



# TENNESSEE

**Break** the Cycle

Empowering Youth to End  
Domestic Violence

[www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)

[www.thesafespace.org](http://www.thesafespace.org)

888.988.TEEN

[askanything@breakthecycle.org](mailto:askanything@breakthecycle.org)

Each state has different requirements for getting a civil domestic violence protection order. Because it makes protection orders difficult for teens to obtain, Tennessee's grade for protecting teen victims of domestic and dating violence is a C.

## Do I Qualify for a Protection Order in Tennessee?

### Type of Relationship

In order to qualify for a protection order, the abuser must be someone:

- You are dating or used to date<sup>1</sup>
- You are married to or used to be married to<sup>4</sup>
- You have or used to have a sexual relationship with<sup>2</sup>
- You are related to by blood, marriage, or adoption<sup>5</sup>
- You live with or used to live with<sup>3</sup>

### Type of Abuse<sup>6</sup>

A judge may issue you a protection order when your abuser has:

- Physically abused you
- Sexually assaulted you
- Attempted to physically abuse you
- Stalked you
- Threatened to abuse you
- Damaged your property
- Sexually abused you
- Unlawfully held you against your will

### Age

If you are 18 or older, you can get a protection order yourself.<sup>7</sup> If you are under 18, you will need one parent or guardian or a case worker from a child abuse or family violence nonprofit organization to sign the petition for you.<sup>8</sup> However, if a case worker files for you, you cannot get a protection order against your parents and a copy of the protection order and notice of all hearings must be sent to at least one parent or guardian, unless the judge decides it would create a threat of serious harm to you to do so.<sup>9</sup>

## How Do I Get a Protection Order?

If you want a protection order, you can go to court to file for a temporary protection order. A judge can give you a temporary order that day and will schedule a full hearing within 15 days.<sup>10</sup> After the hearing, a judge may grant you a permanent protection order which lasts for less than one year and is renewable.<sup>11</sup>

## What Can I Ask for in a Protection Order?

You may ask the court for the following in a protection order:

- Order the abuser to not contact you directly or indirectly<sup>12</sup>
- Possession of the residence<sup>15</sup> or order the abuser to provide alternate housing<sup>16</sup>
- Order the abuser to not abuse, stalk, assault or threaten you or your minor children<sup>13</sup>
- Child and spousal support<sup>17</sup>
- Temporary child custody and visitation<sup>14</sup>
- Counseling for abuser<sup>18</sup>
- Provide for the custody and care of any animals<sup>19</sup>

## How Much Will It Cost?

It is free.<sup>20</sup>

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship...  
free from violence and free from fear.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. §36-3-601(5)(C) (2007).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* §36-3-601(5)(B).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* §36-3-601(5)(A).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* §36-3-601(5)(D), (E), (F).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* §§36-3-601(1), 36-3-602(a).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* §36-3-601(2).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* §36-3-602(b).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* §36-3-605(b).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(2).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(1).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(6).

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(4).

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(5).

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(7).

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(8).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* §36-3-606(a)(9).

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* §36-3-617(a).

You have the right to a safe and healthy relationship..  
free from violence and free from fear.