



How to get ready for your Order of Protection Hearing

Before you get to Court

Wear clothes that are OK for court

- Wear clothes that look like a business person.
- Wear clothes that show respect for the court. This means:
 - No shorts.
 - No tank tops or low cut tops.
 - No crop tops that show your belly.
 - No T-shirts with words or pictures.
 - Don't wear a lot of jewelry.

Make sure your witnesses are coming

- Tell them the time and place a few days before the court hearing.
- Go over what they will say in court.

Not sure your witness will come? Before the date of your hearing, go to the Court where your hearing will be. Ask the Court Clerk to send them a subpoena (say "suh-pee-nuh"). This is a paper that orders them to show up. Police officers **must** get a subpoena or they can't come.

Get your proof ready

- Make 3 copies of papers and pictures that prove you were abused.
- Are you using recordings as part of your proof? If it is a tape, set it to the exact spot where your proof begins.



Read and re-read your petition

The judge will expect you to testify only about what you wrote in your petition. Make sure you know exactly what you wrote. You can't talk about anything that is not talked about in your petition.

In Court

Before the case is called:

- Be on time
- Is your abuser trying to bother or contact you in any way? Let the court officer know.
- Have questions or need support? Ask the court officer to show you who the Court Advocate is. The Court Advocate can answer questions and stay with you during the hearing.

When you testify

You are asking the court to protect you. The judge needs to know what your abuser has done and why you are afraid.



- Tell the court where and when the abuse happened. Show the judge the proof you brought.
- Stick to what you wrote in your petition.
- Keep it short. Speak loudly and look like you are sure of yourself.
- **Don't** look at your abuser. If your abuser asks you questions, **look at the judge** when you answer.
- Does your abuser have a lawyer? Don't look at the lawyer's face. Look at his hair or tie or at the judge when you answer his questions. Then you won't be so nervous.
- What if your abuser or his lawyer asks about something that **isn't part** of your petition? Tell the judge, "I don't think I need to answer that question. It has nothing to do with the abuse I wrote about in my petition."
- After you testify, tell the judge you want the court to hear your witnesses.

When your abuser testifies:

- Sit quietly and with your hands folded.
- Don't make faces.
- Don't shake or nod your head.
- Don't raise or move your hands in any way.
- Think carefully before you ask your abuser any questions. Don't give your abuser a chance to say you did something to cause the abuse.
- Stay calm and confident. Don't be scared. You haven't done anything wrong. You are asking for protection from someone who hurt you.

After the hearing

Wait in the Courtroom until the Court officer has given you your signed Order of Protection. **Think the abuser will attack you on the way to your car?** Tell the court officer. They can have someone walk you to your car.



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1-800-243-1448

It's a free call.

On the internet at **www.las.org**