



DC Volunteer Lawyers Project  
[www.dcvlp.org](http://www.dcvlp.org)

## **NOW THAT YOU HAVE A CPO**

Congratulations on obtaining a Civil Protection Order (CPO). We at DC Volunteer Lawyers Project (DCVLP) are happy that we were able to assist you in accomplishing this result. It is DCVLP's policy to officially close a case once a court order or other resolution of the case is achieved. Therefore, since you have received a CPO, DCVLP will be closing your case file. We will return any of your original documents to you, but will retain your legal case file for five years, after which time it will be discarded (unless you direct otherwise). If you need any additional assistance with this or any other matter in the future, you should contact DCVLP and we will determine whether DCVLP will be able to represent you.

- A DCVLP volunteer will call in three months to check on your safety. **If your cell phone number changes, please contact us to tell us your new number.**
- We recommend that you make several copies of your CPO, and keep a copy in your home, your car, your workplace, your purse or wallet – so that you have a copy with you at all times. If there are other persons or places listed in the CPO that the Respondent must “stay away” from, give them a copy as well.
- If the CPO contains provisions regarding custody or visitation, give a copy to your children's school or daycare.
- If you have a child in common with the Respondent and haven't already filed for child support, take your CPO with you to the DV clerk's office (4<sup>th</sup> floor of DC Superior Court) and ask to speak with the child support specialist to begin the process.

## **WHAT TO DO IF THE CPO IS VIOLATED**

- If the Respondent violates the stay-away or no-contact provisions of the CPO, call 911 immediately. Show the police the CPO, and ask them to arrest the Respondent and take a report. Get the names and badge numbers of all police officers on the scene.
- Call Mary Ryan at DCVLP, 202-885-5542, or the lawyer who represented you, to report the Respondent's violation. Be ready to provide names and contact information of any witnesses. Also contact DCVLP with regard to violations of other provisions of the CPO, like visitation and required payments.

## **CONTACT DCVLP FOR ADDITIONAL HELP:**

Call Mary Ryan at DCVLP, 202-885-5542, or the lawyer who represented you, for the following:

- **Changes to the CPO:** Any changes to the CPO (i.e., a change in the visitation schedule) can only be made through a Motion to Modify CPO. Contact us for help filing a motion.
- **Custody:** If you have a child in common with the Respondent, the CPO provides for custody for one year. After the CPO expires, the custody order expires. We recommend that you file for permanent custody BEFORE the CPO expires. You can do this by going to the Self Help Center in Superior Court (JM-570). If you would like a lawyer to represent you in a custody case, call us.
- **Divorce:** You can file for divorce by going to the Self Help Center in Superior Court (JM-570). If you want a lawyer to represent you in your divorce, call us.
- **Immigration:** If you are undocumented, and would like to talk to a lawyer about getting legal status, call us. DCVLP can help with U-visas and VAWA petitions.
- **Extending the CPO:** Your CPO lasts for one year. The one-year period can be extended “for good cause.” If Respondent has violated the CPO or you have other reasons for wanting the CPO extended, contact us **at least one month before the CPO expires**. A motion to extend **must be filed prior to the expiration of the current CPO**.
- For help with housing, counseling, or other issues, contact Erin Byrne at 202-430-5641.

We wish you all the best, and please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.