

EMERGENCY PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDER

An Emergency Protection From Abuse Order can be requested after 12:15 p.m. until the close of business daily at the office of your Magisterial District Judge. After business hours and on the weekends, your police department will connect you with the “on duty” Magisterial District Judge. If you are granted an emergency PFA, your order will expire the next business day. If you want continuing protection, you must go to the courthouse the next business day.

FINAL HEARING

A final hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) business days after the Petition is filed and any Temporary Order is issued. Both parties attend this hearing. It is at this hearing that evidence and witnesses can be presented to the judge for consideration.

VIOLATIONS (CONTEMPT)

Violations of either a Temporary Order or a Final Order are considered contempt of court and are scheduled before a judge within ten (10) business days. All violations of the Temporary Orders or Final Orders should be promptly reported to the local law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction to enforce the Order.

RESOURCES:

PFA Office
Lehigh County Courthouse
610-782-3387

Turning Point
(Domestic Violence Assistance)
610-437-3369

Lehigh County Children & Youth
610-782-3064

Domestic Violence Prosecutor
610-782-3768 (Office)
484-239-7637 (Cell)

Domestic Violence Detective
610-782-3322 (Office)
610-972-6748 (Cell)

OBTAINING AN ORDER FOR PROTECTION FROM ABUSE



**LEHIGH COUNTY
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**

WHAT IS A PROTECTION FROM ABUSE (PFA) ORDER?

A Protection From Abuse Order is a Court Order that protects victims of domestic violence from abuse. Abuse includes physical injury or threats of physical injury.

WHO MAY FILE

YOU MAY FILE FOR PROTECTION IN LEHIGH COUNTY IF:

YOU LIVE OR WORK HERE, or
THE DEFENDANT LIVES HERE, or
THE ABUSE OCCURRED HERE

A person may file a PFA against an intimate partner or family member. Here are some examples:

- Spouses or former spouses
- Current or former sexual or intimate partners
- Household members related by blood
- Household members related by marriage
- Same sex couples
- Parents and children

A person under the age of 18 must have an adult file on his or her behalf.

The PFA act does not apply to disputes between strangers, neighbors, roommates, co-workers, or classmates.

HOW TO FILE

Go to the Protection From Abuse Office at the Lehigh County Courthouse Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Please note that this is a lengthy process and may take several hours to complete.

Photo identification is required.

The Protection from Abuse Office staff will assist you in filling out a petition. The staff cannot give legal advice.

You will appear before a judge who will review your papers and ask you questions. If your order is granted, it will remain in effect until the final hearing is held.

Petitions are presented to the judge twice daily.

- In order to attend the 10:30 a.m. hearing, you need to be at the PFA Office **no later than 9:15 a.m.**
- In order to attend the 1:30 p.m. hearing, you need to be at the PFA Office **no later than 12:15 p.m.**

Persons arriving after 12:15 p.m. will be referred to their Magisterial District Judge.

If the judge grants the temporary order, copies will be made, and your petition will be filed in the Clerk of Courts. Before leaving the courthouse, you will receive two copies of your protection order. You should keep a copy with you at all times.

Service is provided to the defendant by the Sheriff's Department. A Deputy Sheriff will notify the defendant that an order has been issued by handing a copy of the petition and order to him/her.

The Sheriff's staff will notify the police departments in the jurisdictions (areas) in which you live and work that an order has been issued by the court. You may wish to have an attorney represent you at the court hearing.