

Just as courtrooms are open to the public, the public has a right to find out information about court cases. However, in some situations, you can request that the public not see information about a peace or protective order case that involves you.

Peace and protective orders are civil orders that a judge issues to order one person not to act in certain ways toward someone else.

## Can I request that the court limit public access to the case record?

**Yes, if the case was denied or dismissed and all four (4) of these statements apply to you:**

- 1. The respondent has not been found guilty of a crime.
  - Described in Courts & Judicial Proceedings §3-1503(a) against the petitioner. [Peace order case]
  - Arising from abuse against the petitioner. [Protective order case]
- 2. There is no pending interim or temporary peace or protective order against the respondent in a proceeding between the same parties.
- 3. There are no pending criminal charges against the respondent in a proceeding between the same parties.
  - Arising from an alleged act described in Courts & Judicial Proceedings §3-1503(a). [Peace order case]
  - Arising from abuse against the petitioner. [Protective order case]
- 4. No other final peace or protective order has been previously issued against the respondent in a case involving the petitioner.

**Yes, if the order is expired AND was entered by consent\* and all six (6) of these statements apply to you:**

\*A consent order means that all parties agreed to the order.

- 1. The petitioner consents or agrees to the shielding.
- 2. The respondent did not violate the order during its term.
- 3. The respondent has not been found guilty of a crime against the petitioner.
  - Arising from an act described in Courts & Judicial Proceedings §3-1503(a). [Peace order case]
  - Arising from abuse against the petitioner. [Protective order case]
- 4. There is no pending interim or temporary peace or protective order against the respondent.
- 5. There are no pending criminal charges against respondent.
  - An alleged act described in Courts & Judicial Proceedings §3-1503(a). [Peace order case]
  - Abuse against an individual. [Protective order case]
- 6. No other final peace or protective order has been previously issued against the respondent in a case involving this petitioner.

## For more information

Read the law:  
Md. Code, Courts & Judicial Proceedings § 3-1510;  
Md. Code, Family Law § 4-512

Court forms:  
[mdcourts.gov/courtforms](https://mdcourts.gov/courtforms)

Maryland laws:  
[mdcourts.gov/lawlib/researchtools/sourcesmdlaw.html](https://mdcourts.gov/lawlib/researchtools/sourcesmdlaw.html)

People's Law Library of Maryland:  
[peoples-law.org](https://peoples-law.org)

Public law libraries:  
[mdcourts.gov/lawlib](https://mdcourts.gov/lawlib)  
or call 410-260-1430

Clerk's office:  
Visit or call the court that heard your case.

# Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Peace or Protective Order Case?



[mdcourts.gov/  
accesstojustice](https://mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice)

410-260-1258

[mdcourts.gov](https://mdcourts.gov)

## How do I ask the court to limit public access to the case record?

Follow these steps:

1. **Complete the correct form.** Attach the General Waiver and Release (form CC-DC-077), if necessary.
  - For a peace order case:
    - i. If the court *denied or dismissed* the case, use form CC-DC-PO-016A.
    - ii. If the respondent *consented* to the order, use form CC-DC-PO-016B.
  - For a protective order case:
    - i. If the court *denied or dismissed* the case, use form CC-DC-DV-021A.
    - ii. If the respondent *consented* to the order, use form CC-DC-DV-021B.
2. **File the form** (and the waiver/release, if necessary) by mail or in person with the District or Circuit Court that heard your protective or peace order case.
3. **Send a copy** of everything you filed with the court to any other parties involved in the case. If the petitioner's address is confidential, file a Motion for Appropriate Relief asking the court to send your request to the petitioner.
4. The court will hold **a hearing** and will consider any objection the petitioner may have.
5. If the court decides you are eligible based on the requirements listed in the checklist of this brochure, the court will grant your request.

## What if my order was granted after a trial and a court finding-of-fact?

(It was not entered by consent, and the court did not deny/dismiss the case.)

- You may file a motion to ask the court to limit public inspection of the court record. If a judge grants your motion, the court may remove the records from public access.
- See the brochure *Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Court Case?*

## What if I am the defendant in a criminal case about the same domestic violence matter?

- Through expungement and shielding, you may be able to limit further what the public can see about you in court records.
- See the brochure *How Can I Expunge My Criminal Record?*
- See the brochure *Can I Limit Access to Information about Certain Criminal Convictions?*

## When can I ask that the court limit public access to the case record?

When three (3) years have passed from the time the court denied or dismissed the peace or protective order

**or**

Sooner than three (3) years if you also file a General Waiver and Release (form CC-DC-077). Consider speaking to a lawyer before waiving any legal rights you may have.

If you consented to entry of the order, you must wait until the order has expired.