



Ending Intimate Partner Violence • Empowering Survivors • Ensuring Safe Communities

A Guide to Protection Orders In Virginia

This guide is a starting point to learn more about Protective Orders (PO). A PO can be a great tool for increasing your safety. And, every case is unique. We encourage you to contact us or another domestic violence agency to discuss your case prior to filing for a PO, if possible. We are here to help you create a plan based on your personal circumstances.

To access JCADA's services, send us a confidential message:



1-877-885-2232



support@jcada.org

Learn more about JCADA's services:



jcada.org/survivor-services

Protection Orders in VA

What is a Protection Order?

A court order in which a judge can require a person to follow certain requirements (respondent), including staying away from, not contacting, or committing any offense against the person requesting the PO (petitioner).

Who is a PO filed against?

- A PO can be filed against:
 - A current spouse or ex-spouse
 - Co-habitants (as long they have cohabitated in the past year)
 - An individual in which you have a common child

What abuses qualify for a PO?

- An act that instilled fear of immediate bodily harm or actually caused bodily harm
- Stalking
- False imprisonment - interfering with ability to leave and/or get to safety

What protections can be requested in a PO?

- No contact - abuser cannot contact the petitioner, or the petitioner's family by any means
- No acts that will result in injury to the petitioner or the petitioner's property
- Grant the home to the petitioner, or order the respondent to provide a suitable alternative housing solution to the petitioner and their cohabitants, and/or order respondent to maintain utility services
- Determine custody and visitation of shared child(ren)
- Grant possession of a jointly owned vehicle
- Grant possession of pets
- Order respondent to receive counseling or enter an intervention program
- Order any further relief as the court sees fit for the protection of the petitioner, the petitioner's family, and/or the petitioner's cohabitants.



How to File for a PO in VA

Download and complete both forms below.

[Complete the forms on this website.](#)

Submit the forms.

Forms above can be submitted during business hours at the
[Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.](#)

Next steps.

If forms are submitted at a Commissioner's Office:

- An immediate hearing will be held when forms are filed.
- A judge will determine that**if the relationship between the petitioner and the respondent qualifies for a PO and the acts experiences qualify as abuse under a PO.
- If granted, an interim PO will be granted and lasts about two days. Papers will include a date for a hearing for a Temporary Protective Order (TPO).

At the TPO hearing:

- The respondent will not be present at this hearing.
- If granted a TPO, protections will be in place until the date of the Final Protection Order.

Final Protection Order:

- Both the petitioner and abuser must be present and appear before a judge.
- Petitioner will present evidence of the relationship with the respondent and evidence of abuse to prove it qualifies for a PO.
- ***Abuser will also be able to present evidence
- A judge will rule if a PO is granted, and specifics of the PO will be determined.

We encourage you to contact JCADA or another domestic violence agency to discuss your case.

