



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Each state has different requirements for getting a civil domestic violence protective order. Because it makes protection orders difficult for teens to obtain, the District of Columbia's grade for protecting teen victims of domestic and dating violence is a C.

Do I Qualify for a Protection Order in Washington, D.C.?

Type of Relationship

In order to qualify for a protection order, the abuser must be someone:

- You are in a romantic relationship with (it does not have to be a sexual relationship)¹
- You are sharing a residence with²
- You have a child with³
- You are married to or used to be married to⁴
- You are related to by blood or legal custody⁵

Type of Abuse⁶

A judge is allowed to give you a protection order when your abuser has:

- Physically abused you
- Attempted to abuse you
- Threatened to injure you
- Attempted or threatened to physically abuse you
- Stalked you

Age

If you are 18 years or older, you can obtain a protection order yourself without an adult's permission.⁷ For minors under 18, the law does not say who can file for you. It will be up to the individual courts and judges whether you can get a protection order without your parent's permission. Check with a local domestic violence organization to see how your local courts handle minors who want protection orders.

How Do I Get a Protection Order?

If you qualify to apply for a protection order, you can go to court to file for the order. A judge will decide whether there is enough threat of immediate danger to grant a temporary protection order. The judge will also schedule a time in the next 14 days for a full hearing. The temporary order lasts until your hearing.⁸ After the hearing, the judge may grant you a permanent order which lasts up to 1 year and is renewable.⁹

What Can I Ask for in a Protective Order?

You may ask the court for the following in a protection order:

- The abuser must stop abusive behaviors¹⁰
- Order the abuser to attend counseling¹¹
- The abuser must stay away from you and your home¹²
- Child and spousal support¹³
- Temporary child custody and visitation¹⁴
- Require the abuser to pay you back for costs caused by the abuse, including court costs and attorney fees¹⁵
- Abuser must surrender any firearm(s)¹⁶

How Much Will It Cost?

It is free.

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship...
free from violence and free from fear.

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- ¹ D.C. Code Ann. § 16-1001(5)(B) (2007).
² *Id.* § 16-1001(5)(A).
³ *Id.*
⁴ *Id.*
⁵ *Id.*
⁶ *Id.* § 16-1001(5).
⁷ *Id.* §§ 46-101, 16-1004(d).
⁸ *Id.* § 16-1004(d).
⁹ *Id.* § 16-1005(d).
¹⁰ *Id.* §§ 16-1005(c)(1), (3).
¹¹ *Id.* § 16-1005(c)(2).
¹² *Id.* §§ 16-1005(c)(3)-(4).
¹³ Specified in court forms when filing for a protective order.
¹⁴ *Id.* §§ 16-1005(c)(6)-(7).
¹⁵ *Id.* § 16-1005(c)(8).
¹⁶ Specified in court forms when filing for a protective order.

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