

How to file a PPO in Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court:

Preliminary protective orders can be filed either in person or remotely/virtually.

Preliminary protective orders are obtained at the Fairfax County Courthouse in Domestic Relations Services:

4110 Chain Bridge Rd
Suite 202
Fairfax, VA 22030

- Please schedule an appointment to file by calling Domestic Relations Services Intake at 703-246-3084.
- The person will be asked some questions by a staff person to ensure you are filing the PPO in the right place and have the information you will need.
- The person filing can request a free **interpreter** if you do not speak English fluently.
- The person filing can request to speak with a **domestic violence advocate** to help with the filing process, create a safety plan, and to provide resources. The advocate can also accompany the individual filing to court.
- The petitioner will have an appointment with an **intake officer** who will help with the filing process. The petitioner has the option to file in person or virtually/remotely. This appointment usually takes about two hours. If the petitioner chooses to go to file at the courthouse, they will be at the courthouse for a longer period.
- It is very important to give the intake officer as much information as possible about the respondent's location (home address, work address, other addresses where they might stay) so the sheriffs can serve them.
- If the respondent is currently in jail, the petitioner should let the intake officer know.
- Petitioners can include household members on the protective order.

- If the abuse was against a minor, an adult can file on the minor's behalf. Please talk to the intake officer for more information about this option. See the section on Next Friend Protective Orders for more information.
- The petitioner will have the choice to appear in front of a judge to request the PPO or to file a written affidavit for the judge to read. If you choose to see the judge, you will stay in the courthouse after your appointment until the next available hearing time. An intake officer and a domestic violence advocate will accompany you to court.
- If you elect to file by affidavit, your intake officer will let you know the judge's decision once it is available (usually the same day).
- Once the judge makes a decision, the sheriff will receive a copy of the order. They will attempt to give the order to the respondent; this is called service. Learn more about service of the protective order here (link to section on service). The protective order is not in effect until the respondent has been served.
- The petitioner can ask to be notified if the respondent is released from jail.
- The judge will schedule a court hearing about 15 days from the day the petitioner files the PPO. This court hearing is to decide whether you can be granted a final protective order for up to two years. The other party will receive a summons to attend this hearing as well. It is important that the petitioner attends this hearing so your case does not get dismissed. [WHY IS THIS HIGHLIGHTED? IS SOMETHING MISSING?]