

## SECTION 1 – WHAT IS A PROTECTIVE ORDER?

A **protective order** (sometimes called a restraining order or order of protection in other states), is a **court order** requiring the **respondent** to do or not do certain things to protect the health and safety of the **petitioner**.

The person asking for protection is the **petitioner**, and the person they are filing against is the **respondent**.

A protective order is about physical safety and protection from further abuse. In order to get a protective order, the petitioner must show there has been some physical act of violence, force, or threat in the recent past that makes it necessary to protect the petitioner in the future.

Although emotional and verbal abuse as part of a domestic violence cycle can be very hurtful, those types of abuse are not grounds for a protective order. If someone has questions or concerns about issues such as money, property, disagreements about the children, divorce, immigration, or infidelity. **A protective order is not the proper tool** to address these issues. If you have concerns for other aspects of your safety, you can speak with a domestic violence advocate by call the Domestic Violence Action Center at (703)246-4573.

A final protective order is enforceable in any state or United States territory.\*

\*\* some overview of the process

### Section 2: WHAT CAN A PROTECTIVE ORDER DO?

All protective orders can order the respondent:

- Stop physically abusing the petitioner and family/household members
- Limit or prevent contact between the respondent and the petitioner and their family or household members
- Order the respondent to stay away from the petitioner's home or a specific location
- Cannot sell or transport any firearms

If the petitioner and the respondent have been or are married, live together, share a child, or have certain other family relationships, some orders may also be able to order respondent to:

- Not terminate necessary utilities
- Not terminate the petitioner's cell phone plan or contract
- Not use any electronics to track the petitioner
- Maintain car insurance, registration, and tags
- Pay for the petitioner to live in a different place
- Participate in a batterer intervention program or other treatment
- Participate in drug, alcohol, or mental health treatment or assessment
- Dispose of any firearms in his/her possession and turn over any concealed carry permit

Family abuse protective orders can also grant a petitioner:

- Custody/visitation of a minor child
- Temporary child support
- Possession of a shared residence
- Possession of a vehicle in the petitioner's name (or both parties' names)
- Possession of a cell phone and number
- Possession of pets