

# GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDERS

## DEFINITIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Domestic Violence** is when a family or household member uses physical violence, threats, intimidation and/or emotional, sexual, and economic abuse to maintain power and control over the other person, usually within an intimate relationship. Domestic Violence is most often a combination of psychological and physical actions; the physical results are just the most visible. Domestic violence is a pattern of conduct in which one intimate partner uses force or threats of force to control the other person.

Ohio law has determined that some forms of abuse do not constitute criminal behavior or behavior requiring the court's intervention. For example, psychological battering, economic abuse, or verbal harassment without evidence of threats or physical harm are not recognized by Ohio law as domestic violence that allows a petitioner to obtain a protection order or request that criminal charges be filed.

When a family or household member tries to cause you bodily harm by hitting, pushing, beating, or physically hurting you, that is domestic violence. When a family or household member makes you afraid that you will be harmed, that is domestic violence. When a family or household member stalks or forces sexual relations on you, that is domestic violence. When a family or household member abuses your children, that is domestic violence.

### IN A CIVIL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE:

**Petition for a Civil Protection Order ("CPO")** is the document a domestic violence victim, the victim's parent or an adult household member of the victim must file with the domestic relations court to obtain a civil protection order against an alleged domestic violence offender.

**Ex parte Civil Protection Order ("CPO")** is an emergency order the court issues in response to the Petition for a Civil Protection Order after an *ex parte* hearing. The *ex parte* hearing is described in Form 10.01-A, Side 3.

**Full Hearing Civil Protection Order ("CPO")** is the final order the court issues after a full hearing. The full hearing is described in Form 10.01-A, Side 3. The Full Hearing CPO replaces the *ex parte* CPO.

**Petitioner** is the person asking or "petitioning" the court for protection. By filing the Petition for a CPO, YOU are the Petitioner.

**Respondent** is the alleged domestic violence offender. Petitioner seeks protection from the Respondent by filing for a CPO.

### IN A CRIMINAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE:

**Motion for a Temporary Protection Order ("TPO")** is the document that must be filed in a criminal case if a victim of domestic violence wishes to obtain a protection order against an alleged domestic violence offender. The criminal case must allege the offender committed negligent assault, criminal damaging or endangering, criminal mischief, burglary, aggravated trespass, endangering children, or any offense of violence against a family or household member.

**Temporary Protection Order ("TPO")** is the order the court issues in response to the Motion for Temporary Protection Order. The TPO requires the domestic violence offender to stop abusing and to stay away from the victim(s) named in the Motion for Temporary Protection Order. A TPO expires when the alleged domestic violence offender's criminal case ends or when a new CPO is issued based on the same incident(s) of domestic violence.

**Alleged Victim** is the person asking the court for protection in the Motion for a TPO. YOU are the Alleged Victim.

**Defendant** is the person the Motion for a TPO is filed against. The Defendant is the person accused of the crimes of negligent assault, criminal damaging or endangering, criminal mischief, burglary, aggravated trespass, endangering children, or any offense of violence against a family or household member.

## FEES

UNDER FEDERAL AND STATE LAW YOU CANNOT BE CHARGED ANY COSTS OR FEES FOR OBTAINING A PROTECTION ORDER.

## CIVIL PROTECTION ORDERS

### What is a Civil Protection Order (“CPO”)?

A CPO is issued by a domestic relations court to protect a victim of domestic violence. A CPO is intended to prevent further domestic violence. It orders someone who has been abusive to do or not do certain things in the future. You may want to consider getting a CPO even if you have a TPO from a criminal court because a CPO lasts longer and provides more benefits – such as child custody and support orders.

Violating a CPO is a crime. If the Respondent violates the CPO, he or she may be arrested, jailed, and fined for disobeying the CPO. A CPO can remain in effect for up to five years. If the Respondent violates the CPO, you can call the police, go back to the domestic relations court to file a contempt charge, and go to the prosecutor's office to have the Respondent charged with the crime of violating the CPO.

### Why get a Civil Protection Order?

If you are a victim of domestic violence, a CPO may help you. Once domestic violence starts, the violence often happens more often and gets increasingly severe. A CPO may stop this cycle of violence because the court orders the Respondent to stop hurting or threatening you and your family or household members. A court can use a CPO to order the Respondent to stay away from you for up to five years. A CPO can give you time to "sort things out" and decide what you want to do next without having to be afraid all of the time. If your children have seen domestic violence, a CPO may give all of you a chance to get some help so that you and your children are safe.

Domestic violence is a crime. A CPO tells the Respondent you and the court are serious about requiring the Respondent to stop his or her abusive behavior and not to hurt or threaten you again.

A CPO sets some "rules" that the Respondent must obey while the CPO is in effect. These rules may require the Respondent to pay child or spousal support; give up possession of a home or car; and/or obey the court's orders about visitation.

A CPO issued by a domestic relations court may last longer than a TPO issued by a criminal court and can provide more kinds of help. You should know that if you get a CPO, the TPO from criminal court will end although the criminal case will continue.

### Who can get a Civil Protection Order?

You can apply for a CPO if you are related to the Respondent by blood or marriage AND have lived with Respondent at any time; OR you are living with or have lived with the Respondent during the past five years; OR you used to be married to the Respondent; OR you have a child with the Respondent, whether or not you ever married or lived together.

You can also get a CPO for any member of your household.

You may be able to get a CPO if you have been dating the Respondent; if you share family or financial responsibilities with the Respondent; AND you have an intimate relationship with the Respondent.

Remember that a CPO has limits. If you suspect that the Respondent will not obey the terms of a CPO, contact your local domestic violence program or the Ohio Domestic Violence Network at 800-934-9840.

### Do I need an attorney to obtain a Civil Protection Order?

No, but you are often better off having legal representation in your CPO proceeding. Having an attorney represent you is especially helpful when your case involves contested custody and visitation and/or when an attorney represents the Respondent. If you cannot afford an attorney, contact your local legal aid office at 866-LAWOHIO (toll free), bar association, or Ohio State Legal Services (800-589-5888) for information on low cost or free legal representation.

**Must there be a court hearing for me to obtain a Civil Protection Order?**

Yes. There are two hearings involved in a CPO case: the *ex parte* hearing and the full hearing.

**Ex Parte Hearing:** At this hearing only you are present. The Respondent is not present.

If a Petition for a CPO is filed early enough in the day, an *ex parte* hearing is held that same day. If the Petition for a CPO is filed too late in the day, a hearing is scheduled for the following business day. At the *ex parte* hearing, you take an oath to tell the truth and a judge or magistrate hears your statement of what happened. If the judge or magistrate finds that the events you described meet the requirements of the law, the court will issue an *Ex Parte* CPO and schedule a full hearing. If the Respondent is asked to vacate the home in which you live, there will be a full hearing within 7 business days. Otherwise, a full hearing will be set within 10 business days. The court cannot hold a full hearing until the Respondent has been served with the *Ex Parte* CPO. You may need to fill out forms for the clerk of courts to cause service.

**Full Hearing:** The full hearing is the final hearing.

At this hearing, both you and the Respondent can testify. You must be present at the full hearing. You should bring any witnesses and other evidence to support your case. If the court issues a Full Hearing CPO, it remains in force until the date indicated in the CPO, with five years being the maximum.

If the Respondent does not show up for the full hearing, you can still obtain a final CPO. However, if the Respondent is not served with the *Ex Parte* CPO before the full hearing, the court postpones the full hearing until the Respondent is served. If the full hearing is postponed, the *EX PARTE* CPO remains in effect until the full hearing is held.

**You may bring an advocate with you to the *ex parte* and full hearings for support. Some domestic violence shelters and victim assistance programs can provide advocates to go with you to these hearings. Contact your local domestic violence program or the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, 800-934-9840, for program and shelter information**

**CRIMINAL TEMPORARY PROTECTION ORDERS**

Your local criminal court grants a TPO. You ask the court for a TPO when a criminal complaint is filed alleging someone has committed a domestic violence crime against you. The TPO orders someone who has abused you to do or stop doing certain things in the future. Violating a TPO is a crime. If the Defendant violates the TPO, the Defendant may be arrested, jailed, and fined for disobeying the TPO. Violating a TPO is also a reason for the court to revoke the Defendant's bail. A TPO lasts only until the criminal case is ended or a CPO is issued by a domestic relations court.

**RESOURCES**

You may be able to find additional information about domestic violence at the following Websites:

Ohio Domestic Violence Network	<a href="http://www.odvn.org">www.odvn.org</a>
Ohio State Legal Services Association's DV Resource Center	<a href="http://www.ohiodvresources.org">www.ohiodvresources.org</a>
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence	<a href="http://www.nrcdv.org">www.nrcdv.org</a>

**PLEASE NOTE:** Computer use can be monitored. It is impossible to completely clear all website footprints. If you are in danger, please use a safer computer that your abuser cannot access directly or remotely. For example, computers at a public library, internet café, domestic violence shelter, or community technology center, which can be found through [www.ctcnet.org](http://www.ctcnet.org), would be safer computers.