



# **Sexual Assault Response Services** *of Southern Maine*

P.O. Box 1371  
Portland, ME 04104

P.O. Box 1605  
Sanford, ME 04073

**24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-313-9900**

infosars@sarsonline.org  
www.sarsonline.org

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## **Key Points in a Protection Order**

(Family Crisis Services: 1-800- 537-6066 or outreach: 874-8512)

1. You are the plaintiff. The person you are getting the order against is the defendant.
2. This is a temporary order, good for up to three weeks. You will be given a court date today to come back for your final hearing within 21 days. At that hearing you can request that the order remain in effect for up to one year.
3. The final hearings in Portland are always on Friday mornings at 9:00 am in courtroom 2.
4. The Defendant has to be served with the paperwork, which gives that date of the final hearing. H/she has the right to be at the hearing. We realize that might be frightening to you and will support you through the process. If the police or sheriff cannot find the defendant before the court hearing, you must still be present on the morning assigned or the case will be dismissed. The judge will give you a date to come back if the defendant has not been served.
5. You can ask the law enforcement company responsible for serving the defendant to let you know when papers have served. If you have problems with this, you can call the outreach office and advocate can help you find out what is going on.
6. If the defendant threatens you or does anything the order tells him/her not to do after service, he/she can be arrested. Call the police if this happens. Also, if defendant shows up and service has not been made, call the police immediately and tell them to bring the paperwork.
7. The defendant may become angry after being served. It is important for you to plan for your safety. The protection order is just a piece of paper, but it can help the police protect you. You can also call our hotline and ask for help developing a safety plan, or you can visit/call our outreach office.
8. The defendant can ask the judge to move the court date up with only two days notice to you. It is important that you call a lawyer as soon as possible after you get your temporary order. Tell the lawyer that Family Crisis Services or SARS referred you and that you need to talk about a final hearing for a protection order. The lawyer may tell you that he/she believes that you can represent yourself and send you back to us. Call one of us as soon as possible if this happens.
9. We can walk over with you on the morning of the final hearing whether or not you have a lawyer. Come to the Portland Police headquarters between 8:30 and 8:45 on the morning of the final hearing. If you are working with SARS, call our hotline as soon as you have your final date so we can arrange for an advocate to meet you at the courthouse.

***Help, Hope, and Healing***

10. Remember that a protection order is separate from any criminal cases that may be pending. If the defendant is arrested, you may be asked to be a witness for the state. You should receive a letter from the Victim Assistant in the District Attorney's office if this happens. If you have questions you can call the outreach office or the hotline.
11. We realize how difficult it can be to get out of an abusive relationship. We want you to know that we never judge your decisions and we believe that they are yours alone to make. If you choose to dismiss the protection order, please call the court clerk to inform them of your decision. You can come back if you continue to have problems.
12. You may want to have as much emotional support as possible. Family Crisis Services offers peer counseling through their outreach office and can refer to therapists.

If you are in danger, the Family Crisis Services shelter is available 24 hrs. a day. You may stay for up to three weeks. We can also offer free and confidential support groups for women- day and evening available.