

Domestic Violence

What is the legal definition of domestic violence in CA?

This section defines domestic violence for the purposes of getting a domestic violence protective order.

Domestic violence is defined as; when your current or former spouse, boyfriend / girlfriend, someone you have a child in common with, someone you live with or someone you are related to through blood or marriage does one of the following: Causes or attempts to cause you physical injury; Sexually assaults you; Makes you feel that you or another person is in danger of immediate, serious physical injury; Molest, attacks, strikes, batters (use force), or stalks you; Threatens or harasses you-either in person or through phone calls, emails, etc.; Destroys your personal property.

NOTE: If the acts of the abuser do not fit in this definition or if you do not have the specific relationship with the abuser that is mentioned above, you may still be eligible for a Civil Harassment Order.

WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

Not only can domestic or family violence have devastating physical and emotional affects on victims, it can also have significant impact on those around you.

Children often learn how to behave and interact at a young age. Being exposed to violence may also increase the chance of the child being involved in an abusive or violent relationship as an adult. Possible effects of exposure to domestic or family violence on children can include:

- Physical injury
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Poor sleep habits
- Anger, hitting and biting
- Withdrawn behavior, and/or Low self esteem.



What will happen?

The first priority of a police officer called to an incident is to ensure the safety of the parties involved. If a police officer reasonably suspects an incident of domestic violence (including physical, sexual, verbal or financial abuse; damage to property; harassment or intimidation or threatening to do any of these), it is their duty to investigate the matter thoroughly.

Things to Consider in a Domestic Violence Situation:

- If you are being assaulted or anticipate an attack, leave the scene immediately. Go to a neighbor, friend, or relative for temporary shelter and notify the police.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you are injured. Even if your injuries are minor, you should still see a doctor as soon as possible. Some injuries may not be obvious to you. Tell the doctor exactly how the injuries happened and make sure he or she notes this in your records.
- You may want to talk to someone who can provide you with information and support. You may contact Womanhaven, Center for Family Solutions, at (760) 353-6922, 727 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243.
- Accept the fact that you can't solve the problem by fighting back or trying harder to be "perfect." Instead, consider turning to the protection that is rightfully yours by law.

Develop and Implement a Safety Plan

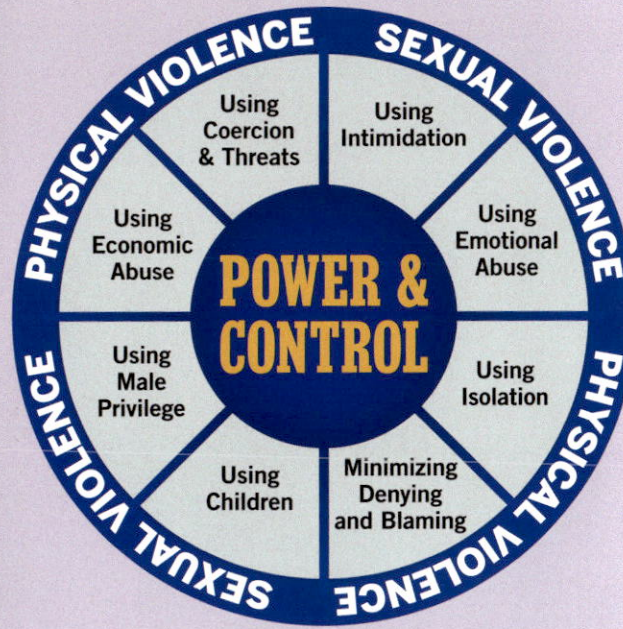
A safety plan is designed to clearly state what to do if you ever need to leave your home and abuser. Creating a safety plan in advance will help you to retain control during your escape. Leaving is very dangerous and it is very important to maintain safety during this time.

IMPERIAL COUNTY VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What can I do?

- If you suspect someone you know is involved in domestic violence there are certainly ways you can help.
- It is never advisable to put yourself in a position where you could be in danger.
- Always contact police in an emergency or if someone's life is in danger.
- You can contact your local police station or Victim Witness at (442) 265-1221.

DIFFERENT TACTICS USED BY THE ABUSER



IMPERIAL COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

940 W. Main St., Ste. 102
El Centro, CA 92243
(442) 265-1221
(442) 265-1175

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Imperial County
District Attorney's Office
Victim Witness Assistance Program
(442) 265-1221