

Make arrangements before your court hearing

1 **If you or a witness wants to attend court remotely (by phone or videoconference)**

Check the court's website as soon as possible to see what you need to do to attend remotely. You can use www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm to find your court's website.

1 **Court interpreter:** If you need an interpreter, use form INT-300 to request an interpreter or ask the court clerk how you can request one. You can also use this form to ask for an interpreter for a witness.

1 **Childcare:** Find childcare because court may take all morning or afternoon, even all day. Some courts have a Children's Waiting Room, a safe place for children to wait while parents are in court. You can check with your court in advance to see if this is available.

1 **Support person:** You can have someone attend court with you. The person you bring cannot speak for you but can sit next to you when your case is called (if you attend in person). If you attend by videoconference, your support person can also attend with you.

1 **Disability accommodation:** You may use form MC-410 to request assistance. Contact the disability/ADA coordinator at your local court for more information.

Bring evidence or witnesses to your court hearing

If you have evidence or witnesses, read the information below. Bringing evidence or witnesses is optional and not required. Your statements alone can be proof for your case. If you are the person asking for the restraining order you will have to convince the judge that abuse occurred. The judge will make a decision based on all evidence and statements made by both sides.

- 1 **Evidence:** Evidence can include pictures, emails, medical records showing injuries, police reports, etc. If you have evidence, you will need to make it available to the judge and other side to see. Sometimes the judge cannot look at or consider certain documents. The judge will decide which documents can be included in your case. If you are attending court in person, bring three copies of your written evidence, if you have not already filed and served it on the other side. If you have evidence and want to attend your court date by phone or videoconference, contact your local self-help center for information on how to share your evidence with the judge and other side
- 1 **Witnesses:** You can ask the judge to allow witnesses to speak at your court hearing. If you have a lot of witnesses, you may need to complete paperwork before your court hearing. Ask your local self-help center for more information.

Request for Accommodations



Assistive listening systems, computer-assisted real-time captioning, or sign language interpreter services are available if you ask at least five days before the hearing. Contact the clerk's office or go to www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm for *Disability Accommodation Request* (form MC-410). (Civil Code section 54.8.)

Tips for your court hearing

Plan what you want to say to the judge

It may help to plan out and make notes about what you want to say to the judge. If needed, you can use your notes for your court hearing. Read over the court papers in your case and write out anything else you want the judge to know. Focus on the facts and details that support your side of the story. Go over any papers you received from the other side. Try to understand what they are asking for and arguing in the case (their allegations). If you do not agree, tell the judge. Think about and write down how you want to defend against their arguments

Attend early and safely

Show up or call in to your hearing early. If you are attending online, practice using the technology, like Zoom, before your court date. If you are late, you may miss your case being called. If you might be late, try to call the court right away to let courtroom staff know that you will be late.

- ▶ If you attend in person, do not sit near or talk to the other person. If you are afraid of the other person, tell the officer who is in the courtroom.
- ▶ If you attend by videoconference, and you don't want the other side to see where you are or your phone number (if you call in), talk with an advocate about how to safely attend using videoconference. This may include using a virtual background or using another phone number to call in. You can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline for free help. See page 4 for information.

Follow courtroom rules

Here are some common rules:

- 1 Put your cellphone on silent mode, if you're attending in person.
- 1 Do not eat or drink during your hearing, except for water.
- 1 Do not wear a hat or sunglasses on your head.
- 1 When speaking to the judge, call the judge "Your honor" or "judge."
- 1 Don't interrupt anyone who is speaking.
- 1 Wait until it's your turn to speak and let the judge know you want a chance to speak

What will happen during my case?

The judge will give both sides time to speak

Usually, the judge asks the person who wants the restraining order to talk first. No matter who talks first, you will both get a chance to speak. Attending court can be difficult and stressful but it is important not to talk over anyone. If you have something to say and it is not your turn, let the person finish talking and then ask the judge for permission to speak.

The judge will reschedule your court hearing or make a decision

- ▶ There are a few reasons why the judge may have rescheduled your court date. This is called a continuance. Here are some examples:
 - 1 Person asking for the restraining order did not serve the other side in time (by the deadline).
 - 1 The judge needs to set aside more time to hear your case.
 - 1 If the restrained person has not filed a response (form DV-120) and asks for more time to prepare for the case, the judge must grant their request if they ask for one at the first court date.

If the judge reschedules your court date, the judge will usually extend the temporary restraining order, if one was granted. If the judge reschedules your court date, make sure you get a new order (form DV-116, *Order on Request to Continue Hearing*).

- ▶ If the restraining order is denied, this means that the judge has decided that there was not enough evidence to prove that abuse happened. This means that your restraining order case is finished and any temporary protection expires.
- ▶ If the restraining order is granted, this means that the judge has decided that there is enough evidence to prove that abuse happened. You should go over the restraining order to make sure you understand all the orders. See the next page for information on next steps.

What do I do after a restraining order is granted?

If you've had your day in court and the judge granted you a long-term restraining order, you may have a couple more steps to take. Make sure all steps are completed as soon as possible. If you do not, the police may not be able to enforce your restraining order.

Protected person:

- ① Your restraining order will be on form DV-130, *Restraining Order After Hearing*. If you don't have a form DV-130 that is signed by the judge, check with the clerk to see if one was filed. If it has, ask for a copy. If one has not been filed, you will need to fill out:
 - ┆ Form DV-130 (required).
 - ┆ Form DV-140, *Child Custody and Visitation Order* (required if court made orders for your children).
 - ┆ Form FL-342, *Child Support Information and Order Attachment*, or form FL-343, *Spousal, Domestic Partner, or Family Support Order Attachment*, if the judge orders child support or spousal support.
- ② Turn in your completed form(s) to the court clerk. The clerk will then give it to the judge to review and sign. You will need to pick it up once it is signed. Ask the court clerk when your forms will be ready. There is no fee for turning in this form, and you should receive some free copies.
- ③ Look at form DV-130 to see if the judge ordered you to serve the form by mail or in person. If you are ordered to serve the form by mail, this means your server only has to mail a copy of the restraining order. But, serving someone in person is always best. When you mail court papers, it may be hard to prove that the person actually received a copy especially if the person moves a lot. Learn more about service at: <https://selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/DV-restraining-order/serve-longterm-order>.

Restrained person:

- ① You must obey orders the judge makes. The orders will be on form DV-130, *Restraining Order After Hearing*. If you do not obey them, you could be arrested, or convicted of a crime.
- ② If you have any prohibited items (firearms (guns), firearm parts, ammunition), you must bring all items to a licensed gun dealer or police. For more information, read form DV-800-INFO/JV-270-INFO, *How Do I Turn In, Sell, or Store My Firearms, Firearm Parts, and Ammunition?* The information is also available online at: www.selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/respond-to-DV-restraining-order/obey-firearms-orders. Free help is also available at your local self-help center. Find your local court's self-help center at www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.

What if I have a child with the other side?

If you ask for child custody or visitation (parenting time) orders, the judge may have you meet with a court professional to see if you and the other parent can agree on parenting time. This process is called "mediation." You can ask to meet separately and not with the other side in your case. Ask the court staff how you can make this request. For more information on mediation, go to: www.selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/child-custody/what-to-expect-mediation.

What happens if I don't attend the court hearing?

- ▶ If you asked for a restraining order and you do not attend the hearing, any protection you have in this case will expire. If the other side attends the hearing and you don't, the judge could make some orders against you, like lawyer's fees. To get another restraining order, you would have to fill out and file a new set of forms. If you've changed your mind and no longer want a restraining order, talk with self-help center staff or a lawyer.
- ▶ If someone asked for a restraining order against you, and you do not attend the hearing, a judge may grant a restraining order against you without hearing your side. The order can last for up to five years, and can include orders regarding children or property that you have with the person asking for protection.

Information about the court process is also available online

<https://selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/DV-restraining-order/process>.

Where can I find a self-help center?

Find your local court's self-help center at www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp. Self-help center staff will not act as your lawyer but may be able to give you information to help you decide what to do in your case.

Where can I find other help?

The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides free and private safety tips. Help is available every day, 24 hours a day, and in over 100 languages. Visit online at www.thehotline.org or call 1-800-799-7233; 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).