

Protection from Abuse and Harassment Quick Reference

Here is a summary of some of the main differences between a **protection from abuse** or a **protection from harassment** case.

Please read the free Judicial Branch booklet, [A Guide to Protection from Abuse and Harassment Cases](#), for more information on both types of cases.

Protection from Abuse	Protection from Harassment
Temporary protection order is available immediately without prior notice to the defendant. If temporary order is <u>not</u> granted, it is your choice to withdraw the complaint or go ahead with a final hearing within 21 days.	In most cases, you must first ask law enforcement to warn the defendant to stop harassing you. This is sometimes called a “cease harassment” notice.
Must have a current or former relationship with the defendant unless you have been sexually assaulted, stalked, the victim of human trafficking, or the defendant disseminated a private, sexually explicit image of you.	No current or former relationship with the defendant is required.
No fees to file or serve the complaint.	May be fees to file and serve the complaint unless an allegation of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault. Ask the clerk’s office what the filing fee is, if applicable.
A business cannot file a protection from abuse complaint.	A business can file a protection from harassment complaint.
The court will hold a hearing within 21 days from the date the complaint is filed.	The court will hold a hearing at the earliest date available, which may be longer than 21 days.
A final protection from abuse order can last up to 2 years.	A final protection from harassment order can last up to 1 year.
A protection from abuse order can prohibit the defendant from having firearms, ammunition, or other dangerous weapons.	Not available in a protection from harassment case. Other legal processes should be used.

The clerk can give you all of the necessary forms for your case and can answer scheduling or other procedural questions. The clerk is not allowed to give legal advice.