

## **Domestic Violence---Questions?**

**Question:** I need a personal protection order, but I don't want the other party to know where I live. What can I do?

**Answer:** Michigan allows you to omit your residence address from court documents as long as you provide a mailing address.

**Question:** I need a personal protection order, but I'm afraid he/she will find out where I live from our child's school records. What can I do?

**Answer:** A PPO can prohibit a person from having access to a child's school records. Make sure you give a copy of the PPO to the school.

**Question:** I need a personal protection order, but the county where I live can't get me in for a month. What can I do?

**Answer:** If the other party is at least 18 years old, you can request a PPO in any county in Michigan, regardless of where you live.

**Question:** I need a personal protection order, but I can't afford to hire a lawyer or pay any filing fee. What can I do?

**Answer:** The forms are available at the County Clerk's office. They are fairly simple. Although lawyers are helpful, you do not have to have a lawyer to represent you. There is no fee for filing a PPO petition.

**Question:** The other side wants to terminate the PPO I have against him/her. I want to keep it in effect. What can I do?

**Answer:** At the hearing you will need to convince the judge that there was sufficient evidence to give you the PPO and that there is sufficient evidence to keep it in effect. The court cannot use police reports, affidavits or hearsay. If you want the judge to consider what somebody else saw or heard, that person must come in as a witness at the hearing. If the person won't come in voluntarily you can get a subpoena from the court.

**Question:** I have a PPO, but what about visitation or parenting time?

**Answer:** Unless the PPO prohibits contact between a respondent and child, parenting time or visitation in Ionia and Montcalm County is covered by the last order in the party's divorce or paternity file. If that custody or visitation/parenting time order needs to be changed, one can obtain the necessary forms from Friend of the Court.

**Question:** I have an upcoming Court case, but I'm afraid to go because he/she is also going to be there. What can I do?

**Answer:** Call the court. We are committed to the safety of the persons who come to court.

**Question:** I have been a victim of domestic violence. I'm afraid if I say or do anything, it will just get worse. Why doesn't the court do something about it?

**Answer:** The court may not even know about the domestic violence. And, even then, courts are required to follow established rules of evidence and procedure. If you are (or know) a victim of domestic violence, contact your local domestic violence shelter or call the state wide toll free number 1(800)799-7233. A person with understanding and experience can answer your questions and give you direction on what to do for the protection of yourself and your family.