



## Understanding Protective Orders: The Facts

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### What are Protective Orders?

A protective order is a legal court order to defend individuals against abuse, threats, harassment, stalking, sexual violence, or other harmful behavior. Protective orders are commonly used in cases involving intimate partner violence, family violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, and human trafficking.[3] For example, a survivor of domestic violence might seek a protective order after repeated threats or physical harm from a partner. Another person experiencing persistent unwelcome contact and intimidation from a former acquaintance, such as repeated calls, messages, or appearances at their workplace, may ask the court to prohibit further contact. These orders may bar the offender from contacting or approaching the victim, going near the victim's home or workplace, possessing firearms, or engaging in threatening behavior.[3] Protective orders can be temporary or long-term depending on the circumstances and state laws.

### Have You Heard?

- Research has found that protective orders may reduce repeat violence and intimate partner homicide risks.[8]
- Studies show survivors often report increased feelings of safety after obtaining a protective order.[4]
- Protective orders are an important legal tool for victim safety, though continued support and enforcement are essential.[2]

### What are the Consequences?

Victims seeking protective orders often experience physical injuries, emotional trauma, fear, anxiety, financial instability, and social isolation from ongoing abuse or harassment.[6] Survivors may miss work, relocate for safety, or face long-term mental health effects such as depression or post-traumatic stress.[1] Violations of protective orders can increase fear and emotional distress, especially in stalking cases.[5] Advocates and local organizations play a key role in connecting survivors with community resources, including mental health services, emergency housing, and financial assistance. Accessing this support helps address survivors' critical needs and promotes well-being.

### How to Raise Awareness and Support Survivors

- Learn about protective orders and the legal rights available to survivors.[7]
- Encourage survivors to work with victim advocates, domestic violence agencies, or legal aid organizations.
- Support policies that improve survivor access to legal services, shelter resources, and trauma-informed care.[2]
- Promote community education about domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, and victim safety resources.

Taken together, believing survivors, providing emotional support, and connecting them with resources can help improve safety and reduce isolation.[1]

### Resources

#### Texas

- **Texas Advocacy Project** — <https://www.texasadvocacyproject.org>
- **Texas Council on Family Violence** — <https://tcfv.org>

#### National

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** — <https://www.thehotline.org>
- **National Center for Victims of Crime** — <https://victimsofcrime.org>
- **Office on Violence Against Women** — <https://www.justice.gov/ovw>
- **WomensLaw.org** — <https://www.womenslaw.org>

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## Resources

- Aging and Disability Resource Center 855-937-2372
- Cyber Civil Rights Initiative 844-878-2274
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving 877-623-3435
- National Child Abuse Hotline 800-422-4453
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233
- National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-4673
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988
- Texas Abuse Hotline 800-252-5400
- Texas Council on Family Violence <https://tcfv.org/survivor-resources/>
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault <https://taasa.org/get-help/>
- Victim Connect Resource Center 855-484-2846
- Victims Of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) 1-855-48-VOICE (1-855-488-6423)