

Bedford County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Family Abuse Protective Order Filing Information

ALERTS:

- **If you feel in immediate danger – call 911.**
- **If you have an Emergency Protective Order – you MUST arrive at the Court Service Unit NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM on the day the Emergency Order expires in order to file for a Family Abuse Protective Order. (Emergency Protective Orders are most often issued by a Magistrate and may last only 72 hours)**

1. **Where is the Bedford County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court located?**

Both the Court and the Court Service Unit are located at:

123 East Main Street
Bedford, Virginia

Directions via Google Maps:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=Bedford,+VA&output=html>

You can click on the up or down arrow in the upper left corner to zoom in or out. To move to a close location just click and drag in the direction you wish to view.

The courthouse is across the street from the Bedford County Administration Building between Court Street and Bridge Street. The entrance to the courthouse is on the left (west) side of the building as you face it.

The Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and Court Services Unit are on the first floor of the courthouse. To file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order, **you must first go to the Court Service Unit located on the first floor in Suite 102.** (A petition is a formal written request asking the Court to do something.)

2. **What are the driving directions to Bedford County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court?**

From the West (Roanoke):

Take VA 460 East, exit onto Blue Ridge Avenue which becomes Main Street and continue to the downtown area. The Courthouse will be on your left.

From the East (Lynchburg)

Take VA 460 West, exit onto Main Street and continue to the downtown area. The Courthouse will be on your right.

From the North:

Take VA 122 or VA 221 South until they intersect with Independence Blvd. Continue on Independence until you intersect Main Street. Turn right on Main Street. The Courthouse will be on your right.

From the South:

Take VA 43 N from Altavista / Leesville. VA 43 will become South Street as you enter Bedford. South Street intersects Washington Street. Take a right on Washington Street and the next left onto Otey Street which will intersect Main Street. Turn left on Main Street and the Courthouse will be on your right.

Directions via Google Maps:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=Bedford,+VA&output=html>

You can click on the up or down arrow in the upper left corner to zoom in or out. To move to a close location just click and drag in the direction you wish to view. You can get directions by filling in the box provided with a starting address.

3. Where is parking available at the Courthouse?

There is all day parking behind the Courthouse. There are some two hour parking places available on Main Street and behind the County Administration Building across the street from the Courthouse. The two hour limit is STRICTLY ENFORCED. There is also some all day parking available in the side parking lot of Vista Food Store located behind the County Administration Building.

4. What public transportation is available to the Courthouse and at what cost?

There is no public transportation available.

5. What taxi service is available to the Courthouse?

There is no taxi service available.

6. What should I wear to Court?

The 24th District Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts have a Courtroom Dress Code Policy that includes the following guidelines:

1. Midriiffs/stomachs are to be covered at all times.

2. Halter tops, Tee shirts and tank tops are not allowed.
3. Shirttails must be tucked inside of pants, unless the shirt is designed to be worn over the belt line.
4. No shorts are allowed.
5. With religious exceptions, no hats, scarves, headbands, or kerchiefs may worn on the head.
6. No clothing with rips, holes, or tears will be permitted.
7. Shoes must be worn at all times; no bedroom slippers will be permitted.

No food, drinks, or gum is permitted in the Court rooms.

7. What should I bring with me?

You must have:

- ✦ A full description of the event, including the date of the event that led you to seek a protective order. **YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO TESTIFY BEFORE A JUDGE AT ALL HEARINGS AND WILL NEED THIS INFORMATION FOR ALL HEARINGS.**
- ✦ If you used the I-CAN! Virginia system to complete your paperwork, bring the Affidavit with you. I-CAN! Virginia is an online forms completion program available at:
<http://www.courts.state.va.us/courtadmin/aoc/judpln/programs/afapo/home.html> I-CAN! Virginia is also available in Spanish.
- ✦ The name and physical address (not a P.O. Box) of the person from whom you are seeking protection.

You should also bring with you:

- ✦ As much identifying and contact information as possible about the person from whom you are seeking protection – **this information is very important because the Sheriff must be able to find this person for the Protective Order to take effect. PLEASE GIVE:**
 - nicknames, aliases;
 - home, work, cell phone and pager numbers;
 - addresses and directions for home, work, friends, relatives, and places frequented;
 - age, height, weight, eye color, hair color, distinguishing marks
 - social security number
 - history of drug or alcohol abuse
 - tendencies toward violence or threat to law enforcement officers
 - history of mental illness and any current medication

- ownership, possession of or access to weapons, especially firearms and possession of a concealed weapons permit
- recent photograph of that person
- ✦ A copy of an Emergency Protective Order if one was issued,
- ✦ Any photographs, medical records and other documents related to the event that led to the petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order.

8. What should I NOT bring with me?

You are prohibited from bringing weapons into the Courthouse. Anything that could be used as a weapon is prohibited including but not limited to firearms, knives, scissors, nail trimmers, box cutters and knitting needles.

Use of tobacco products is not permitted in the building.

Cell phones and pagers **MUST BE TURNED OFF** in the building, if not, they are subject to forfeiture.

You are discouraged from bringing children with you to court. If you must bring children, bring an adult who can supervise the children while you are in the court room. Avoid bringing anyone who may cause a disturbance at the Courthouse.

9. What days can I go to the Bedford County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court to ask for a Family Abuse Protective Order?

The Court Service Unit is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 AM until 3:00 PM, Friday 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM to assist those seeking Family Abuse Protective Orders **EXCEPT** for state holidays. **In bad weather, call ahead** to assure the Court is open 540-586-7641.

10. How early can I arrive to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order? *(A petition is a formal written request asking the Court to do something.)*

You are encouraged to arrive as early as possible. The Court Service Unit is open at 8:30 AM. You may call ahead and schedule an appointment with the Court Service Unit as early as 8:00 AM. 1- 540-586-7645.

11. How late can I arrive to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order and have the petition reviewed the same day? *(A petition is a formal written request asking the Court to do something.)*

You can arrive as late as 3:00 PM Monday through Friday to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order. You may call the Court Service Unit at 540-586-7645 to schedule an appointment.

If you have an Emergency Protective Order, **you must arrive at the Court Service Unit no later than 3:00 PM Monday through Friday ON THE DAY THE ORDER EXPIRES in order to file a petition.** (*Emergency Protective Orders are most often issued by a Magistrate and may last only 72 hours*)

If you feel in immediate danger and your petition can not be considered on a particular day, you can go to the Magistrate's office, which is open 24 hours a day, and seek an Emergency Protective Order.

12. How much time will I need to spend at the Court Service Unit and Courthouse?

You should expect to be in the Court Service Unit with the Intake Officer for at least thirty minutes.

The Court will try to consider the petition as soon as possible after it has been brought to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Clerk's Office. If the Court's morning docket is full, you will be asked to return sometime in the afternoon. You may need to spend up to 2 hours at the Courthouse.

13. Where should I go after passing through the security check at the door?

As you enter the courthouse, you will go through a screening process conducted by a Sheriff's deputy. The process includes an x-ray screening of all cases, bags, and purses brought into the building as well as a "walk through" screening of people. **ALL Prohibited items MUST be left outside the courthouse. Sheriff's deputies will NOT hold or take any responsibility for items left outside the courthouse. PLEASE DO NOT BRING ANY OF THE PROHIBITED ITEMS WITH YOU.**

After passing through the security check, turn right; the Court Service Unit will be the first office on the left, suite 102.

14. How do I contact the Court for more information?

Court Service Unit: suite 102 at the Courthouse, 540-586-7645 (Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM).

The Bedford Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Clerk's Office: suite 101 at the Courthouse, 540-586-7641 (Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM).

15. What should I do if I feel I am in immediate danger?

If you believe you are in immediate danger, call 911 and a law enforcement officer will assist you.

Bedford Domestic Violence Services provides a 24 hour hotline and emergency shelter to victims of domestic violence. The hotline number is 540-587-0970 and toll free 1-877-656-1984.

16. What should I do if an Emergency Protective Order that was issued expires before I am able to have a petition for the Family Abuse Protective Order filed and reviewed? *(Emergency Protective Orders are most often issued by Magistrates and may last only 72 hours)*

If you are physically or mentally unable to file a petition for the Family Abuse Protective Order at the Court a law enforcement officer may request an extension of the emergency protective order.

If you are capable of filing a petition for the Family Abuse Protective Order you should go to the court service unit during regular business hours of the court.

In an emergency, outside of the regular business hours of the court, you may seek issuance of another emergency protective order from the magistrate.

17. How do I contact the Magistrate's Office for more information?

Call 540-586-7657 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Office hours are 8:00 AM to 12 noon; 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM Monday through Friday.

The Magistrate's Office is located at the:

Blue Ridge Regional Jail Building
1000 Broad Street, Bedford

Directions:

From Lynchburg via 460 West – exit onto Main Street and turn right, then take the first right at the traffic light onto Independence Blvd., take the second left onto Dawn Drive, turn left after Sam Moore Furniture Company onto Broad Street. The Regional Jail is on the right. There is a blue sign in front of the office.

From Roanoke via 460 East and Rte 122 – exit 460 east onto 122 North, turn left at the bottom of the ramp. Turn right at the first light onto Independence Blvd., take the second left onto Dawn Drive, turn left after Sam Moore Furniture

Company onto Broad Street. The Regional Jail is on the right. There is a blue sign in front of the office.

From Rte 221 – turn left onto Independence Blvd which is the first traffic light when you enter the City of Bedford, take the second right onto Dawn Drive, turn left after Sam Moore Furniture Company onto Broad Street. The Regional Jail is on the right. There is a blue sign in front of the office.

18. How can I find a lawyer to help me?

The Virginia Lawyer Referral Service can provide information about private attorneys through their toll free number, 1-800-552-7977. The following website may be helpful: www.lawyers.findlaw.com/lawyer/state/virginia. You can also get information about local lawyers by checking the yellow pages of the phone book.

Low-income individuals may be eligible for free legal services through Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley. Call 540-344-2080 to complete an application by telephone. Normal intake hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon, but intake for emergency services is done until 5:00 PM. Legal Aid can provide free lawyers for eligible people to help with obtaining and amending preliminary and permanent protective orders. They also provide assistance with other matters related to family abuse, including custody, support, and divorce.

19. How will I know when the Protective Order is served on the person from whom I want protection?

You may call the Sheriff's Office at 540-586-7681 from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. They will tell you whether or not the person has been served with the protective order. They cannot provide any other information. At other times you can call the Sheriff's office at 540-586-7827.

The Court Advocate at Bedford Domestic Violence Services 540-587-0970, can also help you find out if the person has been served.

20. Where else can I get help?

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

- ▶ **911** – Law enforcement emergency dispatch number.
- ▶ **Magistrate's Office (540-586-7657)** –
- ▶ **Bedford Domestic Violence Services (540-587-0970; toll free 877-656-1984)** provides a 24 hour hotline and emergency shelter to victims of domestic violence.

ASSISTANCE WITH THE COURT PROCESS

- ▶ **Bedford Domestic Violence Services (540-587-0970)** offers a court advocate who will accompany people through the court process.
- ▶ **Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley (540-344-2080)** Low-income individuals may be eligible for free legal services through Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley. Call to complete an application by telephone. Normal intake hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon, but intake for emergency services is done until 5:00 PM. Legal Aid can provide free lawyers for eligible people to help with obtaining and amending preliminary and permanent protective orders. They also provide assistance with other matters related to family abuse, including custody, support, and divorce.
- ▶ **The Bedford Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court Clerk's Office (540-586-7641)**
- ▶ **The Court Service Unit (540-586-7645)**
- ▶ **The Commonwealth's Attorney (540-586-7628)** this office deals with criminal cases and is not involved in the issuance of protective orders. If criminal charges are filed, you should make an appointment to speak with the prosecutor and/or a victim advocate who works directly in the Commonwealth's Attorney Office.

OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES:

- ▶ **Bedford Domestic Violence Services (540-587-0970)** develops and implements domestic violence crisis intervention services in Bedford County to empower victims and their children. Services includes: 24-Hour Hotline, court accompaniment for protective order requests, access to shelter services, support groups, safety planning, domestic violence education, information and referral, and transportation. Bedford Domestic Violence Services also promotes public awareness of domestic violence issues and the impact on the community. It is the only comprehensive domestic violence program in the state of Virginia that operates within a local department of social services.
- ▶ **Teen Talk (540-947-7273, toll free 888-299-7277)**
- ▶ **Sexual Assault Response Crisis Line (540-947-4357, toll free 888-947-9747)**
- ▶ **Bedford County Department of Social Services (540-586-7750)** provides food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid, fuel assistance and day care assistance to eligible residents of Bedford City and County. Allegations of child abuse and elder abuse are also handled through the Department of Social Services.

- ▶ **City of Bedford Police Department (NON-EMERGENCY 540-587-6011)** located at 215 East Main Street in the lower level of the Bedford City Administration Building.
- ▶ **Bedford Public Library System (540-586-8911 ext 18)** The Bedford Public Library System provides computers for the public to use free of charge. You must have a library card or a picture I.D. Staff is available to get you started on the computer, and help you understand the terminology used as well as the instructions which you must follow. Library staff can also help with directions to the Magistrate, the Courthouse or the Domestic Violence Shelter. However, staff cannot give legal advice.

ALL PATRON/STAFF CONTACTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

The Bedford Public Library System has six libraries located in: Bedford City, Big Island, Forest, Moneta, Montvale and Stewartville. For library hours call 540-586-8911 or check the library's website at:

www.bedford.va.us