

DV-120-INFO How Can I Respond to a Request for Domestic Violence Restraining Order?

What is a Domestic Violence Restraining Order?

It is a court order that can help protect people who have been abused or threatened with abuse.

Abuse can be physical or emotional. It can be spoken or written.

What does the order do?

The court can order you to:

- Not contact or harm the protected person, including children or others listed as protected people
- Stay away from all protected people
- Not have any guns or ammunition
- Move out of the place that you share with the protected person
- Follow custody and visitation orders
- Pay child support
- Pay spousal support
- Obey property orders
- Follow other types of orders (listed on *Form DV-100*)

Who can ask for a domestic violence restraining order?

The person requesting the order must have a relationship with you:

- Someone you date or used to date
- Married, registered domestic partners, separated, engaged, or divorced
- Someone you live or lived with (more than just a roommate)
- A parent, grandparent, sibling, child, or grandchild related by blood, marriage, or adoption

I've been served with a request for domestic violence restraining order. What do I do now?

Read the papers very carefully. You must follow all the orders the judge made. The *Notice of Court Hearing* tells you when to appear in court. You should go to the hearing, if you do not agree to the orders requested. If you do not go to the hearing, the judge can make orders against you without hearing from you.

What if I don't obey the order?

The police can arrest you. You can go to jail and pay a fine. You must still follow the orders even if you are not a U.S. citizen. If you are worried about your immigration status, talk to an immigration lawyer.

How long does the order last?

If there is a *Temporary Restraining Order* in effect, it will last until the hearing date. At the hearing, the judge will decide whether to extend the order or cancel the order. The judge can extend the order for up to five years. Custody, visitation, child support, and spousal support orders can last longer than five years and they do not end when the restraining order ends.

What if I don't agree with what the order says?

You still must obey the orders until the hearing. If you do NOT agree with the orders the person is asking for, fill out [Form DV-120, Response to Request for Domestic Violence Restraining Order](#). After you fill out the form, file it with the court clerk and “serve” the form on the person asking for the restraining order. “Serve” means to have someone 18 years or older—**not you**—mail a copy to the other party. The person who serves your form must fill out [Form DV-250, Proof of Service by Mail](#). After Form DV-250 is completed, make sure it is filed with the court clerk. You will also have a chance at the hearing to tell your side of the story. For more information on how to prepare for the hearing, read [Form DV-520-INFO, Get Ready for the Restraining Order Court Hearing](#).

Is there a cost to file my Response (Form DV-120)?

No.

What if I also have criminal charges against me?

See a lawyer. Anything you say or write, including in this case, can be used against you in your criminal case.



What if I have a gun or ammunition?

If a restraining order is issued, you cannot own, possess, or have a gun, other firearm, or ammunition while the order is in effect. If you have a gun or other firearm in your immediate possession or control, you must sell it to, or store it with, a licensed gun dealer, or turn it in to a law enforcement agency. You must also prove to the court that you turned in or sold your gun. Read [Form DV-800-INFO](#), *How Do I Turn In, Sell, or Store My Firearms?*, for more information.

Do I need a lawyer?

You are not entitled to a free court-appointed lawyer for this case but having a lawyer represent you or getting legal advice from a lawyer is a good idea, especially if you have children. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you can represent yourself. There is free or low-cost help available in every county. For help, ask the court clerk how to find free or low-cost legal services and self-help centers in your area. You can also get free help with child support at your local family law facilitator's office.

What if I do not speak English?

When you file [Form DV-120](#), ask the court clerk if a court interpreter is available for your hearing. If an interpreter is not available, bring someone to interpret for you. Do NOT ask a child, a witness, or anyone to be protected by the order to interpret for you.

What if I am deaf or hard of hearing?

Assistive listening systems, computer-assisted real-time captioning, or sign language interpreter services are available if you ask at least five days before the proceeding. Contact the clerks' office or go to www.courts.ca.gov/forms for *Request for Accommodations by Persons With Disabilities and Response* ([Form MC-410](#)). (Civ. Code, § 54.8.)

Can I use the restraining order to get divorced or terminate a domestic partnership?

No. These forms will not end your marriage or registered domestic partnership. You must file other forms to end your marriage or registered domestic partnership.

What if I have children with the other person?

The judge can make temporary orders for child custody and visitation. If the judge makes a temporary order for child custody, the parent with custody may not remove the child from California before notice to the other parent and a court hearing. Read the order for any other restrictions. There may be some exceptions. Ask a lawyer for more information.

What if I want to leave the county or state?

You must still comply with the restraining order, including custody and visitation orders. The restraining order is valid anywhere in the United States.

Will I see the person who asked for the order at the court hearing?

Yes. Assume that the person who is asking for the order will attend the hearing. Do not talk to him or her unless the judge or that person's attorney says that you can. Any temporary restraining order made by the court is in effect until the end of the hearing.

What if I need a restraining order against the other person?

Do not use this form to request a domestic violence restraining order. For information on how to file your own restraining order, read [Form DV-505-INFO](#). You can also ask the court clerk about free or low-cost legal help.

What if I am a victim of domestic violence?

For a referral to a local domestic violence or legal assistance program, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline:

1-800-799-7233

TDD: 1-800-787-3224

It's free and private.

They can help you in more than 100 languages.

For help in your area, contact:

[Local information may be inserted]