

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBTAINING A CIVIL STALKING OR SEXUALLY ORIENTED OFFENSE PROTECTION ORDER (SSOPO)

These instructions are intended to assist you in preparing the Petition for a Civil Stalking or Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order (SSOPO), which can only be heard by the Common Pleas Court in your county. **Throughout the petition you are called *Petitioner* and the person you are filing this petition against is called *Respondent*.**

SOME HINTS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- All forms must be typed or printed.
- When you print your name on the Petition, use the same name you use when you write your signature.
- Write your name and Respondent's name the same way throughout the Petition.
- Fill out the Petition as completely and accurately as possible.
- If you have any questions about completing the Petition, ask the clerk of court's office for assistance or contact your local domestic violence program or the Ohio Domestic Violence Network at 800-934-9840.
- Under Federal and State Law no fees may be charged to obtain a protection order.

FILLING OUT THE PETITION: Mark each instruction below after you read and complete it

- On the front page, leave the "Case No." line and "Judge" lines blank.** The clerk of court's office will fill in this information.
- On the top left-hand side of the front page, fill in the requested information about yourself.** If you do not want your present address to be known, write "confidential" in the space for your address, but list someone else's address where you can receive notices from the court.
- Also on the top left-hand side of the front page, fill in the requested information about Respondent as best you can.** You may use Respondent's work address if you do not know Respondent's home address. If you do not know Respondent's date of birth, leave that line blank. Do not attempt to obtain this information unless it is safe to do so.
- Paragraph 1:** If you are filing the Petition on behalf of yourself, mark the first box.
- Paragraph 2:** If you are filing the Petition on behalf of a family or household member, mark the box and fill in their name(s) and the other information requested in the chart. You may attach additional pages if you need more room.
- Paragraph 3:** State the date(s) of the incident(s) that brought you to file the Petition. If you are requesting a stalking protection order provide a brief description of the pattern of conduct (two or more instances) that caused you to believe that the Respondent will cause physical harm or cause mental distress to you or another family member. If you are requesting a sexually oriented offense protection order, you do not have to provide a description of a pattern of conduct, only a brief description of what happened that caused you to request the sexually oriented offense protection order. (NOTE: Petitioner and or Respondent need not be related in any way for Petitioner to obtain either type of protection order.) If you are aware of any prior convictions of the Respondent for menacing by stalking or similar offenses, or prior convictions of Respondent for any sexually oriented offenses, list what information you know about those convictions. You may attach additional pages if you need more room to complete your description.
- Paragraph 4:** Indicate the action you want the court to take by marking the boxes next to the numbered paragraphs that apply to your situation.
- Paragraph 4 (f):** Write any special court orders you believe would help protect you and your family or household members.
- Paragraph 5:** Be sure to mark the box next to Paragraph 5 if you need an emergency ("*ex parte*") protection order.
- Paragraph 9:** List ALL present or past court cases or investigations that involve Respondent. This includes all criminal, divorce, custody, visitation, and any other case that may have a bearing on the safety of you or your family or household members. Write the case name, the court, the case number, and the outcome of the case, if known. You may attach additional pages if you need more room.

SIGNING THE PETITION: Try to fill out the Petition before you go to the courthouse. **AFTER YOU HAVE FILLED OUT THE PETITION, TAKE IT TO A NOTARY PUBLIC TO HAVE YOUR SIGNATURE NOTARIZED. DO NOT SIGN THE PETITION UNLESS YOU ARE IN FRONT OF A NOTARY PUBLIC.** An employee of the Clerk of Courts office may be available to take your oath.

FILING THE PETITION: After you have your signature notarized, file your Petition at the clerk of court's office. The Clerk of Court's office will tell you when and where your *ex parte* hearing will take place. **There is no filing fee for a Petition for a CSPO.**

FEES

Under Federal and State Law, you cannot be charged any costs or fees for obtaining a protection order.