

## Restraining order

With violence on the rise in our country, crime is becoming harder to prevent. Violence is becoming more random and scattered, making it harder to deter and solve. It used to be that people thought a restraining order was only for situations involving domestic violence. One spouse would get a restraining order on the other spouse and it would be an ongoing battle. We've all read and heard stories about a restraining order failing to work and some innocent victim ends up losing their life because a piece of paper couldn't stop the violence.

Nowadays, a restraining order is becoming more common for many other types of crimes. You can attempt to prevent someone from harassing you, stalking you, threatening you - almost anything. If you feel that you are in danger, a court can grant a restraining order. Usually, what that order does is inform that person that they cannot be within a certain distance of you and not permitted to have any contact. Should they violate that court order, they can and will be arrested. Many courts are now taking these protection and restraining orders very seriously due to one too many tragedies that has happened because of non-enforcement..

It isn't a secret that a piece of paper signed by a judge can't keep a very determined individual from committing the crime that they intend to commit. However, that piece of paper just may be the key evidence if their behavior turns into something detrimental. In my small town, a woman was being abused by her ex-boyfriend constantly. After she ended the relationship, he continued to harass her and caused her to fear for her life. She got a restraining order, but knew that it would do little to ease the situation. She wrote a letter to her parents, which was not discovered until after she had been killed by this man. In her letter, she stated that she knew the restraining order would not prevent anything from happening if he was determined to succeed in ending her life. But, she wanted that order to be in existence in order to help convict him. her wish came true because the restraining order was basically all that was needed to prove that he had been violent to her in the past. He's currently serving life in jail.

A lot of people hesitate to get a restraining order because they feel that it will only infuriate the offender even more than they already are. Sadly enough, sometimes that is the case. Other times, that bit of a serious scare can deter the offenders from harassing the victim. There are so many different arguments as to whether or not a restraining order is effective or worthless. I can argue either side. I can say, though, that if someone is doing something that they shouldn't be doing - harassing, stalking, making threats, they deserve to have something put in their path to create even a slight delay. If it can prevent

some crimes from continuing, it is worthwhile.