



G.L. c. 258E Harassment Prevention Orders Based on Sexual Violence or Stalking

Protection available for those who do not have a relationship with the person who is reported to have stalked or used sexual violence against them.

If you have experienced sexual violence or stalking, you can ask the court for a Harassment Prevention Order. These orders are sometimes also called Harassment Orders or 258E Orders. You do not need to have any particular type of relationship to the person you want the order against. This means that they do not need to be a family or household member for you to apply for a 258E Harassment Order against them.

What is Sexual Violence?

Sexual violence may include actions such as:

- Someone forcing, threatening, or pressuring you to have sex.
- Someone physically hurting you to try to force, threaten, or pressure you to have sex with them.
- Someone drugging you to try to force, threaten, or pressure you to have sex with them.
- Someone touching you in a private area of your body without your consent. Consent may be words or acts that are freely given by someone who is able and willing to agree to sexual acts.

What is Stalking?

Stalking is when someone is threatening you and engaging in a pattern of acts that seriously alarm you.

Can Human Trafficking or Sexual Exploitation be Sexual Violence?

Some examples of sexual violence in this context may look like:

- Being brought to a new country or state with promises of work only to be forced into the sex industry.
- Runaways or people experiencing homelessness forced to trade sex for a place to sleep or food to eat.
- People who are tricked into selling sex by a person they love and/or trust.
- Any minor under the age of 18 recruited to perform or trade sex.

What protection can the court grant in a Harassment Order?

A judge can grant different types of orders as part of a Harassment Order. These orders may include:

- **No abuse or harassment.** This means the person cannot physically hurt you, threaten you, make you afraid that they will hurt you, or force or threaten you to have sex.
- **No contact.** This includes phone calls, text messages, emails, social media, mail. Friends and family of the person the order is against cannot contact you for that person. The person must also stay a specific distance away from you and that distance is written on the order.
- **Stay away from your home and/or your work.** If the judge orders this, there will also be a specific distance written on the order. Even if you are not at a location, the person the order is against cannot go there.
- **Pay for costs** of certain damage or medical bills related to the sexual violence or stalking. This may include the cost to change locks or lost wages from missing work.
- **Surrender firearms and firearms licenses.** This order would mean that the person must give their firearms and firearms licenses to the police and will be ineligible to obtain or renew a license for a period of time.

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Resources for People Experiencing Sexual Violence or Stalking

What Resources are Available?

It is important to know that you are not alone and that there are various agencies that are available to provide harassment support. **Community based advocacy or crisis agencies** can connect you with advocates who can help you and may be able to connect you to pro bono legal services. These community-based agencies offer free and confidential services including counseling and prevention education. **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs)** are specially trained expert nurses who work in hospitals and care for patients who have experienced sexual violence. **SAFEPLAN Advocates** are court-based and can assist with harassment order applications. **Victim Witness Advocates** work for the District Attorney's Office and can answer questions about pursuing criminal charges or pending criminal matters involving violence against you.

The programs and resources listed below can offer information, help, and support for you or someone you know who is experiencing or has experienced sexual violence. Each program will determine if they can assist you.

24/7 Helplines

- SafeLink Helpline (Statewide): 877-785-2020
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-4673
- National Department of Defense (DoD) Safe Helpline (for DoD and military members): 877-995-5247

State agencies

- [Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance \(MOVA\)](#)
 - 844-878-6682
 - Boston Office: 617-586-1340
 - Northampton Office: 413-387-4300
- Attorney General's Office, [Victim Compensation and Assistance Division](#)
 - 617-963-2160
- [MA Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner \(SANE\) Program](#)
- Department of Public Health (DPH) [Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services](#)

Statewide culturally-specific sexual violence resources

- Llámanos y hablemos
 - Spanish Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-800-223-5001
- [Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers \(MAPS\)](#)
 - 617-864-7600
- [Our Deaf Survivors Center, Inc.](#)
 - 24/7 National Deaf Hotline: 855-812-1001
- [SAHELI: Friendship for South Asian Women](#)
 - Bilingual Helpline: 866-472-4354

Legal services for survivors of sexual assault, rape, and stalking in Massachusetts

- [Victim Rights Law Center \(VRLC\)](#)
 - Boston: 617-399-6720
 - Toll Free: 877-758-8132 x. 19

[MassLegalServices](#), [MassLegalHelp](#),

and [MassCLAVC](#) can provide contact information for attorneys and legal aid programs if you have any legal questions.

Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit (SAECK) Tracking System Project

In 2018, the Governor of Massachusetts signed a law to establish and maintain a statewide Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit tracking system. SAECKs, sometimes called rape kits or sexual assault kits, are completed at hospitals by specially trained nurses and collect physical evidence after a sexual assault. If you had a SAECK completed in Massachusetts, you can use the Track-Kit system to track the location and status of your kit from. Track-Kit is anonymous, confidential, and free of charge. You can find more information from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security: <https://www.mass.gov/sexual-assault-evidence-collection-kit-saeck-tracking-system>.

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