

Domestic Violence Part 6: Enforcing or Changing a Protective Order

Protective Orders are court orders that require one person to refrain from doing certain acts against another person. It's Maryland's version of a restraining order or stay-away order. The protective order process can be a dangerous time for a victim of domestic violence. **Stay alert and find help at mdcourts.gov/dv or call a Maryland Court Help Center at 410-260-1392.**

Enforcement

- It's a crime to violate certain conditions of a protective order. Those conditions usually have to do with contacting, harassing, or abusing someone. If you call police, they may arrest a Respondent who violates an order. You may also file criminal charges at a commissioner's office.
- If the Respondent is charged with the crime of violating a protective order, you may be asked to testify at their trial. If found guilty, they may be jailed for up to 90 days and fined up to \$1,000.
- When someone disobeys a court order it's called contempt. You may file for contempt if a Respondent violates ANY provision of the protective order. Submit to the clerk a [Petition for Contempt](#) (Violation of Protective Order) or form CC-DC-DV-007.
- At the hearing, expect to testify and present evidence. There is no specific penalty if the court finds someone in contempt, but a judge may order whatever is necessary to enforce a protective order. This may include jail time.
- Violations of child custody provisions may be complicated. Consider speaking with a lawyer before taking steps to enforce custody terms. Visit mdcourt.gov/dv or mdcourts.gov/custody for legal resources. Or, speak to a lawyer at the Maryland Court Help Center by calling 410-260-1392.

Modification

- As long as a protective order has not expired, you may ask the court to modify it. That includes asking the court to rescind or extend it. Complete a [Petition to Modify/Rescind/Extend](#), or form CC-DC-DV-006.
- The clerk will notify the Respondent and schedule a hearing within 30 days. There are specific rules about notice when extending a protective order. Consider talking with a lawyer.

Watch the Video



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.