

Information for victims of domestic and family violence

If you have been the victim of domestic or family violence and you might have to go to court, you may be feeling anxious. This fact sheet provides information about special measures that are available to help you if you have to give evidence in court. There are also support services available to you around the State.

What is a ‘domestic violence offence’?

An offence may be called a ‘domestic violence offence’ if it was committed by any current or former partner or other family member or carer, and involved behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive.

Otherwise, it may be considered domestic violence because the behaviour was threatening or controlling and caused you fear.

What if I’m worried about giving evidence in front of the accused?

Not all victims end up having to come to court. If you are asked to come to court to give evidence, as a victim of domestic or family violence you are automatically considered a special witness. This means that special procedures may apply so that you do not have to give evidence in front of the accused person.

If the accused does not have a defence lawyer and is representing themselves in court, they will not be allowed

to question you yourselves - the court will appoint an independent lawyer to ask questions on behalf of the accused.

If you have any concerns about giving evidence in court, you can discuss options that may be available to you with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) case lawyer or prosecutor. ODPP staff can talk to you about your concerns and discuss what evidence may be required to support any application for special witness measures. For example, you may be asked to get a letter from a medical professional.

What measures may help me as a special witness?

As a special witness, you may still have to attend court to answer questions asked by the prosecutor and defence lawyer. However, the judge may make orders to help you feel more secure when giving evidence.

The judge can order one or more of the following:

- That you give your evidence from another room in the courthouse.
- That a support person can be with you while you give your evidence.
- That your evidence is pre-recorded before the trial.
- That the court room is closed to the public, including the media, when you give evidence.

The final decision about what special measures will be made available is up to the judge or magistrate.

Will this offence impact a current Domestic Violence Protection Order?

If you currently have a Domestic Violence Protection Order against the accused, or you would like more

information about Domestic Violence Protection Orders, please speak with the ODPP case lawyer or prosecutor.

How many times will I have to say in court what happened to me?

Whether you ever have to come to court will depend on the particular circumstances of the case.

If your matter is yet to proceed through the Magistrates Court, it is possible that the prosecutor and the defence lawyer may ask you questions at a preliminary hearing called a ‘committal hearing’. You may have to give details about what happened.

If the matter then proceeds to trial before a higher court, you will have to give detailed evidence and you will be questioned by the prosecutor and the defence lawyer.

What support services are available?

In an emergency, call the police on 000.

There are domestic and family violence support services available around the State. Some of these organisations are listed in this brochure. Please contact your Victim Liaison Officer if you would like the contact details for a service in your area or visit the Queensland Government website about support for victims of domestic and family violence: <https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/domestic-family-violence>

Statewide services:

Victim Assist Queensland

Phone: 1300 546 587

Website: www.qld.gov.au/victims

DV Connect

Freecall: 1800 811 811 (Womensline)

Freecall: 1800 600 636 (Mensline)

Website: www.dvconnect.org

Family and Child Connect

Phone: 13 32 64

Website: www.familychildconnect.org.au

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Phone: 1300 651 192

Website: www.eapu.com.au

Regional services:

Beenleigh, Logan Central & Cleveland – Centre for Women & Co

Phone: (07) 3050 3060

Website: www.centreforwomen.org.au

Brisbane Domestic Violence Service

Phone: (07) 3217 2544

Website: www.bdvs.org.au

Cairns, Tablelands & Douglas Shire - Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service

Phone: (07) 4033 6100

Website: www.dvcairns.org

Gladstone & Biloela – Gladstone Women’s Health

Phone: 1800 749 222

Website: www.gladstonewomenshealth.org.au

Gold Coast Domestic Violence Prevention Centre

Phone: (07) 5532 9000

Website: www.domesticviolence.com.au

Ipswich & Toowoomba Domestic Violence Action Centre

Phone: (07) 3816 3000 (Ipswich); (07) 3816 3000 (Toowoomba)

Website: www.dvac.org.au

Mackay - Domestic Violence Resource Service

Phone: (07) 4953 1788

Website: www.domesticviolenceservice.org.au

Northern Peninsula Area, Cape York & Torres Strait - North Peninsula Area Healing Centre (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)

Phone: (07) 4212 2000 (Main office)

Website: www.npaws.com.au

Rockhampton, Emerald & Longreach – Domestic and Family Violence Prevention

Phone: 1300 364 277

Sunshine Coast DFV Coordinaton

Website:

www.sunshinecoastdfvcoordination.com.au

Townsville & Mt Isa – North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service

Phone: (07) 4721 2888 (Townsville) or (07) 4743 0946 (Mt Isa)

Website: www.nqdvrs.org.au

Immigrant Women’s Support Service (IWWS)

Phone: (07) 3846 3490

Website: www.iwss.org.au

Further information

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the ODPP in your region.

Freecall

P: 1800 673 428

Brisbane

P: (07) 3035 1122

DPPVictimLiaisonSupervisor@justice.qld.gov.au

Beenleigh

P: (07) 3081 2300

ODPPVLOBeenleigh@justice.qld.gov.au

Cairns

P: (07) 4038 5731

ODPPVLOCairns@justice.qld.gov.au

Ipswich

P: (07) 3470 7419

ODPPVLOIpswich@justice.qld.gov.au

Maroochydore

P: (07) 5376 5200

ODPPVLOMaroochy@justice.qld.gov.au

Rockhampton

P: (07) 4921 6206

ODPPVLORockhampton@justice.qld.gov.au

Southport

P: (07) 5675 7000

ODPPVLOSouthport@justice.qld.gov.au

Toowoomba

P: (07) 4591 4758

ODPPVLOToowoomba@justice.qld.gov.au

Townsville

P: (07) 4781 8933

ODPPVLOTownsville@justice.qld.gov.au