

VIOLENT PERSON FILE: CRITICAL TO OFFICER SAFETY

The FBI Violent Person File (VPF) was created in 2012 in response to a rise in law enforcement officers injured or killed in the line of duty. The ability to alert law enforcement officers when they encounter a potentially violent person is perhaps more important today than ever, considering there were a record number of police officers shot in the line of duty in 2023.¹

The VPF can assist in keeping officers safe by alerting them when encountering a person who:

- Has a history of violence against law enforcement or violent behavior using a weapon.
- Has been convicted of assault, murder, or homicide of a law enforcement officer, fleeing, resisting arrest, or any such statute that involves violence against law enforcement.
- Has been convicted of a violent offense against a person, including homicide and attempted homicide.
- Has been convicted of a violent offense against a person in which a firearm or weapon was used.
- Has seriously expressed their intent to commit an act of unlawful violence against a member of the law enforcement or criminal justice community when based on a law enforcement agency's official investigatory duties and reasonable belief.

Some considerations for the Chief of Police:

1. Evaluate existing agency policy to ensure appropriate governance concerning the use of the VPF, including requiring entries when applicable. An Internal and External Intelligence Reporting Sample Policy Template, which includes information about the VPF, can be found [here](#).
2. Ensure officers are aware of the VPF and the agency policy.
3. Review the agency's policy governing the [New Jersey Extreme Risk Protection Order](#), as the VPF now has the capability to cross-reference ERPO files in some states.²
4. Utilize agency incident examples of when a VPF entry was filed to reinforce officers' understanding of the broad range of entry criteria. If no such agency examples exist, create samples as part of the training program.
5. Include simulated VPF notifications in the agency training program and build the teaching of tactical actions for specific incidents such as motor vehicle stops, pedestrian stops, domestic violence, and more. For example, a simulated VPF notification could be incorporated into the agency's use of force or defensive tactics training program.
6. Establish a review procedure of calls for service or any threat or assault against an officer to determine if the incident meets the criteria of a VPF entry.

Review available information to learn more about the VPF:

- FBI Crime Bulletin: [The NCIC Violent Person File.](#)
- [IACP Officer Safety Column.](#)
- [Improving Officer Safety with the FBI's NCIC Violence Person File.](#)
- FBI: [Privacy Impact Assessment Violence Person File](#)

If you have any questions, please contact your Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant.

¹(2024, January 2). *378 Officers Shot in the Line of Duty in 2023*. Retrieved from Fraternal Order of Police: <https://fop.net/2024/01/378-officers-shot-in-the-line-of-duty-in-2023/>

²Arnold, J. T. (2023, September). Equipping Officers with Critical Information. *Police Chief*, pp. 80-81.