

**Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court  
Oliver Hill Courts Building – 1600 Oliver Hill Way, Richmond, Virginia  
Family Abuse Protective Order - Petitioner/Filing Information**

Underlined words are explained in a glossary at the end of this document.

In order to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order, you MUST go to the courthouse and speak to an Intake Officer in the Court Service Unit.

You also may use the I-CAN! Virginia system to help you fill out a petition. I-CAN! Virginia is a computer program that asks questions and completes the correct court forms. The forms still must be taken to the Court Service Unit for filing. To use I-CAN! Virginia, go to [www.ican.courts.state.va.us](http://www.ican.courts.state.va.us).

Please note: you MUST go to Intake EVEN IF you have already filled out your paperwork on I-CAN! Virginia. The I-CAN! Virginia system does not automatically grant you a hearing for a Family Abuse Protective Order. Even if you use I-CAN! Virginia, additional information may be required by the Intake Officer when filing your petition.

**1. Where is the courthouse located?**

Both the Court and Court Service Unit (CSU) are located in the Oliver Hill Courts Building at: 1600 Oliver Hill Way (formerly North 17<sup>th</sup> Street), Richmond, Virginia 23219.

The Court is directly across the street from the City Jail. You must go to the Court Service Unit-Intake to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order.

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

***From Points North:***

Take 95 South to downtown Richmond. Take Exit 74C for Franklin Street. Go straight through the first traffic light off the ramp. At the second light, turn left onto East Main Street. Turn left onto 18<sup>th</sup> Street. As you cross East Broad Street, 18<sup>th</sup> Street becomes Oliver Hill Way. Go about one mile north on Oliver Hill Way. Turn left at the light into the courthouse entrance (directly across from the City Jail). Turn left into the visitor parking lot.

***From Points South:***

Take 95 North to downtown Richmond. Take the Broad Street East exit. The ramp exits onto Oliver Hill Way (formerly 17<sup>th</sup> Street), which is one-way South at this point. Follow it two blocks to the first traffic light, which is East Broad Street. Go left one block to the next light, which is 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Go left onto 18<sup>th</sup> and proceed one mile north. 18<sup>th</sup> Street merges into Oliver Hill Way. The Richmond City Jail will be on your right and the Oliver Hill Courts Building on your left. Turn left at the light into the courthouse entrance. Turn left into the visitor parking lot.

***From Points West:***

Take 64 East until it merges with 95 South. Then follow the directions for “from Points North” above.

***From Points East:***

Take 64 West. Just before downtown Richmond, take Exit 192, Route 360. At the light at the end of the ramp, turn left onto Route 360 West (Mechanicsville Turnpike). Go just over ½ mile to the second light at Fairfield Avenue. Turn right. Go ½ mile to where Fairfield ends, at the first light. Cross through the light into the courthouse entrance. Turn left to the visitor parking lot.

**3. Is parking available at the courthouse?**

There is free parking at the courthouse. Parking for the public is available immediately to the left of the courthouse main entrance off Oliver Hill Way. From the main entrance, turn left into the visitor parking lot. Please avoid reserved and numbered parking spots if possible.

Parking for handicapped / disabled persons is available directly in front of the courthouse, to the right of the flag poles. There is a ramp that provides access to the courthouse; no steps need to be navigated to enter or to access any service in the courthouse.

**4. What bus transportation is available to the courthouse and at what cost?**

Detailed information on bus service can be found at the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) website at [www.ridegrtc.com](http://www.ridegrtc.com) or by calling their Customer Service Center at 804-358-4782.

GRTC can make accommodations for people who need special assistance after they have approved an application for CARE services. Contact the GRTC Customer Service Center at 804-358-4782 for an application.

The **#11 “17th Street” bus** stops at Oliver Hill Way and Fairfield Court, directly across the street from the Oliver Hill Courts Building.

Currently, the GRTC local route cash fare is \$1.50, commuter express fare is \$2-\$4, and the transfer fee is an additional \$0.25 (25 cents). You should be prepared with exact change for fares.

**5. What taxi service is available to the courthouse?**

A number of taxicab companies serve the City of Richmond. Most are listed in the yellow pages. Cab stands are available at most major hotels, the airport, Amtrak, and the Greyhound/Trailways Bus Terminal. Currently, taxi rates are approximately \$5.00 for the first mile and \$2.50 for each additional mile. There is an additional \$1.00 fee for each passenger beyond the first passenger who is over the age of six years old.

Local taxicab companies:

- Yellow Cab – 548-4995

- Manhattan – 643-6791
- Metro Cab – 977-0933
- Napoleon Taxi – 354-8294

**6. What other assistance is there for transportation?**

When all other options have been exhausted, assistance may be available through a local domestic violence agency (see question 30 below).

**7. What should I wear to Court?**

There is a standing Court Order in effect regarding proper attire in the courthouse. If circumstances prevent your compliance with this Order, please speak with the Sheriff's Officer at the entrance to the courthouse or a Victim-Witness representative. You will be permitted to enter the courthouse to file a petition for a protective order.

The Order states that all parties involved in matters before the Court are required to dress in a respectful and appropriate manner, indicative of the setting and dignity of court proceedings. This includes, but is not limited to, the following guidelines: midriffs/stomachs are to be covered at all times; backs are to be covered at all times; shirttails must be tucked into pants; no shorts allowed, with the exception of children under the age of 10; with religious and medical exceptions, no hats, scarves, headbands, or kerchiefs may be worn on the head; no clothing with rips, holes, tears, or vulgar or offensive language may be worn; and shoes must be worn at all times.

**8. Do I need a lawyer to file a petition for a Preliminary Protective Order?**

No. You may go to the Court to file a petition for a Protective Order without an attorney. The Intake Officer will help you to fill out the necessary paperwork. The Intake Officer will give you basic information about your hearing, but he or she cannot give you legal advice.

**9. If I want a lawyer, how can I find one to help me?**

If you are the victim of domestic violence, you may qualify for free legal services. For more information, contact:

- Central Virginia Legal Aid Society, Inc. – 648-1012, ext. 6047
- Hunton & Williams Women's Advocacy Project – 775-2248
- Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service, University of Richmond School of Law – 955-4010

If you receive a recording, please leave a message with your name, a phone number where you can be safely reached, and the date of your hearing.

Other places you may be able to find a lawyer to help you:

- Virginia Lawyer Referral Service - 800-552-7977

**10. When can I file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order at the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court?**

The Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and Court Service Unit are open Monday through Friday **EXCEPT** for state holidays and severe weather that causes the closing of other government services and schools.

The courthouse is open at 8:00 AM and the Intake/Registrar will begin accepting petitions at that time.

Protective Order petitions are heard twice daily, at approximately 11:30 AM and 3:00 PM.

Petitioners wanting their petition heard by a Judge **the same day it is filed** should arrive at the Court Service Unit **NO LATER** than 2:00 PM.

Anyone filing a petition after 2:00 PM should expect their case to be heard by a Judge the next business day.

Petitioners arriving after 2:00 PM who cannot or do not wish to wait until the next business day for their petition to be heard by the Judge may go to the Magistrate to request an Emergency Protective Order. The Magistrate's Office is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week (see question 19 below).

The Court Clerk's Office and the Intake/Registrar normally close each day at 4:00 PM.

**11. What should I bring with me to the courthouse to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order?**

1. You must have:

- A picture ID of yourself (can be a driver's license, work identification tag, or military ID).
- The name and an address of the person from whom you are seeking protection.
- A full description of the event that led you to seek a protective order. If you used the I-CAN system, bring the Affidavit with you. **YOU WILL NEED THIS SAME INFORMATION FOR THE FULL HEARING that will be scheduled if a Preliminary Protective Order is issued.** You will be asked to testify at the full hearing about the event that made you want to seek protection.

2. You also should try to bring with you:

- As much identifying and contact information as possible about the person from whom you are seeking protection. **This information is essential because the Sheriff must be able to find this person for the Protective Order to take effect. PLEASE TRY TO PROVIDE:**
  - name, nicknames, aliases;
  - date of birth;
  - home, work, cell phone and pager numbers;
  - addresses for home, work, friends, relatives, and places frequented;
  - age, height, weight, eye color, hair color, distinguishing marks;

- social security number;
  - tendencies toward violence;
  - ownership or possession of weapons, especially firearms; and
  - recent photograph of that person.
- A copy of an Emergency Protective Order if one has been issued.
  - Any photographs, police reports, or medical records related to the event that led to the petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order.
  - Any witnesses to the injuries or abuse.
  - If possible, birth certificates and social security numbers for children for whom you may be seeking protection.

**12. What should I NOT bring with me to the courthouse?**

The Court prohibits **ALL electronic devices** including but not limited to: cell phones, pagers, laptop computers, palm pilots, beepers, tape recorders, radios, video games, walkman, iPod, DVD, and CD players.

The Court prohibits **ANYTHING that could be used as a weapon** including but not limited to: guns, knives, scissors, and knitting needles.

Assistive devices or adaptive equipment for persons with hearing impairment or other disabilities, as well as service or companion animals for the disabled are permitted.

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.**

There is no smoking in the courthouse.

Food and drink are allowed **ONLY** in certain areas as designated by signs in the lobby.

**13. How late can I arrive to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order arrive and still have the petition heard the same day?**

Protective Order petitions are heard at least twice daily, at approximately 11:30 AM and 3:00 PM. Petitioners wanting their petition heard by a Judge **the same day it is filed** should arrive at the Court Service Unit **NO LATER** than 2:00 PM.

Anyone filing a petition after 2:00 PM should expect their case to be heard by a Judge the next business day. The Court Clerk's Office and Intake/Registrar normally open at 8:00 AM and close each day at 4:00 PM.

**14. How long should I expect to spend at the courthouse in order to file the petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order and have the petition heard the same day?**

You need to be prepared to spend several hours at the courthouse meeting with the Intake Officer / Registrar, completing paperwork, and waiting for your case to be called before a Judge.

Arrive at the Court Service Unit no later than 9:00 AM if you wish to be heard at 11:30 AM, and no later than 2:00 PM if you wish to be heard at 3:00 PM. While the Court makes every effort to hear Family Abuse Protective Order petitions every day at 11:30 AM and 3:00 PM, these times cannot be guaranteed and may vary.

While waiting for your case to be called, you may wish to meet with the Victim-Witness program located in the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office in the courthouse.

**15. Once I arrive at the Court, where should I go after passing through the security check at the door?**

After you have passed through the Sheriff's security check at the main entrance to the courthouse, turn LEFT and go to the window marked "**Intake Registrar.**"

**16. What should I do if I need assistance because of a disability?**

Notify the Intake Officer that you require assistance filling out your paperwork.

**17. What should I do if I need a foreign language or sign language interpreter?**

Notify the Intake Officer that you require an interpreter. The Court will provide an interpreter for the entire filing process of a Family Abuse Protective Order, from intake through the court hearing.

I-CAN! Virginia is also available in Spanish. I-CAN! Virginia is a free online program that helps a person complete the forms necessary to ask the court for a protective order. Go to: <https://www.vacourtformhelp.courts.state.va.us/> and follow the prompts for Spanish language.

**18. How do I contact the Court for more information about filing a protective order?**

Call the Court Service Unit at 804-646-2900 or the Clerk's Office at 804-646-2942.

**19. What should I do if I need help now?**

If you feel you are in immediate danger, call 911 for police assistance.

You may also go to the Magistrate's Office located at 200 West Grace Street, Richmond, Virginia to obtain an Emergency Protective Order. An Emergency Order could last only 72 hours. If you need longer protection, you **must** ask the Court for a Preliminary Protective Order.

The Magistrate's Office is located in the Richmond Police Headquarters Building on the first floor. The Magistrate's Office is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Parking is available on the street and in Richmond Police Headquarters Visitor's Parking Lot (spaces 1-36) located at the corner of North Jefferson Street and the 100 block of West Grace Street.

The Richmond Police Headquarters is served by a number of bus routes with bus stops located at the corners of North Jefferson Street and West Broad Street, and North Jefferson Street and West Grace Street. Detailed information on specific bus service can be found at the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) web site [www.ridegrtc.com](http://www.ridegrtc.com)

20. **What should I do if the court is not open, or if I have an Emergency Protective Order but it will expire** before I am able to have a petition for the Family Abuse Protective Order filed and heard?

Go to the Magistrate's Office located at 200 West Grace Street, Richmond, Virginia. The Magistrate's Office is located in the Richmond Police Headquarters Building on the first floor. The Magistrate's Office is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Parking is available on the street and in Richmond Police Headquarters Visitor's Parking Lot (spaces 1-36) located at the corner of North Jefferson Street and the 100 block of West Grace Street.

The Richmond Police Headquarters is served by a number of bus routes with bus stops located at the corners of North Jefferson Street and West Broad Street, and North Jefferson Street and West Grace Street. Detailed information on specific bus service can be found at the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) web site [www.ridegrtc.com](http://www.ridegrtc.com)

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

Call 804-646-6689.

22. **When do protective orders take effect?**

A Sheriff's Deputy or court official must give the protective order to the person from whom you want protection. A protective order is not valid until that person gets a copy.

23. **How will I know when the protective order is served on the person from whom I want protection?**

Call the Sheriff's Office at 804-646-2972 during the Court's regular business hours and ask if the person has been served. Outside the Court's regular business hours, you also can try calling the Police at 804-646-6718 to ask if the person has been served.

24. **What if the person from whom I want protection does not obey the order?**

Contact the police and tell them you have a protective order against the person. If you feel that you are in immediate danger, call 911.

25. **What if I am granted a Preliminary Protective Order and a full hearing is scheduled, but I don't go to the hearing?**

If you do not go to the full hearing, your Preliminary Order ends in 15 days or on the date of the full hearing.

26. **What if I need to change part of the protective order?**

Go to the Clerk's Office and file a motion to amend (change) your protective order.

**27. What can I do if I am not a U.S. citizen?**

If you are in immediate danger, call the Police. You may ask for a protective order at the Court Service Unit Intake Registrar as explained above. You also may call the Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-838-8238). The hotline is confidential and will not place you in danger of deportation.

**28. What if my protective order was issued in another state, but I am now in Virginia?**

Virginia courts recognize and enforce protective orders issued from other states. While you are not required to, you may file a copy of your out-of-state protective order with the Richmond Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court.

**29. What if I am being stalked?**

If you feel that you are in immediate danger, call 911 for police assistance.

You may also go to the Magistrate's Office and testify under oath as to why you think you are being stalked and why a protective order is necessary.

**30. Where else can I get help?**

- **Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-838-8238)** is available statewide and can help you make a safety plan and refer you to other services.

There also are a number of agencies and organizations serving the City of Richmond that can help you. A few of these include:

**Richmond Department of Social Services** provides the following services and benefits to eligible residents of the City of Richmond:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - 646-4110
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) - 646-7212
- General Relief - 311
- Employment Services - 646-7437
- Adult Protective Services - 646-7405, After hours 1-888-832-3858
- Energy Assistance - 646-7046
- Medicaid - 311
- Child Care Assistance - 646-7407
- Food Stamp Employment Training Program - 646-7548
- Second Responders are available to assist victims of domestic violence and work seven days a week from 3:00 PM – 8:00 AM. They can be contacted at the police precincts:



- 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct – 646-3618
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Precinct – 646-8184
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Precinct – 646-1947
- 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct – 646-3983
- Headquarters – 646-5100; ask the staff to request a Second Responder.

**Victim/Witness Assistance Program (646-7665)** is located in the Richmond Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney at the Oliver Hill Courts Building. They offer information about the court process, referrals to counseling and social services, and will accompany victims to court when needed.

**Magistrate’s Office (646-6689)** is located at 200 West Grace Street. After review, the office issues warrants for crimes and Emergency Protective Orders.

**Richmond Police Department**

- **Call EMERGENCY – 911** if you are in immediate danger; for non-emergency services call **646-5100**.
- **Domestic Violence Enforcement Response Team (DVERT) (646-6764 or 646-6870)**.

**Sheriff’s Office at Richmond J&DR District Court (646-2972)** provides information during the Court’s regular business hours on the service of Protective Orders.

**United Way of Greater Richmond (771-5820)** provides information and referral to a large number of services in the greater Richmond area.

**YWCA** provides a 24-hour crisis hot line (**643-0888**). In addition the YWCA offers emergency shelter, short-term crisis counseling, support groups and will accompany victims of family abuse and/or sexual assault to the hospital. For non-emergency services call **643-6761**.

**Greater Richmond SCAN (257-7226)** provides parenting education programs and support groups for parents.

**ChildSAVERS (644-9590)** provides services designed to reduce the effects of violence on children by providing direct and immediate intervention with children affected by violence and/or trauma.

**VCU Medical Center Forensic Nurse Examiners (628-0623)**.

**Senior Connections: The Capital Area Agency on Aging (343-3000)** provides information and referrals for services for persons 60 years of age or older.

## GLOSSARY

**Family Abuse Protective Order:** a legal document issued by a judge or magistrate to protect the health and safety of someone who has been injured by a family or household member. Virginia has three kinds of protective orders – Emergency Protective Orders, Preliminary Protective Orders, and Protective Orders.

1. **Emergency Protective Orders:** most often issued by a magistrate. These may last only 72 hours (3 days).
2. **Preliminary Protective Orders:** require that you file a petition at court and are issued by a judge. They last 15 days or until a full hearing. The person from whom you want protection must receive a copy.
3. **Protective Orders:** are issued by the Court after a full hearing where both parties are present before the judge. These orders may last up to two (2) years.

**Hearing:** a proceeding in a courtroom before a judge where both parties are present.

**I-CAN!:** the I-CAN! system provides online forms for a petitioner to fill out. These forms ensure that you have all of the correct information to give to the intake officer in order to be granted a hearing for a Family Abuse Protection Order.

**Intake Officer:** a person with the Court Service Unit who will ask you questions and complete the forms and paperwork needed to file a petition for a Family Abuse Protective Order.

**Magistrate:** a judicial officer with limited powers who handles certain matters, such as the issuance of Emergency Protective Orders.

**Petition:** a formal request to the Court asking the Court to take action on a matter.

**Petitioner:** the person asking the Court to do something.

**Service of Process (“Served”):** when a court document such as a protective order is delivered and given in person to the person named in the document. A sheriff or other law enforcement officer most often serves protective orders.

**Stalked:** a series of actions, rather than a single act, coupled with the intent to, or knowledge that the acts instill fear or cause injury. These actions become a pattern of behavior called stalking. Stalking is illegal.

**Victim-Witness program:** they can answer questions about the court process and help you find other services you may need.

**Witness:** a person who testifies as to what he or she has seen, heard, or observed.