

Safety Planning

Victims of domestic violence are put into distressing and oftentimes life-threatening situations. It is important to have precautions set in place in order to keep you and your children safe from abuse. Consider the information below when developing your safety plan.

Gather important documents (i.e. birth certificates, identification, social security cards, custody papers, proof of insurance, etc.) and put them in a safe place.

Notify your employer of the situation and provide security with a copy of your Protective Order and a picture of the abuser.

Notify your child's school and/or childcare provider of the situation and provide them with a photograph of the abuser.

Prepare an emergency bag filled with essentials such as clothes, toys, medicines, and cash that you may need if you had to leave quickly.

Alert trusted family members and/or friends of the situation.

Alert and gain support from local supportive services and resources.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience serious physical violence by an intimate partner.

(National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey – NISVS, 2014)

Resources

Circuit Court for Charles County

200 Charles Street, La Plata, MD 20646
301-932-3201

District Court for Charles County

11 Washington Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646
301-934-5110

District Court Commissioner

(24 hours, 7 days a week)
11 Washington Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646
301-934-5080

Helplines

Center for Abused Persons

2670 Crain Highway, Suite 303, Waldorf, MD 20603
301-645-3336 (24-Hour Hotline)

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

Shelter Services

Lifestyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.

101 Catalpa Drive, Suite 103, La Plata, MD 20646
301-609-9900

State's Attorney's Office

Physical Address:

Charles County Courthouse Basement Level,
200 Charles Street, La Plata, MD 20646

Phone: 301-932-3350

Website: CCSAO.us



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



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State's Attorney

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is the effort to maintain power and control over an intimate partner through means of willful intimidation and abuse. It is not limited to physical abuse, but can include a variety of controlling behaviors such as harassment, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, and/or financial abuse.

Although domestic violence includes a multitude of controlling behaviors, certain behaviors such as harassment, physical violence, or sexual violence may be punishable by law. It is a crime to commit, attempt to commit, or threaten an act of violence against another person.

If you are a victim of harassment, physical violence or sexual violence, call police to file criminal charges. In addition to filing criminal charges, you can also file for a protective order or peace order.

The State's Attorney's Office is committed to assisting and supporting victims of domestic violence. For more information, please call our Victim Witness Assistance Unit at 301-932-3360.

Protective Order

A protective order is a civil order signed by a judge that orders a person to refrain from committing an act that may include abuse and harassment against another person. There are three kinds of protective orders: Interim, Temporary, and Final.

If the courts are closed, you can apply for an Interim Protective Order with a District Court Commissioner that is effective when it is provided to your abuser by a law enforcement officer. The date for a temporary order hearing will be listed.

You can apply for a Temporary Protective Order during regular business hours in either District or Circuit Court. Temporary Protective Orders will list the date for a final order hearing and are valid until that hearing,

Final Protective Orders are effective for one year but may be extended up to two years under certain circumstances. Additionally, the court may issue a permanent, non-expiring Final Protective Order in cases of attempted murder, first degree assault, or rape that meet certain criteria.

The court can grant temporary custody of children and pets to the victim. The court also can order a person to stay away from a victim's home and job, as well as vacate the residence that is being shared between the victim and the abuser.

Protective Order Eligibility

To be eligible for a protective order, the petitioner must be a victim to at least one of the following forms of abuse as defined by Maryland law:

- An act that causes serious bodily harm
- An act that makes a person fearful of impending bodily harm
- Rape or sexual offense, including attempts
- Stalking
- False imprisonment defined as physically preventing someone from leaving somewhere against her/his will

Additionally, the petitioner must have one of the following relationships to her/his abuser:

- Spouse (current or former)
- Family (blood, marriage, or adoption)
- Biological parents of a child together
- Resided together for at least 90 days during the past year in an intimate relationship
- Resided together for at least 90 days during the past year in a parent-child or stepparent-stepchild relationship
- Has a caretaker-vulnerable adult relationship
- Had a sexual relationship within 1 year before the filing of the petition

If you are a victim of abuse outlined above but do not have one of these relationships, file for a peace order.