

**Can I keep information about a minor confidential?**

Yes. In a domestic violence restraining order case, you can ask a judge to make information about a minor confidential. Confidential means that the public is unable to see the information, because the information is kept private. This is important because most papers in your court case are available for the public to see. This means anyone can view information on your papers, including information about a minor. If the judge grants your request, the public will not be able to see the minor's information on your paperwork.

Who can make this request?

Several people can make this request, including a minor's parent or legal guardian.



Any minor protected by a restraining order can make this request, as well. Also, any person, including a minor, who is the accused person in a case may make this request.

A minor can make this request without the help of an adult. This depends on the minor's age, though. If the minor is 12 years old or younger, the judge may want an adult to help the minor make this request.

For more information on who can make this request, contact your local self-help center or a lawyer.

What information can I ask the judge to make confidential?

A judge can make any information about a minor confidential. That means that you can ask to make confidential the minor's name, address, any statements about the minor's abuse, or any abuse the minor witnessed.

If you want to protect the minor's address only, you do not have to make this request. Instead, you can use a different address on your restraining order request, such as a mailing address that is not where the minor lives, a P.O. box, or someone else's address. If you use someone else's address, be sure to get their permission first.

Whatever address you use, make sure you will get your mail regularly. This is important, because the address you use is the address the court and other party will use to send you papers for your case.

Does this request cost money?

No, this request is free.

I need an interpreter. How can I get help?

You may use [form INT-300](#) to request an interpreter. Ask court staff for information.

I have a disability. How can I get help?

You may use [form MC-410](#) to request assistance. Contact the disability/ADA coordinator at your local court for more information.

Do I need a lawyer to make this request?

No, but this type of request can be hard to get through on your own. Free help may be available at your local court's self-help center. (See below.)

**Where can I find a self-help center?**

Find your local court's self-help center at www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp. Self-help center staff will not act as your lawyer but may be able to give you information to help you decide what to do in your case.

Where can I find other help?

The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides free and private safety tips and help in over 100 languages. Call them at 1-800-799-7233; 1-800-787-3224 (TTY); or visit online at www.thehotline.org.

What do I have to do to make information about a minor confidential?

If you're ready to start the process for this request, go to page 2 to see a checklist of steps you need to complete in order to ask the judge to make information about a minor confidential.



What do I have to do to make information about a minor confidential?**○ Step 1: Complete the forms.**

You will need to complete these forms to make your request:

○ [Form DV-160](#)

○ [Form DV-165](#) (complete items 1 and 2 only)

You can find these forms online at www.courts.ca.gov/forms.

► See tips to complete the forms.

To request a restraining order, you need to complete different forms. See form [DV-505-INFO](#) for a list of forms you need to complete to request a restraining order.



You can use these steps as a checklist.

○ Step 2: Take the forms to your court clerk to file.

Find out which courthouse to take your forms to by calling your local court or searching online at www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm.

○ Step 3: Understand the judge's order.

The judge will write your orders on [form DV-165](#).

The judge will **grant** or **deny** your request.

► See page 3 for what this means.

○ Step 4: Give court papers to other parties.

In some cases, you will need to have your server give court papers to the other parties in your case. This process is called service.

► See page 4 for tips to complete service.

**○ Tips for Step 1: Complete the forms**

I only want to protect the minor's address. If you only want to protect the minor's address, you do not have to make this request. See "What information can I ask the judge to make confidential?" on page 1 for more information.

I want to protect more than one minor. Only an adult who is the minors' parent or legal guardian may make a request to protect more than one minors' information.

I want to give the minor's school or other people copies of court orders from this case.

If the court grants your request to make information regarding a minor confidential, you may want to ask the court for permission to give other people copies of certain documents in your case. For example, if the minor's name was made confidential and the restraining order protects the minor, you may want the minor's school to have a copy that is unredacted (shows the minor's name). You can make this request at item 9 on form DV-160.

My right to cancel my restraining order request.

You have the right to cancel your request for a restraining order if the judge does not grant your request to make information confidential. This right only applies if you are asking for a restraining order at the same time as your request to make information confidential. To cancel your request for a restraining order, check the box on [form DV-160](#), item 7a, and item 8d(1), if it applies.



If you cancel your request for a restraining order, you will **not** receive a domestic violence restraining order at this time.

If, **after** canceling your request for a restraining order, you want to ask for a restraining order based on the same facts, you must start the process over. See [form DV-505-INFO](#) for more information.



U Tips for Step 3:**Understand the judge's order.**

Look at [form DV-165](#) to see what the judge decided.

**What if the judge granted my request?**

Look closely at [form DV-165](#), items 7 and 8, to see what information the judge made confidential in your case. If the judge granted your request to keep information confidential, the information the judge decided to keep confidential will not be available to the public. The information will be available only to the parties in the case.

At times, the judge may make information confidential from the other party in your case. If this happens, the judge will complete box 8b on [form DV-165](#).

Now, take a close look at item 10 on [form DV-165](#). This tells you who is responsible for redacting the information on your paperwork and deadline for filing it with the court.

Redacting means to hide (blacken or whiten out) information so it cannot be seen. If the judge makes you responsible for redacting the information, your local self-help center may be able to help you.

**What if the judge did not grant (denied) my request?**

This means that if you move forward with your case, the minor's information will not be confidential on your paperwork. This is important because anyone can go to your local courthouse and ask to see the documents you filed in this case.

If the judge does not grant your request, you may have other legal options available to you. Visit your local court's self-help center or talk with a lawyer.

W What if I asked to cancel my restraining order request?

If you checked box 7a or 8d(1) on [form DV-160](#) and the judge denied your request, the paperwork you turned in with this request will not be available to the public, except for page 1 of [form DV-165](#). This includes [form DV-100](#) and any proposed order forms. The court will either return these forms to you, destroy them, or delete them from its records unless you give the court permission to file the forms.

W What if I file documents with the court in the future?

If you file documents with the court in the future, be sure to use [form DV-175](#) as a cover sheet and follow the instructions at the top of the form.

Is there a penalty for disclosing confidential information?

Misusing or giving out confidential information can result in the court ordering you to pay up to \$1,000 or other court penalties. You will not be penalized if you:

- Give information to police to help them enforce the judge's orders, or
- If you are the minor who has claimed abuse.



U Tips for Step 4: Give court papers to all parties in your case.

In some cases, the judge will order you to serve your court papers. Look at [form DV-165](#) to see what the judge decided.



The judge **granted** my request to keep some of the minor's information confidential.

**Your papers must be served.
Follow steps 1–5 below.**

What did the judge decide in your case?

The judge **denied** (did not grant) my request to keep some information confidential. I **canceled** my request for a restraining order and there is **no other issue** in this case for a judge to decide on.

**Your papers do not need to be served.
You may stop here.**

The judge **denied** (did not grant) my request to keep some information confidential. The **case is still open** because there are other issues for a judge to decide on, like divorce or custody.

**If this is your situation, forms DV-160 and DV-165 must be served by mail or in person.
Follow steps 3–5 below.**

○ Step 1: Find out which papers you need to serve.

The judge will check which papers you need to serve to the other parties in your case on [form DV-165](#), item 13.

○ Step 2: Find out whether you need to serve the other parties personally or by mail.

The judge will check how you need to serve your court papers to the other parties in your case on [form DV-165](#), item 13.

If the judge checks item 13a, you will need to have your server personally serve (give) your court papers to the other parties in your case.

If the judge checks item 13b, you will need to have your server mail your court papers.

○ Step 3: Choose a server.

The person who serves your papers is called a server. Your server must be at least 18 years old, not protected by the restraining order, and not involved in your case. **You are not allowed to serve your own court papers.**



Some situations may be dangerous. Think about people's safety when deciding who you choose to serve your court papers.

A sheriff or marshal will serve your court papers for free. Another option is a process server.

A process server is a business you pay to deliver court papers. To hire a process server, look for "process server" on the internet or in the yellow pages.

○ Step 4: Have your server give your court papers to all parties.

For personal service, give your server your court papers as well as [form DV-200](#).

For service by mail, give your server your court papers as well as [form DV-250](#).

○ Step 5: File proof with the court.

The court needs proof that your papers were served. After your server completes [form DV-200](#) or [form DV-250](#), take it to the court to file in your case.

If the sheriff or marshal served your papers, they may use another form for proof instead of [form DV-200](#). Make sure a copy is filed with the court and that you get a copy.

For more information, read [form DV-200-INFO](#) or ask your local court's self-help center for help.