

What You Need to Know

A Sexual Violence Protection Order (SVPO) is designed to protect victims of sexual violence from further abuse and/or intimidation by their abuser, regardless of whether or not criminal charges have been filed against the perpetrator. Similar in many ways to a Protection From Abuse Order (PFA), the key difference lies in the relationship between the abuser and the victim. While PFAs require an intimate or household relationship between the two parties, a SVPO does not and is available to victims of sexual violence who are at continued risk of harm from their perpetrator.



Who can be protected by a Sexual Violence Protection Order?

SVPOs offer civil protection to any victim of sexual violence who is at risk of further harm by the perpetrator. Parents or guardians may seek SVPOs on behalf of minor children. Protections can be extended to other designated persons who are also shown to be at risk of harm.

What type of relief does a Sexual Violence Protection Order offer?

SVPOs prohibit an offender from having any contact with the victim. Protections can include preventing the offender from entering a victim's home, workplace, or school. SVPO protection can also be expanded to prevent intimidation/contact from a third party on

behalf of the offender or to extend protection to related parties, such as parents, siblings, or children of the victim. Other appropriate relief also may be granted, depending on the circumstances of the sexual assault.

Some examples may include:

- A student who was sexually assaulted by another student and is being made fun of by the perpetrator on Facebook
- A tenant who has been fondled by a landlord who threatens her/his housing
- An employee who has been raped by a co-worker who threatens him or her
- A college student who experiences harassment from a perpetrator's friends after reporting a campus sexual assault
- A child victim whose offender repeatedly drives by the bus stop



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How this impacts advocates: Advocates may provide options counseling and victim accompaniment to civil legal proceedings.

How this impacts survivors: Sexual Violence Protection Orders provide victims with a civil remedy requiring the offender to stay away from the victim. Additional protections or relief may be granted.

How much evidence is required to obtain a Sexual Violence Protection Order?

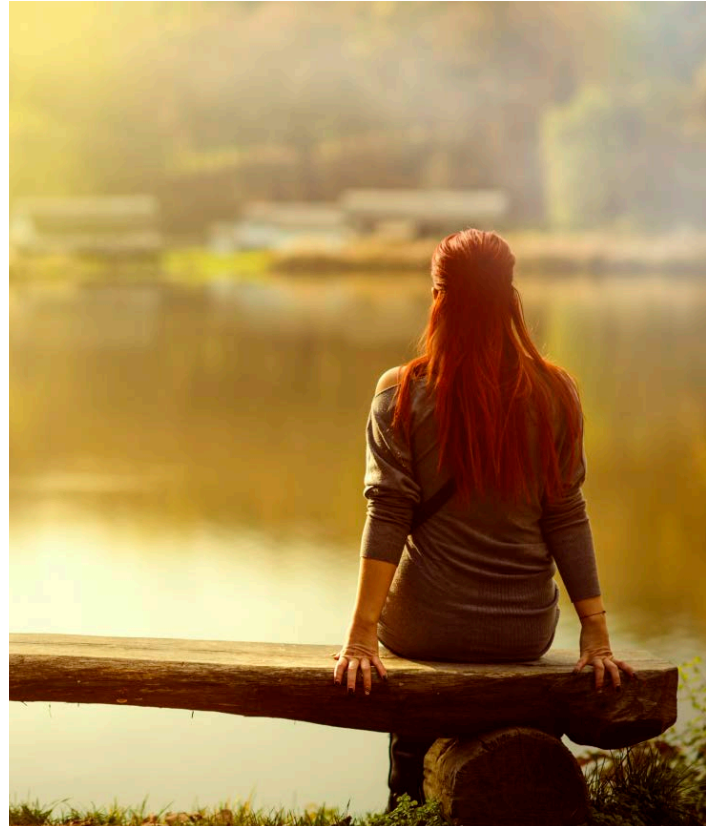
SVPOs are civil remedies that require a “preponderance of evidence.” Most basically, this means that in order to obtain a SVPO, a victim must prove that the abuse most likely happened – not that it happened beyond a reasonable doubt.

How can a person obtain a Sexual Violence Protection Order?

The exact process for filing for a SVPO may vary from county to county; however, SVPOs are free to victims seeking relief and utilize the same technology systems as PFAs. A person can obtain a SVPO regardless of whether or not criminal charges have been filed. Many counties are currently working to establish their jurisdiction’s procedures for obtaining a SVPO. For more information on how to obtain a SVPO in your county, contact your local rape crisis, domestic violence, or victims’ services agency.

How long does a Sexual Violence Protection Order last?

SVPOs offer protection for up to 36 months. Extensions of the order may be granted.



What is the history of the Sexual Violence Protection Order?

The Sexual Violence Victim Protection Act (Act 25 of 2014), was signed into law by Governor Corbett on March 21, 2014. Originally introduced nearly a decade ago by Senator Stewart Greenleaf, this law recognizes that the majority of crimes involving sexual violence never make their way into the criminal justice system. As a result, victims were left vulnerable to further abuse and harassment at the hands of the perpetrator. SVPOs offer victims an additional option. This law went into effect on July 1, 2015. 🌊