



Utah Domestic Violence Council

320 West 200 South, Suite 270 B • Salt Lake City, Utah 84101 • (801) 521-5544 • Fax (801) 521-5548

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Judy Kasten Bell, Executive Director

## Domestic Violence Deaths a Tragic Reality in Utah

**Contact:**

Brandy Farmer  
UDVC Chair  
(801) 281-1259

Judy Kasten Bell  
UDVC Executive Director  
(801) 521-5544 x 103

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – In 2004 national attention was riveted on Utah as millions followed the tragic disappearance of 27-year-old Lori Soares Hacking. Lori was reported missing on July 19 by her husband, Mark Hacking, 28. Hacking was later arrested. He allegedly confessed to his brother that he shot Lori while she slept and then disposed of her body in a dumpster. An exhaustive search by law enforcement officers of a Salt Lake Valley landfill proved successful when on Oct. 1, Lori's decomposed body was located. Sadly, Lori's senseless death was not an isolated incident.

There were 23 domestic violence related deaths in 2004, according to information collected from public sources by the Utah Domestic Violence Council. This information is continually tracked, compiled and updated to illustrate the tragic impact of domestic violence in communities throughout the Beehive State.

Last year's 23 fatalities include thirteen cohabitant homicides. As outlined by Utah law, cohabitant means an emancipated person or a person who is at least 16 years of age and who has these characteristics:

- Is a current or former spouse of the other party or is living as if a spouse with the other party, or is related by blood or marriage to the other party;
- Has one or more children in common, or is expecting a child with the other party, and/or;
- Is or has been residing in the same residence as the other party.

Other deaths on the list include six perpetrator suicides, two domestic violence-related deaths, one dating-relationship homicide, and one family violence-related homicide.

Firearms played a significant role as the weapon used in all but one of Utah's domestic violence related deaths in 2004. Rhonda Rosenbalm, 34, was allegedly killed by her boyfriend, James Cunningham, 26, in Arches National Park when he struck her with his car as she fled, following an argument. In unrelated cases, two perpetrators were shot and killed by police in the line of duty; five perpetrators took their own lives after they shot and killed their victim; and one perpetrator, John Hansen, 49, died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after shooting his wife four times. Donna Hansen, 46, survived. The full 2004 Domestic Violence Related Death list and other domestic violence-related information is available on the Utah Domestic Violence Council website located at [www.udvc.org](http://www.udvc.org).

Domestic violence has been called the hidden crime because it takes courage to break the silence.

Telling someone can save lives, so be aware of the following risk factors and get help if you are experiencing<sup>1</sup>:

- Physical violence that has increased in frequency and severity.
- Threats involving weapons, especially when weapons are accessible.
- Attempts to strangle or choke you.
- Amphetamine use by the abuser.
- Threats to kill you (particularly if you feel that it could actually happen).
- Forced sex and other controlling behaviors.
- Threats of suicide by the abuser.
- Violence against your children and/or against animals.
- Violence outside the home.

**To get help**, call 911 in the event of an emergency. Otherwise, you can receive important information about resources in your local area by calling the Utah Domestic Violence Link Line at 1-800-897-LINK (5465). Your call is confidential and could save lives. Remember, there's no excuse for abuse. End domestic violence by breaking the silence.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "Danger Assessment," by Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N.