

PRESS RELEASE



Nampa Police Department to Mandate Strangulation Prevention Training Course for All Officers

“When men choke women, those men might as well be raising their right hand and saying ‘I am a killer’ to everyone that is paying attention,” said Gwinn. “After 20 years of research and practice, it is clear that men who choke women are the same men who are likely to later kill those women, kill children, and kill police officers.” Casey Gwinn, National Strangulation Training Institute

Nampa Police Chief Craig Kingsbury has accepted the challenge of the U.S. Department of Justice-funded National Strangulation Training Institute to have all employees in his department complete an online course on investigating non-fatal strangulation crimes in domestic violence cases. The National Strangulation Training Institute is seeking to recruit police chiefs and Sheriffs to mandate a new online training course in order to train 5,000 law enforcement officers across the country by March 31, 2013. “This is a life and death issue for victims of domestic violence and the failure to handle these cases and treat them as serious felonies can also endanger police officers dealing with these violent and abusive men,” said Chief Kingsbury. “Doing these cases well is ‘homicide prevention’” added Chief Kingsbury.

Strangulation is a gender-based crime committed almost entirely by men against women. In a nationally published study conducted in San Diego in 1995, the research team found that 299/300 cases involved male perpetrators. Most of the cases involved no visible injury and most cases were never prosecuted or properly investigated as serious crimes. Idaho and more than 32 other states have now passed felony strangulation laws and are focused on treating these cases as serious felonies even if there is no visible injury when law enforcement officers arrive at the scene. Today, more than 10% of the women killed each year in Idaho by their intimate partners are strangled to death. Research confirms that 50% of all domestic violence homicide victims were strangled at least once before they were later murdered. **“If we can prevent even one homicide by early prosecution of an abuser when he strangles his partner and she survives, all our work will all be worth it,” said Gael Strack, the Project Director of the National Strangulation Training Institute and CEO of the National Family Justice Center Alliance.**

- Strangulation is more common than professionals have realized. Recent studies have now shown that 34% of abused pregnant women report being “choked” (Bullock, 2006); 47% of female domestic violence victims reported

- being “choked” (Block, 2000) and most experts believe the rate is higher given the lack of minimization by victims and the lack of education.
- Victims of multiple strangulation “who had experienced more than one strangulation attack, on separate occasions, by the same abuser, reported neck and throat injuries, neurologic disorders and psychological disorders with increased frequency”. (Smith, 2001)
 - **Almost half of all domestic violence homicide victims had experienced at least one episode of non-fatal strangulation prior to a lethal violent incident (Glass, Sage, 2008). Victims of prior non-fatal strangulation are 800% more likely of later becoming a homicide victim. (Glass, et al, 2008).**
 - Strangulation is more serious than professionals have realized. Loss of consciousness can occur within 5 to 10 seconds and death within 4 to 5 minutes. (Watch, 2009; Hawley, McClane, 2001). The seriousness of the internal injuries may take a few hours to be appreciated and delayed death can occur days later. (Hawley, McClane, 2001).
 - Because most strangulation victims do not have visible injuries, strangulation cases are minimized or trivialized by law enforcement, medical and mental health professionals.

The Nampa Family Justice Center provides comprehensive services to victims of non-fatal strangulation and other domestic violence and sexual assault-related crimes. All partners of the Nampa Family Justice Center have received training in the handling of non-fatal strangulation related crimes and the Center has hailed Chief Kingsbury’s decision. “If every officer in Nampa handles these cases based on national best practices, our community will be safer and the most dangerous domestic violence offenders will be held accountable for their crimes,” said Rebecca Lovelace, Director of the Nampa Family Justice Center.

“The Nampa Police Department and others that are making this pledge are leading the way for law enforcement agencies across the nation and their example will help save many lives in the months and years ahead,” said Casey Gwinn, President of the National Family Justice Center Alliance. Other departments that have committed to mandate the course since the Project 5000 Challenge was issued last week include: Hibbing Police Department (MN); Bristow Police Department (OK); Fulton County Sheriff (OH); Riverside Police Department (CA); and Shasta County Sheriff (CA).

“I am proud that the Nampa Police Department is a leader among law enforcement agencies in the area of domestic violence prevention and detection. Strangulation is often misunderstood and sometimes missed by first responders. This training will provide some new tools that will assist NPD officers and dispatchers to recognize the signs of strangulation and ensure proper medical help is given to the victim as well as better documentation for an arrest and prosecution of the offender. I will do everything in my power as the Chief of Police to protect victims of domestic violence. This training is a great opportunity.”

Chief Craig Kingsbury
Nampa Police Department

For more information on the Institute, go to: (www.strangulationtraininginstitute.org).

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