

Can I Limit Access to Information about Certain Criminal Convictions?



Are there other ways to protect my information?

- **Criminal cases**

While certain criminal convictions may be shielded, other types of convictions may be expunged. See the brochure *How Can I Expunge My Criminal Record?*

- **Juvenile records**

See the brochure *How Can I Expunge My Juvenile Record?*

- **Peace or protective order cases**

Peace and protective orders are civil cases. They are treated differently than a criminal case. You may have both criminal charges and a peace or protective order from the same incident. Peace and protective orders may be shielded from public view, but, there are special steps you must take. Please refer to the brochure: *Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Peace or Protective Order Case?*

- **Civil cases**

If you want to limit public access to records in a civil case (or if you are a victim or witness in a criminal case), see the brochure *Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Court Case?*

Talk with a lawyer for free at a Maryland Court Help Center

Call: 410-260-1392

Chat: mdcourts.gov/helpcenter

Read more on access to court records



mdcourts.gov/legalhelp/courtrecords

People's Law Library of Maryland
peoples-law.org

Public law libraries
410-260-1430
mdcourts.gov/lawlib

Read the law
Md. Code, Criminal Procedure
§ 10-301 through 10-306

Clerk's offices
Find the court that heard your case.
mdcourts.gov/courtsdirectory

mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.



What is shielding?

If you were convicted of certain misdemeanors, you may ask the court to keep those records out of public view. This process is called “shielding.” When a case is shielded, it will no longer be displayed in Case Search or be available to the public. Law enforcement officers, and certain agencies and individuals, may still be able to review this information.

How do I ask the court to keep my criminal convictions out of public view through shielding?

- You may petition only one court (you must choose either the circuit court or District Court).
- You may file in only one county.
- Include all eligible convictions (from one court in one county) on one petition. Use the form called Petition for Shielding Under Md. Second Chance Act (form CC-DC-CR-148).
- Pay a \$30 fee, unless waived. It is nonrefundable, even if your petition is denied. You will pay only once per petition, even if it includes several cases.
- File the petition in person or by mail with the court which heard the case.

Can I request that the court keep my criminal record out of public view?

Your conviction may be eligible for shielding if:

- You were convicted of one or more of the following crimes:
 - Disorderly Conduct
 - Disturbing the Peace
 - Failure to Obey a Reasonable and Lawful Order
 - Malicious Destruction of Property in the Lesser Degree
 - Trespass on Posted Property
 - Possession or Administering a Controlled Dangerous Substance
 - Possession or Administering a Non-controlled Dangerous Substance
 - Use or Possession with Intent to Use Drug Paraphernalia
 - Driving Without a License
 - Driving While Privilege is Canceled, Suspended, Refused, or Revoked
 - Driving While Uninsured
 - Prostitution

AND

- Three years have passed since you completed your sentence, including any parole, probation, or mandatory supervision.

Your conviction cannot be shielded if:

- Your conviction is for a crime that is “domestically-related.”
- You are a defendant in a pending criminal matter.
- Other convictions in the “unit” or group of related charges are not eligible for shielding.
- You are convicted of a crime during the three-year waiting period, unless the new conviction becomes eligible for shielding.
- You have previously been granted shielding in a criminal case.

What happens after I file a petition to shield my criminal record?

- The court will send a copy of your petition to the State’s Attorney’s office and to the victims in your case. They have 30 days to file an objection.
- If someone files an objection, the court will hold a hearing.
- If no one files any objection, a judge will grant or deny your petition.
- The court will grant you only one shielding petition over your lifetime.

