

## Relief from Abuse Order (RFA)

A Family Court order that is designed to stop violent, harassing, threatening behavior; as well as protect you if you have been sexually assaulted or are a victim of stalking by a current or former partner.

### The parties' relationship must be:

- Family Members
- Household Members
- Sexual Relationship
- Dating Relationship

### The type of abuse covered in a Relief from Abuse Order:

- Cause or attempt to cause bodily harm
- Place in fear of bodily harm
- Child Abuse
- Stalking
- Sexual Assault
- Lewd and Lascivious Conduct with a Child

### Protections the order could provide:

- Do not abuse
- Stay away
- No direct or indirect contact
- Possession of the home
- Custody of any children
- Child support and spousal maintenance
- Pet protection
- Any other protections the court deems necessary

### The Process of Obtaining an Order:

You can apply for a temporary RFA order *24 hours a day 7 days a week*. If during business hours, apply at the Family Courthouse. If after hours, you can apply at your local police station. If the judge grants your order, it will be in effect from the time it is served on the defendant by law enforcement. You must attend a hearing for the final order, normally within 10 days. When the order is served to the defendant they will also be notified of the final order hearing date. In order for a final RFA to be obtained, the plaintiff **must** attend this hearing otherwise the order will be dropped. A final RFA order can be issued at the scheduled hearing and only after the Court has either found that abuse has occurred or the defendant agrees to the order without findings. If the final order is not granted you can still work with your local domestic and sexual violence agency to create a safety plan or utilize other services they offer.

**For more information, go to the [Vermont Judiciary website](#).**

## **What If I Need Support?**

Your local domestic and sexual violence agency can assist with:

- Filling out the paperwork for a temporary sexual assault or stalking order
- Accompanying you to the Court hearing
- Answering questions about the process

## **WomenSafe's 24-Hour Hotline:**

**(802)-388-4205 or 1-800-338-4205**

*Confidential and free assistance, 7 days a week.*