

## **PLAINTIFF'S INFORMATION** *for after an RFA Order has issued:*

The Court has issued a Final Order intended to protect you from abuse. **The Defendant can be charged with a crime in criminal court if the Defendant violates the order.**

Although a final order has been issued, an advocate from your local domestic violence agency may still be contacted. For information regarding an advocate in your area visit this website <https://vtnetwork.org/get-help/>

**SERVICE.** Usually, the Defendant receives a copy of the Final Order in hand before he or she leaves the courthouse. If Defendant was not there or that did not happen, it is the Court's responsibility to have law enforcement serve the Defendant. If Defendant is not personally served, the Order will not be enforceable, and your safety could be at risk.

**ENFORCEMENT.** All orders forbid the Defendant from abusing you and/or your children. Depending on what your order says, the Defendant may not be allowed to contact you or be near you, your home, work, school or vehicle. You should immediately report any violations of the Order to the police. **THEY WILL HELP YOU ENFORCE YOUR ORDER.** Keep a copy with you. You may get extras from the court.

**COVERAGE.** All law enforcement officers can check a nationwide list to see if your Order is in effect and what its terms are. Your Order is enforceable throughout the state and the country.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORDER.** You need to read your Order and understand it. The Order is **ONLY AGAINST THE DEFENDANT.** This means that only the Defendant can violate the Order and be arrested. You should not encourage contact with the Defendant if he or she is ordered not to contact you. Any criminal case against Defendant is separate from this RFA case. This Family Court Order will not change any criminal court conditions of release or probation conditions against the Defendant. A change or dismissal of this RFA Order does not change Defendant's conditions of release or probation conditions.

**CHANGES TO THE ORDER. ONLY THE COURT CAN CHANGE OR DISMISS THE ORDER.** The Order may not be changed by you, by Defendant or by agreement of both parties. It can only be changed after a written request is filed with the court and ruled on by the Judge. The Judge may require a hearing before making any changes to an existing order.

**COMMUNICATION.** If you need to communicate with the Defendant and he or she is not allowed to have contact with you, the Judge must change the Order before the Defendant may have contact with you.

**PERSONAL BELONGINGS.** Your Order may allow you or the Defendant to pick up personal belongings from the home. That should only happen in the way the Order allows. Contact your local police for help. You may have to pay for this service.

**EXPIRATION.** Please note the expiration date of your Order on the last page. If you wish to extend the Order beyond the expiration date, you must file a written request with the Court. Be sure to file it a few weeks before the Order ends.

**CHILDREN.** In order for the court to properly and fully address the long term needs of the children, you will need to file a Parentage, Divorce, Separation, or Civil Dissolution case. Any custody or visitation terms in this RFA Order will end when the Order expires.

**PROPERTY.** To get final orders about property rights or ownership, you will need to file a Divorce, Separation, or Dissolution case if you are married or have a civil union. If you are not married or in a civil union, to get a final order about property ownership, you will need to file a small claims or civil case in Superior Court.

**FORMS.** Ask court staff for forms, or go to [www.vermontjudiciary.org](http://www.vermontjudiciary.org).

## **DEFENDANT'S INFORMATION** *for after an RFA Order has issued:*

The Court has issued a Final Relief from Abuse Order. **YOU CAN BE CHARGED WITH A CRIME IN CRIMINAL COURT IF YOU VIOLATE THIS ORDER.**

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORDER.** You need to read the Order and understand exactly what it says so that you do not violate it. If you do not understand it, you may wish to get legal help. Keep a copy with you. You may get extras from the Court.

**ENFORCEMENT.** The Order is **ONLY AGAINST YOU**. Only you can violate it. If you do, you can be arrested. **THE ORDER WILL BE ENFORCED BY THE POLICE.**

**WHAT TO DO.** If you are ordered to stay a specific distance away from the Plaintiff and you have accidental public contact, you must cross the street, leave the store or just get away from the situation immediately. If the Order does not allow telephone contact and the Plaintiff calls you, hang up the phone.

**CHANGES TO THE ORDER.** **ONLY THE COURT CAN CHANGE OR DISMISS THE ORDER.** The Order may not be changed by the Plaintiff, by you, or by agreement of both parties. It can only be changed after a written request is filed with the Court and ruled on by the Judge. The Judge may require a hearing before making any changes to an existing Order.

**COVERAGE.** All law enforcement officers can check a nationwide list to see if the Order is in effect and what its terms are. Your Order is enforceable throughout the state and country.

**CRIMINAL ORDERS.** Any criminal case against you is separate from this RFA case. This Family Court Order will not change conditions of release or probation orders in District (criminal) Court. An amendment to this RFA Order, or a dismissal of it, will not change your conditions of release or probation conditions.

**FIREARMS.** If you buy or possess firearms or ammunition, you may be charged with a federal crime. If you have any questions about this, you may wish to get legal help.

**IMMIGRATION.** If you are not a U.S. citizen, the Order may affect your right to remain in this country. If you are a citizen, it may affect your right to travel outside the country. You may wish to get legal help.

**PERSONAL BELONGINGS.** Your Order may allow you to pick up personal belongings from the home. That should only happen in the way that the Order allows. Contact your local police for help. You may have to pay for this service.

**EXPIRATION.** This Order will remain in effect until the expiration date on the last page, and will be enforced as written until then.

**CHILDREN.** In order for the Court to properly and fully address long term needs of children, you will need to file a Parentage, Divorce, Separation, or Civil Dissolution case. Any custody or visitation terms in this RFA Order will end when the Order expires.

**PROPERTY.** To get final orders about property rights or ownership, you will need to file a divorce, separation or dissolution case if you are married or have a civil union. If you are not married or in a civil union, to get a final order about property ownership, you will need to file a small claims or civil case in Superior Court.

**FORMS.** Ask Court staff for forms, or go to [www.vermontjudiciary.org](http://www.vermontjudiciary.org).