

Protection From Abuse Orders (PFA Orders)

Protection Orders

There are three kinds of civil protection orders available in Pennsylvania:

- The standard PFA is for domestic and familial relationships:
 - Spouses or persons who have been spouses
 - Persons living as spouses or who lived as spouses
 - Parents and children
 - Other persons related by consanguinity or affinity
 - Current or former sexual intimate partners
 - Persons who share biological parenthood
- The Sexual Violence PFA is for sexual assault victims who do not otherwise qualify for a PFA;
- The Intimidation PFA is for minors who are being stalked or harassed by adults.

How to File a PFA

There are several ways to file for a civil protection order:

- You can go to the Law Library in the Crawford County Judicial Center, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays. Court staff or an advocate from Women's Services, Inc. will assist you with filing your protection order. In some circumstances, PFA's will be taken after 4:00 p.m., but will be subject to judicial availability and you may be required to come back the next business day to complete the process, or you may be referred for an Emergency Protection Order.
- If you need a protection order when the Judicial Center is closed or when there is no Court of Common Pleas judge available, you should contact your local police department or Women's Services, Inc. to ask about Emergency Protection Orders.

What to Expect

The temporary PFA process is an in-person process that can take several hours depending on court and staff availability. Once you start the PFA process, the PFA cannot be granted until the entire process is finished.

1. You (the Plaintiff) will fill out and explain in your own words incidents of most recent abuse (i.e.: what led to you getting an order), when those incidents occurred and why you feel you are eligible for a PFA.
 - a. If you are wanting to file on behalf of a minor, depending on age, the minor will also need to be present at the time of filing.
 - b. PFA's will only temporarily address custody. You may want to pursue the custody process simultaneously with the PFA as PFA custody is intended to be temporary.

2. You will meet with a court representative who will put your statement into a system.
3. Once the paperwork is completed, you will meet with a judge and have an *ex parte* interaction.
4. If the temporary PFA is granted, the Crawford County Sheriff's Department will serve the order on the person you have filed against (the Defendant).
5. The temporary PFA will last until the next PFA trial date. PFA trials are held every Thursday at 8:30 a.m. in one of the three Court of Common Pleas courtrooms and attendance is required.

PFA Violations

If you have a Protection Order and the Defendant violates it, you should contact the police. You may also go to the Law Library in the Judicial Center and file either a "Petition for Indirect Criminal Contempt (ICC)" or a "Petition for Civil Contempt" to report the violation to the Court.

How Can a PFA Order protect me?

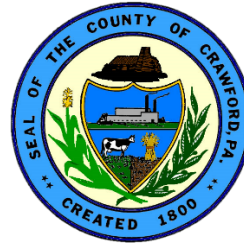
A Protection From Abuse Order can:

- Order the abuser not to abuse, harass, or stalk you, your relatives or your minor children.
- Under some circumstances, order the abuser to be removed from the home where you both live and grant you temporary possession of the home.
- Award temporary custody or temporary visitation rights of your minor children.
- Order the abuser to pay financial support (including medical bills, health insurance, rent or mortgage payments) to you or your children.
- Prohibit the abuser from having any contact with you or minor children, including staying away from your and/or your child's place of employment or business or school.
- Order the abuser to turn in any firearms, other weapons, and ammunition to the sheriff or police, and prohibit acquisition of additional firearms.
- Order the payment of reasonable losses resulting from the abuse (this may include the cost of medical/dental care, relocation and moving expenses, attorney and counseling costs, as well as loss of earnings or support).
- Grant any other appropriate relief you request that the court deems necessary and appropriate.

AOPC STOP Violence Against Women Grant Program’s informational video on “Understanding Protection Orders for Respondents/Defendants”

English Version: [PFA English | Videos & Movies on Vimeo](#)
Spanish Version: [PFA Spanish | Videos & Movies on Vimeo](#)

Local Resources



Offices in Meadville and Titusville

Meadville (814) 724-4637

Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Titusville (814) 775-0445

Mon-Thurs 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Fri-Sun by appointment only

Telephone Hotlines: (814) 333-9766/888-881-0189

<https://womensservicesinc.org/>

Crawford County Law Library

Crawford County Judicial Center

359 East Center Street

Meadville, PA 16335

Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

(814) 373-2730

<https://crawfordcountypa.net/government/court-of-common-pleas/>

Local Rules of Civil Procedure Regarding PFA’s

County Local Rule L1901.3:

https://crawfordcountypa.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/RULE-1901_3.pdf

For more information regarding protection orders, please call the Law Library at (814) 373-2730 or visit Women’s Services Inc. (<https://womensservicesinc.org/get-help/protection-from-abuse/>)