved.

In cases where probable cause exists, supporting the warrantless arrest of a police employee offender, and an arrest is not made the Shift Commander shall submit a detailed report to the Uniform Division Assistant Chief detailing any and all reasons for the non-arrest action.

16.02.06 WHEN THE OFFENDER LEAVES THE SCENE. If the police employee offender has left the scene, the responding officer(s) and supervisor(s) shall:

- A. Search the area, if potentially worthwhile, in an attempt to prevent any further domestic violence, assault, or employee misconduct;

RESERVE

- B. Obtain all relevant information from the victim, family, or witnesses as to where the offender might have gone to prevent any further domestic violence, assault, or employee misconduct; and
- C. When probable cause exists, indicating an aggravated offense or serious injuries have occurred, immediately obtain an arrest warrant for the offender.
- D. If probable cause does not exist, or, no injuries have occurred the warrant may be obtained through the routine filing process.

16.02.07 OFFICER(S) FROM OTHER AGENCIES. When responding to a domestic violence assault involving an officer from another agency, all responding officers, investigators, and supervisors shall follow the policies in place for any victim of domestic violence assault. In addition, a responding shift supervisor shall notify the accused officer's department.

The responding officer shall inform the victim(s) of all available resources.

16.02.08 POST-INCIDENT ACTION. The Shift Commander shall debrief all officers responding to a police involved domestic violence assault call at the conclusion of the preliminary investigation. This debriefing will ensure the validity of the investigative process and may encourage commitment to this policy by those officers involved in the dispute incident.

16.03 ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

16.03.01 OFFICER SELF-INTERVENTION. In order to prevent the escalation of a problem to the point where domestic violence occurs an employee is entitled and encouraged to seek assistance from the City of Lubbock Employee Assistance Program, or another counselor, in matters involving a personal and/or family conflict.

16.03.02 FIRST DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE INCIDENT. After an initial domestic disturbance involving a police employee offender, where no injuries or assault occurred, supervisory counseling will be utilized to address the employee's misconduct and actions. Non-mandatory City of Lubbock Employee Assistance Program referral(s) may be used in conjunction with supervisory counseling.

16.03.03 SECOND DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE INCIDENT. After the second domestic disturbance incident involving a police employee offender, where no injuries or assault occurs, supervisory counseling and mandatory City of Lubbock Employee Assistance Program referral(s) will be utilized.

RESERVE

Each subsequent non-violent domestic incident will result in moving to the next applicable step in the disciplinary process including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Administrative Leave – pending Departmental Complaint investigation.
- B. Internal Affairs Investigation – Formal Complaint by Shift Commander.

16.03.04 FIRST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSAULT INCIDENT. After the first domestic violence assault resulting in bodily injury, a mandatory employee assistance referral will be made to the City of Lubbock Employee Assistance Program. The offending employee will be sanctioned as follows:

- A. The employee offender will be placed on administrative leave by the Shift Commander or shift supervisor, and
- B. The employee offender will remain on administrative leave until the initial contact with EAP, or while continuation of regular duties is not favorable to the best interests of the employee or the Department, and
- C. Internal Affairs Investigation – Formal Complaint by Shift Commander.

16.03.05 SECOND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSAULT INCIDENT. Following the second domestic violence assault resulting in bodily injury, the police employee will be subject to further disciplinary action. This action may include indefinite suspension. This action will be taken without a requirement for any further mandatory counseling.

16.03.06 MANDATORY COUNSELING. A police employee who commits an act of domestic violence assault shall be required to participate in mandatory counseling and treatment. The counseling will be conducted by City of Lubbock Employee Assistance Program. The employee will cooperate with the counseling services and treatment process. The employee must provide a limited release of information authorizing Lubbock Employee Assistance Program administrators to provide a progress report to the Department regarding the successful participation of the employee.

The employee will be required to submit certification to the department upon completion of this mandatory-counseling program.

RESERVE

FAILURE TO ATTEND AND COMPLETE THE MANDATORY COUNSELING PROGRAM WILL RESULT IN FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION, TO INCLUDE INDEFINITE SUSPENSION.

- 16.03.06 WEAPONS, SERIOUS INJURIES, OR OTHER FELONIES.** Domestic incidents involving the threat or use of weapons to commit domestic violence assault, serious injury(s), or other felonies shall be grounds for more serious disciplinary action without a requirement for mandatory counseling.

RESERVE

CITY OF LUBBOCK
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
743-1EAP

Your employer, City of Lubbock, provides the Employee Assistance Program as an employee benefit to keep you healthy and on the job. Employee Assistance therapists are trained in solving all types of problems related to daily living, including:

- Family and Relationship Problems
- Depression, Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Anxiety and Stress
- Other problems in living

You may have questions about the Employee Assistance Program (SWEAP), how to use it and how it can help you. Here are some commonly asked questions:

1. WHAT IS THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SWEAP)?

SWEAP is a helping program that enhances a healthy work attitude by providing you, the employee, and your family the opportunities to manage life's problems before they become serious and impair work performance.

2. WHO WOULD USE THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SWEAP)?

SWEAP is for all employees and their families. Anyone living in the employee's household is entitled to EAP services. The EAP program is an employee benefit—a partnership between the City of Lubbock and you that insures a better and safer place to work and promotes "wellness" on the job.

For example, SWEAP is a program of prevention, education, treatment and good health. It is for any employee with a personal problem that interferes with the ability to work at his or her greatest capacity. These problems may be related to stress in one's work environment, one's marriage and/or family, in legal and/or financial areas.

This is a voluntary program which is **CONFIDENTIAL AND SAFE**. A SWEAP consultation is private and professional. Your supervisor and co-workers need not know about the call unless you choose to tell them.

3. HOW DOES THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SWEAP) WORK?

SWEAP helps to identify problems that result from emotional stress which may interfere with efficient daily living. SWEAP is a friend when no one else understands the problem. This program strives to educate everyone in the job to recognize the signs of problems. It emphasizes that impaired workers need attention. SWEAP also provides a vehicle for you to seek treatment or help with a problem.

SWEAP helps the employee and their family members recognize their problems and gain the confidence to ask for help without the worry of losing confidentiality. It ultimately helps an employee remain a productive member of the work force before a problem causes lost time.