

**What does a restraining order do?**

It can order you to:

- Not contact or go near the protected person
- Not have a gun while the order is in effect
- Move out of the house
- Follow child custody and visitation orders
- Pay child support and
- Pay spousal support

**Read the order carefully. If you disobey the order, you can be sent to jail, fined, or both.**

**What if I have a gun?**

You cannot own, possess, or have a gun or firearm while the order is in effect. If you have a gun now, you must sell it to a licensed gun dealer or turn it in to police. Read Form DV-810.

**Should I go to the hearing?**

Yes. Go to court on the hearing date listed on page one of Form DV-109. If you do not go to court, the judge can make the orders without hearing from you.

**How do I tell my side of the story?**

File Form DV-120, *Answer to Temporary Restraining Order*, before the hearing date. Also, have someone mail it to the person who asked for the order or to the person’s lawyer. This is “service.” The person who mails it must fill out and sign a *Proof of Service by Mail* (Form DV-250). File the *Proof of Service* with the court clerk. Keep a copy. Bring copies of all documents to the hearing.

**What if I have a witness?**

You may file a witness statement (also known as a declaration), signed under penalty of perjury, by anyone who has personal knowledge of the facts. You must file and mail witness statements or other documents that support your case at least two days before the hearing or when you mail your *Answer* (Form DV-120) to the protected person. A witness must go to the hearing for the judge to consider the witness statement.

**Do I have to get a lawyer?**

No. But it is a good idea, especially if you have children. Ask the clerk how to find free or low-cost legal services or go to [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/lowcost](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/lowcost).

**What if I also have criminal charges against me?**

See a lawyer. Anything you say or write can be used against you in your criminal case.

**What if I am a victim of domestic violence?**

Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline:

**1-800-799-7233**

**TDD: 1-800-787-3224**

Ask who can help you file a restraining order request.

**Will I see the protected person at the court hearing?**

If the protected person comes to the hearing, you will see him or her. Do not talk to the protected person unless the judge says you can.

**How long does the order last?**

The first (temporary) order lasts until the expiration date. At that time, the judge will decide whether to grant or deny a longer-term order. That order can last for up to five years. Spousal support orders can last longer than five years. Custody, visitation, and child support orders can last until the child turns 18.

**What if the protected person contacts me?**

No matter what, you have to follow the court order. The order does not affect the protected person. It only affects what *you* can do.

**Can the protected person and I make an agreement to cancel the order?**

No. Only the judge can change or cancel the order.

**What happens if I don't obey the court order?**

The police can arrest you. You can go to jail, pay a fine, or both.

**What if I don't have a green card?**

The order is valid whether you have a green card or not. If you are worried about being deported, talk to an immigration lawyer.

**What if I don't speak English?**

Ask someone who speaks English to call the court clerk before your hearing and ask for a court interpreter. If an interpreter is not available, bring someone to interpret for you. Do not ask a child, a witness, or a protected person to interpret for you.

**What if I am deaf or hard of hearing?****Request for Accommodations**

Assistive listening systems, computer-assisted real-time captioning, or sign language interpreter services are available if you ask at least five days before the proceeding. Contact the clerk's office or go to [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms) for *Request for Accommodations by Persons With Disabilities and Response* (Form MC-410). (Civil Code, § 54.8.)