

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PFA'S

(while operating under the Court's emergency order for essential functions)

1.) Question: Where and what time can I file a PFA?

Answer: Protection from Abuse matters are being handled at the Family Court Building at 440 Ross St, Room 3030, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

Temporary PFAs will be handled from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday until June 12, 2020. Beginning Tuesday, June 16, 2020, the hours will be from 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

Emergency PFAs (night/weekend/holidays) will be handled from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., Monday through Friday and 24 hours beginning at 2:00 p.m. on Fridays through Sunday at 8:00 a.m. until Tuesday June 16, 2020.

Beginning Tuesday, June 16, 2020, the hours will be from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Monday through Friday and 24 hours beginning at 11:00 a.m. on Fridays through Sunday at 8:00 a.m.

2.) Question: How do I apply for a Temporary PFA at the Family Court?

Answer: You should arrive at the Family Court as early as possible and expect to remain at Court for several hours. You will need to complete a PFA Petition and appear at a video hearing before a Judge. You can file for a Temporary PFA without the payment of any fees.

3.) Question: Who Can Obtain a PFA Order?

Answer: A victim of abuse may file for a PFA order against an intimate partner or a family member. This includes:

- Spouses or ex-spouses,
- Current or former sexual or intimate partners (including dating relationships),
- Family members related by blood or marriage (including parents, children, siblings)

4.) Question: What type of abuse is covered by the PFA Act?

Answer: The PFA Act defines abuse as the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between family members or intimate partners:

- Causing or attempting to cause bodily injury
- Sexual assaults
- False imprisonment
- Conduct which would place a person in reasonable fear of imminent serious bodily injury (stalking, threats of physical harm)

5.) Question: What Can a PFA Order Do?

Answer: A plaintiff can request the following types of relief in a PFA Petition:

- Prohibit abuse, threats, harassment or stalking
- Eviction or exclusion of the abuser from the victim's residence

- Prohibit contact, including from work or school
- The entry of a temporary custody order
- The relinquishment of weapons

The judge will review the Petition and may grant all or some of these requests in the PFA order. In order to grant a Temporary PFA order, the Judge must find that an emergency exists regarding the **physical safety** of the Plaintiff or Plaintiff's children.

6.) Question: How long does a Temporary PFA remain in effect?

Answer: If the Judge issues a Temporary PFA Order, a Final PFA Hearing will be scheduled within ten (10) business days. The Temporary PFA Order will remain in effect until the Final PFA Hearing date. In order to extend the Temporary PFA Order, you must return to Court for the Final PFA Hearing. At the Final PFA Hearing, a Final PFA Order may be issued for up to a maximum time period of three (3) years.