

Title 18. Criminal Code

Part 8. Domestic Violence.

§ 18-6-803.6. Duties of peace officers and prosecuting agencies - preservation of evidence.

(1) When a peace officer determines that there is probable cause to believe that a crime or offense involving domestic violence, as defined in section 18-6-800.3 (1), has been committed, the officer shall, without undue delay, arrest the person suspected of its commission pursuant to the provisions in subsection (2) of this section, if applicable, and charge the person with the appropriate crime or offense. Nothing in this subsection (1) shall be construed to require a peace officer to arrest both parties involved in an alleged act of domestic violence when both claim to have been victims of such domestic violence. Additionally, nothing in this subsection (1) shall be construed to require a peace officer to arrest either party involved in an alleged act of domestic violence when a peace officer determines there is no probable cause to believe that a crime or offense of domestic violence has been committed. The arrested person shall be removed from the scene of the arrest and shall be taken to the peace officer's station for booking, whereupon the arrested person may be held or released in accordance with the adopted bonding schedules for the jurisdiction in which the arrest is made.

(2) If a peace officer receives complaints of domestic violence from two or more opposing persons, the officer shall evaluate each complaint separately to determine if a crime has been committed by one or more persons. In determining whether a crime has been committed by one or more persons, the officer shall consider the following:

- (a) Any prior complaints of domestic violence;
- (b) The relative severity of the injuries inflicted on each person;
- (c) The likelihood of future injury to each person; and
- (d) The possibility that one of the persons acted in self-defense.

(3) (a) A peace officer is authorized to use every reasonable means to protect the alleged victim or the alleged victim's children to prevent further violence. Such peace officer may transport, or obtain transportation for, the alleged victim to shelter. Upon the request of the protected person, the peace officer may also transport the minor child of the protected person, who is not an emancipated minor, to the same shelter if such shelter is willing to accept the child, whether or not there is a custody order or an order for the care and control of the child or an order allocating parental responsibilities with respect to the child and whether or not the other parent objects. A peace officer who transports a minor child over the objection of the other parent shall not be held liable for any damages that may result from interference with the custody, parental responsibilities, care, and control of or access to a minor child in complying with this subsection (3).

(b) For purposes of this subsection (3), "shelter" means a battered women's shelter, a friend's or family member's home, or such other safe haven as may be designated by the protected person and which is within a reasonable distance from the location at which the peace officer found the victim.

(4) (a) The arresting agency shall make reasonable efforts to collect and preserve any pertinent evidence until the time of final disposition of the matter, including, but not limited to, the following:

(I) Any dispatch tape recording relating to the event;

(II) Any on-scene video or audio tape recordings;

(III) Any medical records of treatment of the alleged victim or the defendant; and

(IV) Any other relevant physical evidence or witness statements.

(b) However, in the absence of bad faith, any failure to collect or preserve any evidence listed in paragraph (a) of this subsection (4) shall not be grounds to dismiss the matter.

(4.5) When a peace officer responds to a call or is otherwise responding to a report about an alleged offense involving domestic violence, as defined in section 18-6-800.3 (1), or other domestic dispute, the officer shall include in his or her written or oral report concerning such incident whether children may have seen or heard the alleged offense; except that, in the absence of bad faith, the failure of a peace officer to note that a child may have seen or heard the alleged offense shall not be grounds to dismiss the matter.

(5) A peace officer shall not be held civilly or criminally liable for acting pursuant to this section if the peace officer acts in good faith and without malice.