

SAFETY PLANNING:

GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT

Safety planning is an essential part of protecting yourself if you are or have been in a relationship, which causes you to be afraid. This is an important step even if you decide that you don't want a restraining order or you think that you are not eligible for one.

You need to assess your own safety and develop a plan which is right for you. Advocates can help you to consider your options. As part of your plan, you may want to:

- Notify your family, friends, school resource officer and workplace, if appropriate, when you get a restraining order;
- Let others know your whereabouts and schedule throughout the day;
- Seek out people who can support you, including family, teachers, counselors, school officials and friends;
- Identify safe routes to and from school, activities and work;
- Consider the need for changes to school or work schedules;
- Locate places you can go if you are in danger; and
- Call your local domestic violence program.

RESTRAINING ORDERS AND SCHOOL:

If you let your school know that you have a restraining order, the school may help you in the following ways:

If the abuser isn't a student, your school may assist you by keeping that person off school property and by reporting violations of the restraining order to the police.

If the abuser is a student at your school, the school can assist by:

- Changing class schedules and lunchtime assignments;
- Changing locker assignments;
- Providing staff and services to address your needs; and
- Notifying the police of any violations of the order.

Chief of Police

Gary F. Souza



Fairhaven Police Department
1 Bryant Lane
Fairhaven, Ma. 02719
Phone (508) 997-7422
Fax (508) 997-3147

*FAIRHAVEN POLICE
DEPARTMENT*

Teen Dating Violence & Restraining Orders

POLICE PAGES

What is a Restraining Order?

A restraining order, or abuse prevention order, is a court order requiring that your boyfriend or girlfriend, past or present, stop “abusing” you. The order may also state that they may not contact you.

How does the law define “abuse”?

The law says you are “abused” if your former or current boyfriend or girlfriend is:

- Attempting to physically hurt you;
- Placing you in fear of serious physical harm or;
- Causing you to engage involuntarily in sexual relations by force, threat or duress.

How do I know if I’m eligible to apply for a restraining order?

If you are considering seeking a restraining order, you should know that the law covers you if you are or have been in any of the following relationships:

- Substantive dating, based on how long you were involved (there is no minimum length of time); the type of relationship; how often you saw each other; and if the relationship is over, how long ago it ended;

- Living together in the same household;
- Engaged or married;
- Have a child together; or
- Related by blood or marriage.

The law applies to all dating relationships – those between members of the opposite sex and those between members of the same sex.

What can a restraining order include?

Under a restraining order, a judge can impose any number of restrictions on the person who is hurting you, including requiring the abuser to:

- Stop abusing you;
- Not contact you, either directly or indirectly (other people, letters, e-mail or telephone calls);
- Leave or move out of your home;
- Stay away from you at your home, work, school or any other place you may be;
- Give you custody of your minor child;
- Stop abusing or contacting your child;

- Surrender any guns, gun permits or ammunition; and
- Collect his or her belongings from your home only in the presence of the police.

Every dating situation is different. If you need something that does not appear on the standard order, you can ask the judge to consider adding items so that the order addresses your particular concerns.

What happens if the abuser violates the restraining order?

Violating a restraining order is a crime and subjects the abuser to arrest and possible jail time. You should report any and all violations to the police immediately. You cannot violate the order, only your abuser can. However, when an order is in place, you should not initiate any contact that the order forbids.

Where do I go to obtain a restraining order?

You can apply for a restraining order at your local district court, probate court, or superior court. If you need an order after the courthouse is closed, you can apply for one by contacting your local police department. If the order is granted, you must go to the courthouse to extend it on the next day that court is open. Failure to do so will result in the restraining order being vacated once the courthouse closes for business.