



Understanding TPOs

A Temporary Protective Order, or TPO, is a court order meant to keep a person safe from family violence or stalking. It can order the other party to stay away and have no contact. Georgia courts take these orders very seriously, and so do we.

How the process works

- 1 Filing the Petition.** The person asking for protection, called the petitioner, files a petition describing what happened and the protection needed.
- 2 Temporary Order.** A judge may sign a temporary order right away, often before the other party knows about the case or can respond.
- 3 Service.** The other party, called the respondent, must be formally served with the petition, the temporary order, and the hearing date.
- 4 The Hearing.** A hearing is generally held within about 30 days. Both parties can testify, bring witnesses, and present evidence such as texts or photos.
- 5 The Outcome.** The judge may dismiss the case or grant a protective order for up to 12 months, which can later be extended or made permanent.
- 6 Consent Orders.** Sometimes the parties agree to an order instead of a full hearing. An agreed order is still a binding court order.

Why it matters

Custody. A protective order can include temporary custody and visitation terms, and it may affect later custody decisions.

Firearms. A protective order can restrict the respondent from having guns or ammunition.

Your Home. An order can address who stays in the home and may require one party to move out.

Violations. Violating a protective order can lead to arrest and criminal charges.

What to keep in mind

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Follow the order exactly, even if the other party reaches out to you first.

The protected party cannot give permission to break the order. Only the judge can change it.

Save texts, emails, photos, and records. Evidence matters at the hearing.

Missing the hearing can lead to a dismissal or an order entered without you.

This guide provides general information about protective orders in Georgia family law matters and is not legal advice about your specific case. Your attorney will explain how a protective order applies to your situation.

YOUR ROLE

Keep a copy of the order with you, follow every term exactly, gather your evidence early, and email us right away about any contact or new incident.

QUESTIONS?

As always, all questions and requests should be directed to the team via email to team@pepitone.law.