



**STATE OF NEW YORK
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES**

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TO: All Incident- Based Reporting Agencies

FROM: Adam Dean, Crime Reporting Unit

DATE: December 29, 2009

SUBJECT: Reporting Victim/Offender Relationships

**REPORTING ALERT:
IBR VICTIM/OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS**

Agencies participating in IBR are required to report a victim/offender relationship for each incident submitted to DCJS. The accuracy of this data element, which identifies the relationship of each victim to each offender, is particularly critical when domestic violence crime is being analyzed.

Modifications to the IBR Victim/Offender Relationship Codes

In July 2008, the definition of “domestic relationship” was expanded by the New York State Family Court to include all persons who are currently, or were previously, involved in a significant intimate or dating relationship, regardless of whether or not they previously lived together. To more accurately reflect the new definition, the IBR “victim to offender relationship” codes have been modified and are enclosed for your reference (see attachment A). This listing can also be found in the “IBR Data Elements Listing” located on the DCJS public website at:

http://www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us/crimnet/ojsa/crimereporting/ibr_ref.htm

Common Misclassification of Victim/Offender Relationships and Data Quality

A recent analysis showed that many relationships appear to be misclassified by the reporting agencies. Misclassifications of the victim/offender relationship can result in certain relationships being misrepresented. For instance, classifying former intimate partners (e.g. ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend) as “Acquaintance” or “Otherwise Known” will result in an undercount of domestic violence victims among IBR agencies.

There is also a distinction between “Stranger” and “Relationship Unknown”, although many get the two confused or use them interchangeably. “Stranger” relationships are to be used when the victim (or witness) can verify that there is no relationship to the offender. In these situations, some demographics (e.g. age, gender, and race) of the offender are required in order for the victim to verify the person as a stranger. “Relationship Unknown” is essentially a “missing” label for the relationship because no demographics are known about the offender at the time of the report. Many times

“Relationship Unknown” can be updated when the offender is later identified.

“Not Reported” is applicable when the victim refuses to report who the offender was or if the officer fails to record a relationship on the report. **DCJS strongly encourages agencies to ensure incident reports are filled out completely.** However, when the relationship is left blank agencies should be recording the relationship as “Not Reported” which indicates that no relationship was filled out or reported. “Relationship Unknown” should be reserved for incidents where a relationship cannot be determined at the time of the report.

Please make sure staff responsible for programming your records management system, as well as those entering your IBR crime and arrest data, receive copies of this memorandum, and make adjustments to future reporting as needed.

Please call the Crime Reporting Unit at (518) 457-8381 or email to CrimeReporting@dcjs.state.ny.us if you have any questions or need assistance. My office is available to assist you or answer any questions you may have.

Modifications to Victim/Offender Relationship Code Values For Incident-Based Reporting (IBR)

The literals associated with the victim to offender relationship codes have been modified to more accurately reflect the New York State Family Court's expanded definition of "domestic relationship" which was enacted in July 2008. The new definition was expanded to include all persons who are currently, or were previously, involved in a significant intimate or dating relationship, regardless of whether or not they previously lived together.

V-DE47 VICTIM/OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP (up to 10 per victim) (2AN) SJS Screen: Victim Linkage Tab

Victim was:

Within Family

- 01 = **Spouse:** Legally married
- 02 = **Former Intimate Partners:** Former partners; boyfriend/girlfriend, fiancés or same sex couples.
- 03 = **Parent:** Legal guardian through blood or adoption.
- 04 = **Sibling:** Any person who shares at least one of the same parents.
- 05 = **Child:** Child-in-common, child-in-household or child-in-family.
- 06 = **Grandparent:** Parent of child's legal guardian.
- 07 = **Grandchild:** Child of victim's child.
- 08 = **In-Law:** Relative through marriage (limited to father, mother, sister, brother).
- 09 = **Stepparent:** The husband or wife of victim's parent from a subsequent marriage.
- 10 = **Stepchild:** The child of a spouse from a previous marriage.
- 11 = **Stepsiblings:** Son or daughter of stepparent.
- 12 = **Other Family:** Other family members including aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews.
- 22 = **Current Boyfriend/Girlfriend:** Current heterosexual couples.
- 23 = **Child of Intimate Partner:** Child of one of the intimate partners.
- 27 = **Current Same-Sex Relationship:** Current same-sex couples.
- 29 = **Ex-Spouse:** Legally separated husband or wife.

Outside Family but Known to or by Victim

- 20 = **Acquaintances:** A known associate.
- 21 = **Babysittee (the baby):** Individuals under the supervision of a babysitter or caretaker (non-familial)
- 24 = **Employee:** Victim works for or with (co-worker) offender.
- 25 = **Employer:** Offender works for or is employed by victim.
- 26 = **Friend:** Person who the victim knows well and regards positively.
- 28 = **Neighbor:** Persons who live next to each other including next door, same street, apartment complex, or neighborhood.
- 30 = **Otherwise Known:** All other known relationships not identified by other categories.

Not Known to or by Victim

- 40 = **Relationship Unknown:** Identity of offender(s) is unknown by victim and cannot be determined by investigation.
- 41 = **Stranger:** Identity of offender(s) is known but there is no relationship between the victim and offender.

Other

- 77 = **Not Applicable:** Relationship is not required because victim is not an individual (e.g. crimes against society).
- 88 = **Not Reported:** Relationship was not reported by either the victim or police officer filling out the report.