

What is an Emergency Protective Order?

An Emergency Protective Order (EPO) is a civil order issued by a judge to prevent one person from committing certain acts against another. An EPO is a legal method used to help protect people from any further acts of domestic abuse, such as physical harm, threats, harassment, or stalking. The person filing for an EPO is considered a PLAINTIFF and the person being filed against is considered a DEFENDANT.

Is an EPO Right for You?

If you have been:

- ❖ Physically harmed or there has been an attempt to physically harm you
- ❖ Threatened
- ❖ Harassed
- ❖ Stalked

by an intimate partner, former intimate partner, family member, current or former household member, you meet the criteria to file for a Protective Order under Oklahoma's Domestic Abuse Act.

Think of your safety first and know that sometimes a defendant's behavior can increase once finding out that a protective order has been filed against them. This information is NOT to deter you from filing, only to empower you with important information and to help keep you safe. If you believe it would not be safe at this time to file an EPO, we recommend you follow your instinct and seek help the best way you know how.

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How Do I File for an EPO?

If you decide an EPO is right for you, you can file for it at your local county court clerk's office. Contact the Safeline at 1-800-522-7233 to find the nearest DV or family service center that can help with completing the paperwork, which includes the petition, the court papers, and information on how those papers will be served to the DEFENDANT.

Once you have completed the EPO paperwork, we will then go with you to file it at the courthouse. A judge will read your request and let you know that same day whether your EPO has been granted. The full protective order hearing will be set for hearing within 14 days. At the hearing you will be required to present all your evidence (witness, photographs, recordings, etc.). Remember at the full hearing you cannot testify about what other people have told you, that person will need to be present.

If your EPO is granted by the judge, the DEFENDANT will be served with the same paperwork. The DEFENDANT must then strictly follow what has been ordered in the EPO. If the DEFENDANT breaks the order in any way, you MUST contact the Police or Sheriff's Department immediately to report that you have an active EPO and that it has been violated. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU REPORT ALL EPO VIOLATIONS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, otherwise the paperwork won't help protect you.

Updated by DAC Training and Outreach 09/2022

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