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 weekends, your police department can connect you with the "on duty" Magisterial District Judge. The Magisterial District Judge may issue an Emergency PFA Order, but not a Temporary PFA Order.

If you are granted an Emergency Protection From Abuse Order, your Emergency Order will expire at the end of the next business day.

If you want a Temporary PFA Order, go to the Lehigh County Family Court Office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. and file a Petition For PFA.

LEHIGH COUNTY FAMILY COURT OFFICE

Lehigh County Courthouse Room 423 455 W. Hamilton Street Allentown, PA 610-782-3390

Turning Point

(Domestic Violence Assistance) 610-437-3369 Toll Free 24-Hour Hotline 1-877-438-4957

Lehigh County Children and Youth

610-782-3064

Domestic Violence Prosecutors Office

610-782-3100

Domestic Violence Detectives Office

610-782-3322 610-782-3768

Disclaimer: This brochure is not a substitute for professional legal advice. For legal advice, contact a lawyer.

Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County

Family Court Office

How to Obtain a Protection From Abuse Order

Effective September 1, 2022



What is a Protection From Abuse (PFA) Order?

A PFA 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 for a PFA Order?

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

- Spouses or former spouses
- Current or former sexual or intimate partners
- Household members related by blood or marriage
- Persons related by blood or marriage
- Same sex couples
- Parents and Children
- A person under 18 must have a parent, guardian ad litem, or an adult household member file on his or her behalf

The PFA Act does not apply to disputes between strangers, landlords and tenants, neighbors, roommates, co-workers or classmates.

In what county do I file for a PFA Order?

You may file for protection in **LEHIGH COUNTY** if:

- you live or work here;
- the abuse occurred here; or
- the Defendant lives, works, or can be served here.

Where do I file?

Go to the Family Court Office at the Lehigh County Courthouse, Room 423, 455 W. Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA, Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. This is a lengthy process and it may take several hours to complete.

What will happen at the Courthouse?

You will fill out a Petition for PFA that will be presented to a Judge. The staff cannot give you legal advice. You will be taken before a Judge for a hearing for a Temporary Order.

Petitions are presented to a Judge daily.

A Judge will review your papers and ask you questions. If you are granted a Temporary Order, it will remain in effect until a hearing is held for a Final PFA Order.

If the Judge enters a Temporary PFA Order, your petition will be filed with the Clerk of Judicial Records. Before you leave, you will receive a copy of your Temporary PFA Order. Keep it with you at all times.

The Defendant will be served 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 or her.

What happens at the final hearing?

A final hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) business days after the Petition for PFA is filed and any Temporary PFA Order is issued. Both parties attend the final hearing. Evidence and witnesses may be presented to the Judge for consideration. You may wish to have your attorney represent you at this court hearing.

What happens if the Order is violated?

All violations of Temporary or Final Orders should be reported promptly to your local law enforcement agency to enforce the Order. Violations of Temporary or Final PFA Orders are considered contempt of Court and are scheduled for a hearing before a Judge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT
THE LEHIGH COUNTY COURT'S WEBSITE
AT
WWW.LCCPA.ORG

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