



COVID-19 FAMILY VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS

If you are at risk of family violence, it is very important to put your safety and that of your children first, in deciding what to do next.

Family violence can be physical violence, a threat of violence or any other behaviour that's abusive or controls another family member or makes them scared. It can include forms of financial, emotional and psychological abuse.

There are a range of possible options to help protect you from family violence, including applying for a Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO).

A lawyer can help you to decide what to do next. You can see a lawyer in person or by telephone.

Recent changes to how you can apply for an FVRO

Recent changes to the law in WA have made it easier for some people to apply for an FVRO.

More people can apply for an FVRO without the respondent being present in court

If you have a Family Court case or a child protection case in the Children's Court, you can now ask for an interim FVRO to be made without the person you want the order against, the "respondent", being present.

You can now apply online

You can now also apply online for an FVRO through an approved legal service provider like Legal Aid WA.

What happens after I lodge my application?

Each court may do things differently

Some courts in Western Australia have different processes to apply for an interim FVRO, due to COVID-19 and other reasons.

If you lodge online through your legal service provider you can select a hearing time. If you have an urgent need for an earlier hearing time than is available online, you or your legal service provider will have to ring the court to see if an earlier hearing time is possible.

Some courts may grant an interim FVRO at the first hearing based only on the written application and others may ask you to give more evidence at court or by telephone.

If you are not sure about the process, or if you are unwell, ask your legal service provider or check with the court where your case will be heard.

COVID-19 restrictions

COVID-19 restrictions may impact on the usual FVRO court process. For example: you might need to lodge documents electronically and attend court by phone or video.

You are not alone. There are many agencies that can help protect you and your children from family violence

Serving the interim FVRO

Changes in place during the COVID-19 pandemic may also make it easier for the police to serve the respondent if an interim order is made.

You should put as much contact information for the respondent as possible in your FVRO application. For example, you should include their:

- address,
- phone number, and
- date of birth.

Also make sure that you have the correct spelling of their name. This makes it easier for the police to serve the FVRO.



You are not alone

There are many agencies that can help protect you and your children from family violence. There are legal services, like Legal Aid WA, and social services that can support you.

How can Legal Aid WA help?

Legal Aid WA can lodge your online FVRO application and help you with safety planning. You can also ask if Legal Aid WA can help with the next steps in applying for your FVRO.

Contact Legal Aid WA

There are many ways you can get in contact with Legal Aid WA, including by telephone or online chat if it's easier or safer.

Telephone: 1300 650 579

Online chat: www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

You can also find the contact details for all of our offices on our website.

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