

## You are not alone.



1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the US have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.\*



**An Order of Protection can help keep you and your family safe.**

## If your OP is violated

If you are in immediate danger or you are afraid for your life, **call 911.**

If you are not in immediate danger and want to file charges or make a report, you can call the non-emergency number at:

**(615) 862-8600**

If you are unsure about what to do or have any questions, you can call an advocate at the Family Safety Center to discuss your options.

\*Source: National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010 Summary Report



## Metro Office of Family Safety

If you are worried about your safety or are sometimes afraid of your partner or loved one, there is help available. To speak to an advocate, reach out to either of our offices. Your information will be kept **confidential** and **all services are free.**

### Family Safety Center

*walk-ins and appointments*

610 Murfreesboro Pike

Nashville, TN 37210

(615) 880-1100

M - F, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

*Order of Protection assistance 24/7*

### Jean Crowe Advocacy Center

*courthouse location*

100 James Robertson Pkwy., Suite 114

Nashville, TN 37201

(615) 862-4767

M - F, 7:45 am - 4:00 pm

We can help file Orders of Protection, create a safety plan, assess your level of risk, connect you with resources like shelter and counseling, and provide a safe place for you to wait for your court hearing.

Your experience with abuse is unique to you, and your path to safety and healing will be as well. We will listen to you, believe you, and explain the resources that are available. **You choose whether to involve law enforcement or not.**

If you are in Nashville, you can also call the YWCA's 24-hour hotline:

**1-800-334-4628**

If you are outside of Nashville, you can call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline at:

**1-800-799-7233**



# Orders of Protection

**No one deserves to be hurt.**

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## What is an Order of Protection?

An Order of Protection (OP) is a **legal document signed by the court** that forbids an abuser from contacting you or coming around you for any reason.

It is a **civil** procedure which means you **don't need to involve law enforcement** in order to get an OP.

The OP does not go on an abuser's record **as long as they abide by the Order**. Violating the Order can result in **criminal charges** against the abuser for behavior that wouldn't normally be considered criminal, like calling you.

A judge can grant an OP for **up to 1 year**. You can **request an extension** of your OP before the end of that year.

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## Who can file for an Order of Protection?

- parties who are dating, have dated, or have had sex
- parties who are married, have been married, or share children together
- parties who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption
- parties who have lived together
- a person who has been sexually assaulted by the Respondent of the OP
- a person who has been stalked by the Respondent of the OP

## Under an OP

An abuser can be **ordered not to:**



threaten, frighten, or abuse you, your children, or your pets



contact you and/or your children by any means including phone calls, texts, social media messages, letters, emails, or through other people



come around you or your children whether you are at home, at work, at school, at the grocery store, or anywhere else



interfere with your utilities or phone



own or possess firearms

You can also request:



temporary custody of your children



for the abuser to immediately move out of the home you share



for the abuser to pay child support, alimony, and/or part or all of the household bills



your cell phone lines to be separated



## How to file an OP

- 1 At the Family Safety Center, an advocate will talk to you in a private room. They will ask you demographic and contact information about yourself and the person you want the OP against (Respondent).
- 2 The advocate will write a summary of the abuse, why you are afraid, and why you need the OP. They will read it back to you to make sure you agree with what they wrote.
- 3 The advocate will go with you in front of the Commissioner using a video conference. The Commissioner will swear you in, ask you a few questions, and decide whether or not to grant you the temporary OP.
- 4 If the Commissioner grants your temporary OP (this is called an "*ex parte*"), the Commissioner will sign it, give you a copy, and send a copy to the Sheriff's Office.
- 5 The Sheriff's Office will attempt to serve the OP on the Respondent and put them on notice of what they can and cannot do under the Order.
- 6 Once the Sheriff's Office serves the OP on the Respondent, they will call you to let you know that the Order is officially in effect. They will also give you a court date to go in front of a judge to request a permanent (1 year) OP.
- 7 On the day of court, you will go to the Jean Crowe Advocacy Center in the courthouse to meet with another advocate from our office. They will answer any questions you have, go with you to court, stay with you during the hearing, and, if needed, help you leave the courthouse safely.