

# PRACTICE GUIDE

## Recording a *significant DFV threat* alert in Unify

Unify alerts support risk assessment and case work by making certain elements about a person's behaviour or circumstance clearly visible. As domestic and family violence is a pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner or family member through fear, intimidation and coercion, these behaviours on their own can seem insignificant or innocuous. When domestic and family violence is reported or alleged, an alert should be added to support safe and effective engagement with those involved.

### When to record the alert

Record a *Significant DFV threat* alert in Unify when a referral to a High risk team has been made or when one or more of the following risk factors are identified:

- the person experiencing violence's self-perception of the risk level is high, due to the current circumstances with the person using violence
- the person using violence:
  - has caused the serious injuries to any person that require hospitalisation or assessment and treatment at a hospital emergency department
  - is alleged to have strangled, choked or stabbed another person at any time
  - has a history of incarceration for breach of a domestic violence order, physical assault, grievous bodily harm, torture or deprivation of liberty
  - has a history of breaches of domestic violence orders, failure to comply with a domestic violence order
  - has made threats (previously or currently) to kill the person experiencing violence, a child, other family members or pets
  - has access to or possession of a firearm or has threatened to use an item as a weapon
  - has a history of stalking or obsessive or jealous behaviour including technology-facilitated surveillance
  - has demonstrated a pattern of coercive control using abusive behaviours to control, manipulate, and dominate the person experiencing violence
  - has forced or coerced a person to participate in sexual acts without consent (this may include intimidation or threats)
- there has been an escalation of abusive behaviour, including escalation in severity, frequency or the violence has become more 'unpredictable'

Record a new *significant DFV threat* alert in Unify when the relevant people change. For example, when the person using violence does so to a different person or within the context of a different relationship, family or child.

This alert can be added at any phase of the child protection continuum (at intake, responding to a notification or during ongoing intervention)

## Where to record the alert

Create a *significant DFV threat* alert in each relevant person's profile in Unify, including:

- the person using violence
- the person experiencing
- each child who is exposed to the violence.

## Details to include in the alert

In the *description* field of the alert record:

- who was using violence (include their person profile number)
- who was experiencing violence, both adult and child (include their person profile numbers)
- where to locate the assessment of the behaviour of the person using violence, for example, the case number or *risk/lethality assessment* case note on Unify.
- the nature of the domestic violence, identifying the domestic and family violence risk factors present.

## Add a new incident to the alert

Add an incident to the *significant DFV threat* alert **each time** the person using violence perpetrates or poses a threat to the one or more people experiencing violence as recorded in the alert.

These records will enable us to track the behaviour of the person using violence over time. This record will help identify escalations of frequency or severity of the domestic and family violence.

Record details of the incident including the people involved directly and indirectly, the high risk factors demonstrated, pre-cursor or contextual information and where to locate the assessment of the behaviour of the person using violence, for example, the Unify case number. Documents, such as copies of domestic violence orders, may be added to *incidents* in Unify.

## Considerations for review and end dates for the alert

There is no requirement to set a review date. You may set a review date to correlate with the next planned safety assessment, home visit or relevant case management activity.

Unify alerts support risk assessment and case work by making these aspects clearly visible. As domestic and family violence is a pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner or family member through fear, intimidation and coercion, these behaviours on their own can seem insignificant or innocuous. These behaviours stem from attitudes and belief systems and are often sustained by the person using violence throughout their life.

Keep the *significant DFV threat* alert open (without setting an end date) whilst the credible threat remains.

Example alert	
<b>Quick create: Person Alert</b>	
<b>Alert details</b>	
Alert type *	Significant DFV threat
Alert Category	Child Safety
Person	<a href="#">Paul Brown</a>
Start date *	02/04/2025
Review date	---
End date	---
Description *	<p>Paul Brown is using violence and coercive control towards Liz Brown (ID 8255783E).</p> <p>Their child Hayden (ID 9876456E) is exposed to this violence as all reside in the same household.</p> <p>Case (INT-0002671) source of information to this alert.</p>
This alert would be applied to Paul, Liz and Hayden's person profiles in Unify.	

Example incident	
<b>New Incident</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Incident detail</b>	
Title *	DFV – pending separation
Subject person *	<a href="#">Paul Brown</a>
Incident Date	30/03/2025
Date reported	02/04/2025
Location	32 Boundary St, Warilda
Description	<p>Liz Brown and Hayden have left the home and are staying at a DFV shelter following Paul being physically violent towards Liz by punching her stomach after learning she was pregnant. Police attended following the neighbour's call for assistance.</p> <p>High risk factors identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- separation</li> <li>- threats to kill Hayden and Liz</li> <li>- history of DFV</li> <li>- pregnancy</li> </ul> <p>Case (INT-0002671) source of information to this incident.</p>
Attachments	<a href="#">QPS report of house visit 30/03/2025</a>
This incident would be copied so it appears on Paul, Liz and Hayden's <i>Significant DFV threat alert</i> on their person profile.	

## Further reading

Practice kit: [Domestic and family violence](#)

## Version history

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