



A Guide to Restraining Orders

A comprehensive guide for survivors of domestic violence on getting an order of protection

Restraining orders inhibit an abuser from contacting, intimidating, threatening or otherwise interfering with a survivor.

Many survivors of domestic violence choose to get a restraining order -- also known as an order of protection -- against a person who is or was abusing them. While some may discount it as “just a piece of paper,” this legal order can be key to sending an abuser a clear message to stay away, both helping a survivor and their children improve safety and setting up the possibility of fines and criminal charges if not obeyed.

This toolkit will provide you with these insights and more. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful Articles
- Recommended Books
- Lists
- Survey Results
- Support Communities
- How to Find Help



There are hundreds of articles on [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) covering the many facets of domestic violence. Here are links to those that will help you understand the many aspects of restraining orders.

[A Guide to Restraining Orders](#)

A comprehensive guide for survivors of domestic violence on getting an order of protection.

[Ask Amanda: Restraining Versus Protection Orders](#)

What to do if a court denies your request for an order.

[Can I Get a Protection Order if I'm Under 18?](#)

How to get one varies state-to-state, but the bottom line is yes, you can.

[FAQs About Protection Orders](#)

Breaking down the basics on protection orders.

Do Protective Orders Work in Rural Areas?

Study examines effectiveness of protective orders in urban and rural settings.

What Happens When Someone Violates a Court Order?

What you can expect to happen if your batterer breaks a restraining order.

Many Survivors Fearful to File Restraining Orders

Debate continues as to whether or not they're too easy, or too difficult, to obtain.

How to Get a Protection Order Served on an Abuser

Having a judge grant you a protection order is only half the battle.

Will My Abuser Retaliate?

Debate continues as to whether or not they're too easy, or too difficult, to obtain.

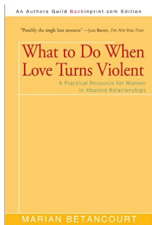
An Order of Protection Should Mean No Guns

Lori Jackson Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act would close a deadly loophole.



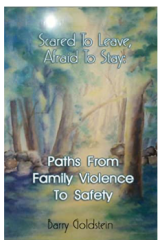
Reading books can be a helpful way to understand restraining orders.

Here are our recommended reads:



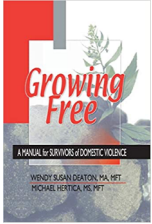
What to Do When Love Turns Violent: A Practical Resource for Women in Abusive Relationships.

Empowers you to find help and take back your life. Everything you need to know to get out of danger: making a protective order work; calling the police; finding safe shelter; seeking medical attention; getting financial assistance, to details on how to stay safe and regain control over your life: preparing for safety at home and at work; protecting your children; rebuilding your life.

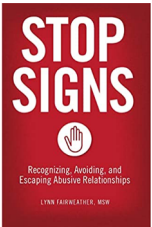


Scared To Leave, Afraid To Stay: Paths From Family Violence To Safety.

This book presents stories of ten women as they fought the courts and their abusers to gain safety for themselves and their children. The author demonstrates how courts handle divorce, custody, visitation, support, child abuse, marital property, orders of protection and crimes when domestic violence erupts, and discusses the tactics abusers use to maintain control over their partners.



Growing Free: A Manual For Survivors of Domestic Violence. Battered women often don't recognize they are being victimized, may minimize the abuse and may make excuses for the abuser. The checklists, questionnaires, and personal stories in this book can provide the recognition needed to say, "This is wrong. It has to end." Plus lists of abusive behaviors, protection orders and other legal matters, safety planning and safe relationships in the future.



Stop Signs: Recognizing, Avoiding, and Escaping Abusive Relationships. Familiarizes readers with intimate partner violence and explains how to develop self-esteem, preparation and assertive awareness that can protect you from involvement with abusive individuals; explores the minds of abusers, explains visible signs of danger in their attitudes and actions; and provides effective strategies for safe extraction when involved with an abuser.



Mejor sola que mal acompañada: para la mujer golpeada / For the Latina in an Abusive Relationship. If you're a Latina involved in an abusive relationship, this book is for you. "Mejor Sola Que Mal Acompañada" offers support and practical information on many topics like: what abuse is; family/cultural expectations; getting police, medical and legal help; where you can go if you leave your home; what the church may say; protecting your children; and dealing with discrimination.



Sometimes lists are easier on the mind because they are uncluttered and to-the-point. If you'd rather read a few items vs articles or books, these lists are for you.

To view all list items at once, click the SEE ALL button located below the list text.

- [23 Ways Survivors Can Collect Evidence of Abuse](#)
- [25 Services Most Commonly Sought by Survivors](#)
- [15 Ways to Plan for Pet Safety and Custody](#)
- [19 Stalking Signs](#)
- [27 Characteristics of Unsafe People](#)
- [32 Items to Pack When Escaping Domestic Violence](#)
- [29 Types of Personal Boundaries You Can Set](#)



A lot of lessons can be taken from people who have been through it before. Check out the following survey results to learn from the experiences of others.

- [What happened when you obtained a protection order?](#)
- [How do you feel the system is failing DV survivors?](#)
- [Did you collect evidence against your abuser before court?](#)
- [As a survivor, what sort of legal representation did you get pertaining to your DV case?](#)
- [How did you document the abuse you experienced?](#)



Online forums and chats can help you connect with others who are in or have faced similar situations, and find support and ideas from the survivor community.

[AfterSilence.org](https://www.aftersilence.org) aims to help victims become survivors and to communicate in the recovery of domestic and sexual violence. It offers an active message board and chat room for rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest and molestation survivors. There are over 31,000 members and about 1,000,000 posts, including recent posts and many useful posts from days and months past.

[Pathways to Safety International](https://www.pathways.org/) If you're an American overseas, your situation is different than 99% of your fellow countryman, and this site will be a wonderful resource for you. Among the services is a 24-hour response to emails, as well as international phone options.

DomesticShelters.org Facebook Page offers one of the most active places where domestic violence survivors connect. You'll find conversation, past experiences and unvarnished stories, and occasionally advice from professionals who have joined in on a topic.

DomesticShelters.org Facebook Group is a private group designed to be a safe space for domestic abuse victims, survivors, advocates and others affected by abuse to support one another through meaningful dialogue and helpful insight.

Fort Refuge is a clever grassroots site run by survivors for fellow survivors as a safe place to come together and discuss their struggles and victories in healing from various types of abuse. Though the forum and chat do not boast the same numbers as some of the larger organizations, they are one of the more active conversation places on the internet currently. They also add new content to their site regularly.

Love is Respect - National Teen Dating Helpline focuses on teen relationships and can be accessed by phone, text or live chat. It offers real-time, one-on-one support by trained peer advocates who offer information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse. They also offer support to parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

National Domestic Violence Hotline offers confidential, private, one-on-one chats with advocates every day 24/7.

OnYourMind.net is a safe and anonymous place for teens to get information and support from other teens in an online chat room, covering topics such as relationships, school, depression, stress, suicide, parents, cutting, identity and health.

Pandora's Aquarium is an online forum with around 2 million posts and over 70,000 members, and is run by Pandora's Project, which provides information, support and resources to rape and sexual abuse survivors and their friends and family.

When accessing hotlines, chats or forums from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, please remember to take the necessary precautions to keep your activities confidential from your abuser. Learn more about how to stay safe online [here](#).

Also, keep in mind that local shelters may offer in-person or virtual support groups. You can find shelters in your area at [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org).



Another way to determine if you're experiencing abuse is to contact a trained domestic violence advocate near you or through a national service.

To search for domestic violence program staffed with trained advocates, visit [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) and type either your city and state, or ZIP code, into the search bar at the top of the page. A list of organizations and contact numbers near you will be displayed. To reach an advocate, reach out directly by calling the phone number listed. Most are open 24/7.

To speak to an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, also 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) to chat online.

It's important to know that your call is confidential and you can choose to remain anonymous when speaking with an advocate. To know what to expect when calling, read [this article](#).