

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/FAMILY ABUSE

Are you a victim of domestic violence/family abuse or do you know someone who is?

Family abuse is any act of violence, force or threat which results in actual physical injury or places you, a family member or household member in reasonable apprehension of bodily injury.

Examples of family abuse may include:

- Pushing, shoving, grabbing
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking
- Biting, pulling hair, choking or strangling
- Holding or restraining
- Threatening to physically harm or kill
- Threatening to use weapons
- Unwanted sexual activity

A "family" or "household member" includes:

- Spouse or former spouse
- Parent, step-parent, child, step-child
- Brother, sister, half-brother or half-sister
- Grandparents or grandchildren
- Mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law living in the same residence
- Persons who have children in common
- Persons who have lived together within the last 12 months and any of their children who live in the same home

If you are a victim of family abuse you have the right to seek protection through the courts against the abusive family or household member in the form of a civil protective order.

There are three types of civil protective orders:

(1) Emergency protective order, which lasts for 72 hours, may:

- Prohibit the abuser from committing further acts of family abuse
- Restrict the amount of contact the abuser has with you, your family or household members
- Grant you temporary exclusive use and possession of the residence

(2) Preliminary protective order, which lasts for 15 days, may:

- Prohibit the abuser from committing further acts of family abuse
- Restrict the amount of contact the abuser has with you, your family or household members
- Grant you temporary exclusive use and possession of the residence
- Order the abuser to provide suitable alternative housing for you
- Grant you temporary use and possession of a motor vehicle owned solely by you or jointly owned by the parties

(3) Permanent protective order, which may last up to 2 years, may:

- Prohibit the abuser from committing further acts of family abuse
- Restrict the amount of contact the abuser has with you, your family or household members
- Grant you temporary exclusive use and possession of the residence
- Ordering the abuser to provide suitable alternative housing for you
- Grant you temporary use and possession of a motor vehicle owned solely by you or jointly owned by the parties
- Grant you temporary custody of the children
- Order the abuser to pay temporary child support

A civil protective order is not a criminal action, and you do not have to press criminal charges against the abuser in order to obtain this court ordered relief.

Please contact the police immediately if the abuser violates any provisions of the protective order.

A violation of a protective order is a crime. Criminal charges can be brought against the abuser for violating the order, and there may be jail time if the abuser is found guilty of the violation.

To obtain a civil protective order, you must go to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in your county and file a petition, along with a sworn affidavit, or statement, about the incident of family abuse.

Please contact the appropriate court to file for a protective order:

Alexandria

Juvenile Court
520 King Street, 1st Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 838-4144

Arlington County

Juvenile Court
1425 N. Courthouse Road, 4th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201
(703) 228-4500

Fairfax County

Juvenile Court
4000 Chain Bridge Road, Room 2500
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 246-3040

Prince William County

Juvenile Court
9540 Center Street, Suite 200
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 792-7350

Potomac Legal Aid Society offers free legal assistance for victims of domestic violence/family abuse who are seeking civil protective orders.

Potomac Legal Aid Society provides civil legal services in the Northern Virginia area to **low-income** individuals for the following legal matters:

- Bankruptcy;
- Consumer;
- Family; and
- Public Benefits.

We do not provide legal services for traffic or criminal matters.

For more information or to apply for our legal services, contact us at:

Potomac Legal Aid Society, Inc.

Main Office:

6400 Arlington Blvd., Suite 600
Falls Church, VA 22042
Phone (703) 532-2525
Toll Free (866) 534-5243
Fax (703) 532-4998

Fredericksburg Office:

618 Kenmore Avenue, Suite 2-A
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Phone (540) 374-9101
Toll Free (866) 534-5243
Fax (540) 374-9169

Email: admin@potomaclegalaids.org

Website: www.potomaclegalaids.org

This pamphlet contains general information about your rights.



POTOMAC LEGAL AID SOCIETY, INC.

Domestic Violence



Know Your Rights