

WHAT IS A PROTECTIVE ORDER?

A protective order or PO is an order issued by the civil court, a juvenile court, a family court, or a criminal court. It can protect you from being hit, threatened, harassed, or stalked by another person. The PO may also stop someone from coming into your home or bothering you at work. It can stop the abuser from buying a firearm or finding your address through school records. It can also stop the abuser from taking your minor children unless ruled to ordered.



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The
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



United Way
of Northwest Louisiana



Shreveport Bar Foundation
Pro Bono Project's
LEGAL REPRESENTATION
FOR VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



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WHAT IS THIS PROGRAM?

The SBF Pro Bono Project gives free legal help, advice and representation to victims of domestic violence. This help includes providing an attorney to go to court with you to get a Protective Order.

WHO CAN GET A PROTECTIVE ORDER?

- *ANYONE* who has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused.
- *ANYONE* threatened by someone they have been married to, lived with, have a child with, or dated.

Some examples may include:

- Current or former spouse;
- Current or former partner;
- Family member;
- Other parent of your child;
- Anyone who has been stalked. (Stalking is repeated harassment that makes you feel scared.)
- Current or former roommate;
- Current or former person you dated;

IS IT JUST A PIECE OF PAPER?

While most abusers do violate protective orders in some way, these court orders often stop repeated physical abuse.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING WHEN I MEET WITH THE PRO BONO ATTORNEY?

- Police reports, medical records, photographs, and names, addresses and phone numbers of witnesses to the abuse.
- Any information about the abuser - current address, date of birth or age, hair color, eye color, height, weight, address, Social Security number, or driver's license number.
- Any court papers you have if you can get them. For example, custody and/or parenting time orders, lease agreement, divorce papers, or criminal case records. You will need to bring a one-time \$50 administrative fee in the form of cash or money order. If your protective order is granted, the judge may order the abuser to reimburse you for this fee. This fee is for the purpose of running the program and not for court costs. A payment plan or waiver of the administrative fee is available on a case by case basis for clients who are unable to pay the fee at the first meeting.

HOW CAN I GET HELP WITH A PROTECTIVE ORDER?

1. Come to the SBF Pro Bono Project at 625 Texas Street, one block from the Caddo Parish Courthouse, in downtown Shreveport or call (318) 221-8104 for an appointment.
2. The SBF Pro Bono Project staff has Protective Order forms and will help you fill out the forms. *There are no up front court costs to file a PO. However, if the PO is denied by the judge, you may be ordered to pay court costs.*
3. The SBF Pro Bono Project staff attorney will meet with you, review your forms, give you advice, and represent you in court to get a Protective Order, *all free and without charge.*
4. *There are no attorney's fees charged for the staff attorney.*
5. The only cost is a one-time \$50 fee which the judge may order the abuser to reimburse you if the protective order is granted. A payment plan or waiver of the administrative fee is available on a case by case basis for clients who are unable to pay the fee at the first meeting.

HOW ARE ORDERS OF PROTECTION ENFORCED?

Violation of a protective order can be addressed through both civil and criminal action. In civil court, the abuser who violates a protective order can be ruled back into court on an allegation of contempt of court. In addition, violation of certain orders of protection is a crime in Louisiana and the abuser can be arrested for the violation (see La. R.S. 14:79. Violation of protective orders). If found guilty, the abuser can be sent to jail and/or fined.



CARRY A COPY OF YOUR PO WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES!!
This will help police enforce the PO if there is a violation.

Remember, while POs do work, it is important to be careful and have a safety plan.