

TEN FACTORS OF A SUSPICIOUS DEATH

A QUICK-POCKET REFERENCE GUIDE

Effective Ja.1, 2025, **Joanna's Law** (SB 989),
codified as Penal Code §§ 679.07, 13519,
and Government Code § 27491, creates
enhanced law enforcement protocols and
procedures for investigating the death of
a decedent whose cause of death initially
appears to be suicide or accident where
there is a history of domestic violence.



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TEN FACTORS OF A SUSPICIOUS DEATH WITH A HISTORY OF DV

1. Victim **dies prematurely/unexpectedly**
2. Appears to be a **suicide** or **accident** scene
3. One partner wanted to **end** the relationship
4. Prior **history of DV** or coercive control
5. Victim found **dead in a home/residence**
6. Victim **found by partner**, current or previous
7. Prior **history of strangulation/suffocation** against partner (including previous relationships)
8. Partner is the **last to see the victim** alive
9. Partner has **control of the crime scene** before police arrive
10. **Crime scene altered** in some way

If three or more of the factors are present, law enforcement must interview family and/or friends and may request an autopsy. (California Penal Code Section 679.07)