



## **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Washington Governor has changed how you get a Protection Order during the Pandemic**

**I need a domestic violence protection order, vulnerable adult protection order, sexual assault protection order, or an anti-harassment order. Can I get one during this pandemic?**

Yes. Courts are still hearing and issuing civil (in cases that are not criminal cases) protection orders.

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- ❖ We do **not** discuss no-contact orders or protection orders in criminal cases here.
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**Do I have to have my abuser served with the papers I am filing?**

Yes. But **do not do it yourself**. Ask the court to send it to law enforcement (recommended) to serve for you. If that does not happen, another responsible adult you trust can do it for you. We explain more in the next section.

**Does the server have to hand-deliver the papers?**

**No.** Under the Governor's Order, whoever serves the papers for you can email the papers, text them, or send them to the other person using social media.

**Can I get protection right away?**

Yes. You can get an immediate ex parte order. **Ex parte** means without the other party (the person you need the order against) there.

During COVID-19, courts have changed how they handle ex parte matters. Check with the clerk of the court where you will file your petition. Ask if you need to go to the courthouse in person to get an ex parte order.

## How long will the ex parte order last?

Until there can be a hearing that both you and the other party will be at.

## Do I have to go to the courthouse for a hearing during this pandemic?

Maybe not. **Under the Governor's Order, the court can hold this hearing by phone.** If you want to have the full hearing by phone and not have to go to court in person, you should ask for this in your petition.

## What happens at the hearing?

The judge will hear from both sides. The judge will issue a protection order if the judge decides that there is enough reason to do so.

## How long will my protection order last?

It depends. Protection orders default to one year. The court might make it longer.

## How long will it take the court to schedule that hearing?

Ask the court clerk. Usually a hearing will be within 14 days of the ex parte order. It may take longer right now.

## Where can I learn more?

- For more about DVPOs (domestic violence protection orders), read [Domestic Violence: Can the Legal System Help Protect Me?](#)
- For more about VAPOs (vulnerable adult protection orders), read [Protecting Elders and Vulnerable Adults from Abuse and Neglect](#)
- Forms and instructions for filing a VAPO:  
<https://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/index.cfm?fa=forms.contribute&formID=70>
- For more on SAPOs (sexual assault protection orders), read <https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/understanding-the-sexual-assault-protection-order-a-step-by-step-guidebook?ref=N8hbc>

- Forms and instructions to file for an anti-harassment order:  
<https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/antiharassment-forms-instructions?ref=7j3lL>

## Can I get help right away?

Call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** at 1-800-799-7233.

## Get Legal Help

- **Outside King County:** Call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays from 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- **In King County:** Call 211 for referral to a legal services provider weekdays from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm.
- **Persons 60 and Over** can call CLEAR\*Sr at 1-888-387-7111 (statewide).
- **Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers** can call CLEAR or 211 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) using a relay service of their choice.

CLEAR and 211 will provide a free interpreter.

Visit [WashingtonLawHelp.org](http://WashingtonLawHelp.org). It has free information about Washington laws, do-it-yourself court forms, videos about legal issues and a legal help directory.

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