

Restraining Orders



A protection order makes it a crime for your abusive partner to come near or contact you in any way. Every state uses different terms to describe their laws. We used “restraining” or “protective” order because they’re most common. Your state might call it an order of protection or a restraining, protection-from-abuse, stay-away or peace order. Whatever it’s called, there are many ways that a restraining order can protect you:

- It can encourage the police, school officials and other authorities to help protect you from your abusive partner.
- You do not have to wait for your abusive partner to hurt you before calling the police -- you can call as soon as they contact or come near you.
- Going to court establishes an official record of the abuse, making further legal action easier.
- You may be able to get custody and visitation orders that also protect your child.
- You may be able to make the abuser move out of a home you share.
- Your abuser may face criminal penalties for contacting you.

While a restraining order is a powerful tool, it can’t guarantee your safety or change your abusive partner. Here are some other things a restraining order CANNOT do:

- Guarantee your abusive partner will be out of your life, especially if you have a child together.
- Guarantee your abusive partner won’t still be able to intimidate, harass or scare you.
- Stop peer or gang retaliation.

How to Get a Restraining Order

In general, young victims must follow the same process that adults do to get a protection order. However, there are some unique issues that you may face when filing for a restraining order.

Dating vs. Married

Although most states allow you to get a domestic violence protective order against someone you are married to or live with, you may not meet these requirements. Don’t worry, many states also allow you to get a restraining order against someone you’ve dated or had a child with. Find out the rules for getting a protective order in your state by checking our National Survey.

Under 18

Many states require you to have an adult involved if you’re under 18. If you don’t want your parents to know, you may be able to have another adult help.

In School

Although your abusive partner may be attending the same school as you, the court may not automatically deal with this situation. You should remember to ask them to address school issues in your protection order.

If you don’t think you’ll qualify for a protective order in your state, don’t give up. There may be other ways to use the law to help you stay safe, like going through the criminal justice system. Chat with a peer advocate at loveisrespect.org to access local legal services in your area.

connect now!

chat at loveisrespect.org

 text “loveis” to 22522

 call 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options confidentially.
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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