

# *Restraining Orders: A Guide to Obtaining an Abuse Prevention Order in Massachusetts*



This publication has been authored by [Stop Abuse Today, Inc](#) in association with the [Holland Police Department](#) and is distributed for the purpose of providing guidance to domestic violence victims on how to obtain a restraining order in Massachusetts. The information contained herein conforms to the rules & regulations promulgated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Legal & Justice section concerning abuse prevention orders. For more information concerning restraining orders you may contact your local District Court or visit: [Abuse Prevention Orders for Plaintiffs](#) at [Mass.gov](#).

**Who is Eligible for a Restraining Order?** You may request an abuse prevention order (commonly called a 209A or restraining order) from a judge **if you and your abuser are or were**: married, in a substantive dating or engagement relationship, have a child in common (even if never married), residing together in the same household, or related by blood or marriage; **and you are suffering from abuse because your abuser has**: harmed or attempted to harm you physically, put you in fear of imminent serious physical harm, or caused you to engage in sexual relations involuntarily by using force, threat, or duress.

**Where do I get a Restraining Order?** During regular business hours at the local District Court (where you currently reside (or did reside but left to avoid abuse), local Probate & Family Court, Superior Court (except for dating relationships). [Brimfield, Holland, and Wales](#) fall under the geographical jurisdiction of [Palmer District Court](#) - Hampden County. Remember, an abuse prevention order is limited to someone with whom you have an **intimate, family, or residential relationship with**. If you are being abused by someone that does not fall into one of these categories you are not eligible for a restraining order against that person, see [Harassment Prevention Orders](#), 258E. Only a judge can issue a restraining order. If you require a restraining order after court hours in an emergency situation you must contact the police. A police officer cannot issue a restraining order but can make contact with an on-call judge on your behalf.

**What Relief Will a Restraining Order Offer?** Relief may include an order that your abuser may not abuse or contact you. Your abuser may also be ordered to vacate and remain away from your household and workplace, pay restitution for directly-resulting losses, and pay temporary support for a child you have in common. Court may order temporary custody of the child in common to you and may order your abuser to surrender firearms and firearms permits. A restraining order is a court order and a violation of the order is a **criminal offense**. Only a judge can change or vacate the order. You cannot change or end the order without returning to court. Even if you request, agree, or allow the defendant to do something forbidden by the order, the defendant will be in violation of the order and will be arrested even if you do not want that to happen. If you believe that the defendant has violated the order, you should report the violation to the police.

**Stop Abuse Today, Inc**  
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### **Important Phone Numbers**

Police/Fire/Rescue Emergency: 911  
Regional Dispatch Center: 413-245-7222  
Holland Police Voicemail: 413-245-0117  
Palmer District Court : 413-283-8916



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