Domestic Violence

Notice of Rights

As a victim, the Commonwealth has afforded you certain rights. The Abused Person's Notice of Rights outlines your rights as a victim of domestic violence as provided by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 209A.

In accordance with Chapter 209A, you have the right to appear at the Superior Court, Probate and Family District Court or Boston Municipal Court if you reside within the appropriate jurisdiction, and file a complaint requesting the issuance of any of the following orders:

(a) an order restraining your attacker from abusing you,

(b) an order directing your attacker to leave the household, building or workplace,

(c) an order awarding you custody of minor children,

(d) an order directing your attacker to pay support for you or any minor child in your custody, if the attacker has a legal obligation of support, and/or

(e) an order directing your attacker to pay you for losses suffered as a result of abuse, including medical and moving expenses, loss of earnings or support, costs for restoring utilities and replacing lockers, reasonable attorney's fees and other out of pocket losses for injuries and property damaged sustained.

For an emergency on weekends, holidays, or week nights the police will refer you to a Justice of the Superior, Probate and Family, District or Boston Municipal Court Departments.

You have the right to go to the appropriate Court and seek a criminal complaint for threats, assault and battery, assault with a deadly weapon, assault with intent to kill or other related offenses.

If you are in need of medical treatment, you have the right to request that the police officer drive you to the nearest hospital or otherwise assist you in obtaining medical treatment.

If you believe that police protection is needed for your physical safety, you have the right to request that the officer present remain at the scene until you and your children can leave or until your safety is otherwise ensured. You may also request that the officer assist you in locating and taking you to a safe place, including, but not limited to designated meeting place for a shelter or a family member's or friend's residence, or similar place of safety.

You may request a copy of the police incident report at no cost from the police department. To obtain a restraining order you do not need an attorney and it will not cost you any money.