

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**SPARCC 24-hour Crisis Hotline (941) 365-1976**

**HOPE Family Services, Inc.**

Manatee (941) 747-8499

Crisis Line (941) 755-6805

**Florida Domestic Violence Hotline**

1 (800) 500-1119 TDD1 (800) 621-4202

**Child Protection Center Inc.**

(941) 365-1277

**Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service**

(800) 342-8011

**Sheriff's Office Victim Assistance**

Sarasota (941) 861-4942

Manatee (941) 747-3011 ext. 2525

Desoto (863) 993-4700 ext. 2294

**Law Enforcement**

**\*\*\*IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL 911\*\*\***

Sarasota County Sheriff (941) 861-5800

Manatee County Sheriff (941) 747-3011

DeSoto County Sheriff (941) 993-4700

City of Sarasota Police (941) 366-8000

Town of Longboat Key Police (941) 316-1977

City of Venice Police (941) 486-2444

City of North Port Police (941) 429-7300

**States Attorney Office**

Sarasota (941) 861-4400

Venice (941) 861-3200

Manatee (941) 747-3077

Desoto (863) 993-4881

**Clerks of the Circuit Court**

**12th Judicial Circuit**

Sarasota (941) 861-7400

Manatee (941) 749-1800

Desoto (863) 993-4876



## KAREN E. RUSHING

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

and COUNTY COMPTROLLER

**Sarasota Historic Courthouse**

2000 Main Street  
Sarasota, FL 34230

**Robert L. Anderson Administration Center**

4000 S. Tamiami Trail,  
Venice, FL 34293

**Hours of Operation:**

Monday through Friday

8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[www.SarasotaClerk.com](http://www.SarasotaClerk.com)

**941.861.7400**

## KAREN E. RUSHING

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

and COUNTY COMPTROLLER

# FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

## A GUIDE TO CIVIL INJUNCTIONS FOR PROTECTION



*Filing a restraining order against domestic, dating, sexual, stalking (including cyberstalking) or repeat violence*

# I NEED TO FILE A RESTRAINING ORDER— WHAT DO I DO?

*If you are a victim of any act of domestic violence, or have reasonable cause to believe that you are in imminent danger of becoming a victim of violence, you can ask the court for a protective order. Because you are making a request to the court, you are called the **petitioner**, and the person whom you are asking the court to protect you from is called the **respondent**.*

*The injunction process is a civil court process, and is not a part of a criminal court proceeding. An injunction is different than a criminal “no-contact” order—It is a court order against another person who has been physically violent with you, or has placed you in fear of physical violence. The purpose is to require him or her to stay away from your home, your car, your place of employment, and other places the court finds necessary.*

*Court-ordered injunctions can order the other person not to contact you by phone, in writing, by email, or in person. Injunctions can also include other relief that the court feels is appropriate. Petitions for a Restraining Order are made through the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at either the Sarasota, FL or Venice, FL business office locations. For details, resources and forms, go to [SarasotaClerk.com](http://SarasotaClerk.com) and select Court Services from the menu, then Restraining Orders.*

## SPARCC

Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center, Inc. (SPARCC) is the only state-certified center for domestic violence and sexual assault services for Sarasota and DeSoto Counties. All of SPARCC's programs and services are confidential and free of charge, serving its clients through an outreach center in Sarasota, satellite offices in Venice, North Port and Arcadia, a shelter operating 365 days a year, a 24-hour crisis helpline, counseling, hospital and courthouse accompaniment, legal services, support groups, empowerment programs and community education.

For more information, or to schedule an appointment for services, call the **SPARCC Hotline at 941-365-1976** or visit [www.SPARCC.net](http://www.SPARCC.net).

## INJUNCTION FOR PROTECTION FAQ — Frequently Asked Questions

### WHAT IS A TEMPORARY ORDER OF PROTECTION?

An *injunction for protection*, often referred to as a *restraining order*, is a means of getting legal protection that directs a person not to have any contact with you, whether or not you have ever called the police or a criminal charge was pursued. You do not need to have a lawyer to obtain an injunction for protection.

### HOW DO I FILE A TEMPORARY ORDER OF PROTECTION?

Petitions for a restraining order are made through the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller at either the Sarasota or Venice business office locations.

Because of the complexities of the forms required to be filled out, it could take up to 45 minutes to complete the application. **Since all paperwork must be submitted to the Court for review by 4:00 p.m., it is necessary for petitioners to submit completed paperwork to the Clerk's office no later than 3:40 p.m. to ensure same day review by the Court. Paperwork filed after 4:00 p.m. on business days will be provided to the Court the following day.**

### WHAT ABOUT AFTER HOURS FILING?

If a petitioner needs to file after the Clerk's normal business hours, on a holiday, or weekend, they must contact the Sarasota County Sheriff's office at (941) 861-5800 or bring the petition to the Sarasota County Main Jail, 2020 Main Street, Sarasota, FL 34237. Sheriff's Office staff will work with pre-trial services to present the petition to the first appearance judge.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE FILED MY PETITION?

The Clerk will send your petition to the judge, who will review your filing and make a decision. This process may take several hours, as the judge may be in court. If the facts contained in your petition convince the judge that you are a victim of violence or that an imminent danger of violence exists, the judge will sign either an immediate Temporary Injunction for Protection, or the judge may choose to enter an order setting a hearing only, or may deny the petition.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE JUDGE ENTERS A TEMPORARY INJUNCTION FOR PROTECTION, AND SETS A HEARING?

If the judge enters an order for *Temporary Injunction for Protection*, the Clerk will prepare copies for you to pick up, and copies for the respondent to be served by the Sheriff's Office. You must return to the Clerk's office immediately (same day) or as soon as possible, to pick up your copies of the order—It is

important that you have copies with you. If the respondent contacts you before the hearing, call law enforcement—they will need to see copies of the injunction paperwork you received from the Clerk and Comptroller's office.

The temporary Injunction is *only in effect until the hearing date*. The copies you receive from the Clerk and Comptroller's office are important, and serve as the only notification of your hearing date and time. **You will not receive an additional phone call or written notification from the Clerk and Comptroller's office.**

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE JUDGE ENTERS AN ORDER SETTING A HEARING ON PETITION FOR INJUNCTION FOR PROTECTION?

If the court enters an *Order Setting Hearing* only, this means that there is no injunction in effect. The Clerk will prepare copies for you to pick up, and copies to be served to the respondent by the Sheriff's Office. You must return to the Clerk's office immediately (same day) or as soon as possible to pick up your copies of the order—It is important that you have copies with you. **The copies you receive from the Clerk's office are important, and serve as the only notification of your hearing date and time.**

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS MY HEARING ?** If you miss your hearing, your case will be dismissed.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE JUDGE ENTERS AN ORDER DENYING PETITION FOR INJUNCTION FOR PROTECTION?

If the judge denies the petition, you will be provided a reason, in writing. The respondent will not be served a copy.

### HOW CAN I FILE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION?

If you believe may have been left out important information the first time you filed, or you have information that may make a difference in the judge's decision, you have the right to file a supplemental petition and add additional information. ♦

*Domestic violence is a pervasive, life-threatening, emotionally destructive crime that affects thousands of Floridians. As your Clerk and Comptroller, I am determined to support victims of domestic violence, and to partner in public safety efforts to ensure that both safety and justice are achieved for victims—and their families—when domestic violence occurs.*

—Karen Rushing