

Resources for Victims of Stalking and Harassment



The Office of the
Minnesota Attorney General
helping people afford their lives and live with dignity, safety, and respect

Harassment Restraining Orders and Orders for Protection

In Minnesota, there are two kinds of court orders that are designed to protect victims of harassment, stalking, and domestic abuse: Harassment Restraining Orders and Orders for Protection. It is a crime to violate a Harassment Restraining Order (HRO) or an Order for Protection (OFP).

What Is a Harassment Restraining Order (HRO)?

Harassment may include physical or sexual assault, stalking, and other acts done with harmful intent. A Harassment Restraining Order (HRO) is an order from the court that requires a person, called a respondent, to stop harassing you. It may also require the respondent to cease all contact with you, including coming to your home, your school, or the place where you work. An HRO can be issued against any person who is harassing or stalking you or your children, regardless of the respondent's relationship to you.

What Is an Order for Protection (OFP)?

An Order for Protection (OFP) is a special kind of restraining order for victims of domestic abuse. An OFP orders the respondent not to contact, harm, or threaten to harm you or your children. An OFP may direct the respondent to do certain things, or stop doing certain things, to help keep you safe. It may direct the respondent to:

- stay away from where you live, go to school, or work
- leave your household
- enter a counseling program

An OFP may also award temporary custody, child support, or use and possession of property.

Who Is Eligible for an OFP?

You may obtain an OFP if you have been a victim of domestic abuse by a family or household member. Domestic abuse includes hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, stabbing, forcing sexual acts, or threatening imminent physical harm or bodily injury. You are eligible for an OFP if you and the respondent:

- are married or used to be married
- are parent and child
- live together or used to live together
- have a child in common
- are related by blood or adoption
- are involved or used to be involved in a significant romantic or sexual relationship

How To Get an HRO or OFP

Contact your county courthouse. Court administration can help you file a petition for an HRO or OFP. There is no charge for filing and serving an OFP petition on the respondent, and fees may be waived for filing and serving an HRO petition in cases of harassment and stalking. The court may schedule a hearing to decide whether to issue the HRO or OFP. A temporary HRO or ex parte OFP can be issued to protect you until the court holds the hearing. Forms, additional instructions, and contact information for your county court administrator are available online. Court resources may be found at the following website:

**[www.mncourts.gov/Help-Topics/
Domestic-Abuse-and-Harassment.aspx](http://www.mncourts.gov/Help-Topics/Domestic-Abuse-and-Harassment.aspx)**

What Happens If an HRO or OFP Is Violated?

If the respondent assaults you, threatens you, continues to harass you, or refuses to stay away from you, call 911 immediately. In some cases, the police are required to make an arrest. If the respondent doesn't follow another part of the order—for example, doesn't pay child support, doesn't attend counseling, or doesn't abide by a child visitation order—Violence Free Minnesota (contact info below) may be able to help you bring the case back to court.

- **About 3.4 million people** in the U.S. were victims of stalking in 2019.
- **Women are stalked** more than **twice as often** as men.
- **More than 2 out of 3** victims know their stalker.
- **More than 1 out of 3** victims is stalked by an intimate partner.
- **More than 2 out of 3** stalking victims are afraid of being physically harmed or killed.
- **Fewer than 1 out of 3** victims report the stalking to police.
- **24% of victims** reported the stalking lasted **2 years** or more.*

**Stalking Victimization, 2019, Bureau of Justice Statistics*

Remember: Stalkers and harassers often attempt to isolate their victims and make them feel powerless. You are not alone, and you are not powerless.

Resources exist to help you and your family feel safe.

Safety Alert!

Computer use can be monitored, and it is impossible to completely clear information viewed on the Internet from your computer. If you are afraid your internet and/or computer usage might be monitored, please use a safer computer, and/or call a local or national hotline at the numbers below.

For Help or Information

Call 911, the police, the sheriff, or your local domestic abuse program. You can also call the following:

Minnesota Domestic Violence Crisis Line

(866) 223-1111

National Domestic Violence Hotline

(800) 799-SAFE (7233)

TTY: (800) 787-3224

Text START to: 88788

www.thehotline.org

Violence Free Minnesota

(651) 646-6177 or (833) 659-3350

www.vfmn.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline

(800) 656-HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org

United Way 211 [24-Hour Crisis Referral Line]

Dial 2-1-1 or (651) 291-0211

Toll Free: (800) 543-7709

Calls answered 24 hours a day and 7 days a week