

Risk assessment and risk management by police

Step 1: Define the purpose and objectives of police risk assessment

Police risk assessment objectives should include:

- the design of effective and tailored responses for victim safety;
- the delivery of targeted and immediate risk management interventions for cases assessed and identified as high, medium or standard risk;
- informing decisions about whether to proceed with a case should victims choose to withdraw a complaint;
- holding stakeholders within a multiagency framework accountable for decisions on victim safety and perpetrator management;
- the development of a shared language among service providers and enhancing multiagency communication and coordination on delivering effective responses to intimate partner violence (see how to embed police risk assessment in a multiagency framework in [Step 5](#)).

Police risk assessment should assess for multiple types and levels of risk including:

- lethality risk and risk of repeated violence;
- level or extent of harm to the victim and her children, her family or other relevant people;
- the threats to which the victim is exposed and the presence of, or threats to use, weapons;
- evidence of escalating violence or intimidation.

Defining the purpose and goals of risk assessment will affect the types and levels of risk that the police attempt to address. While most risk assessment tools include a high proportion of the same risk factors, the level and type of intervention will be different depending on whether the priority is to prevent lethality or all types and levels of risk. For example, the distinction between assessing the risk of reoffending and assessing the risk of lethal violence may influence the choice of risk assessment tool, how different risk factors are weighted, and responses to the type and level of risk identified. To ensure that risk assessment focuses on prevention of intimate partner violence in all its forms, it should not be limited to assessing for lethality but be broad enough to identify multiple types and levels of risk associated with intimate partner violence against women.

Assessing for multiple types and levels of risk facilitates the linking of risk assessment to risk management, helping to ensure the immediate and ongoing safety and well-being of women and children (see [Principle 5](#) on risk assessment).