

Connecticut's Risk Protection Order: A Vital Tool for Safety

A risk protection order is a measure designed to help an individual in crisis, and the people around them, to stay safe from gun violence.

A risk protection order, also called an RPO, is a court order that temporarily restricts a person's access to guns. It is designed to allow police officers and concerned family members to intervene quickly in dangerous situations.

FAQs

How do I request a risk protection order?

To seek a risk protection order, a family or household member or a medical professional can apply to the court to request an order requiring law enforcement to conduct an investigation. If law enforcement finds probable cause that the person is at risk of causing imminent physical injury to themselves or others, law enforcement will petition the court for a risk protection order.

Who can request a risk protection order in Connecticut?

Under Connecticut law, only law enforcement can file a risk protection order, but family, household members, and medical professionals can initiate the process.

What happens after the request for a risk protection order has been filed?

Once the court receives a request from the prosecutor or police officer and issues a risk protection order, it will order the police to search for and take possession of the person's firearms within a reasonable time. The person will be notified that they have a right to a court hearing within 14 days.

During the hearing, the court decides whether the firearms should continue to be held or whether they should be returned to the person. If the court finds that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to themselves or others, the court will order law enforcement to continue to hold the person's guns for as long as the order remains in effect (one year, or longer if the risk protection

order is renewed). If a person's guns are held after the hearing, they may then choose to transfer the firearms to a federally licensed firearms dealer.

Also, the person will not be able to purchase new firearms.

I'm afraid to wait until a court hearing is scheduled. What if the person is in immediate danger of harming themselves or someone else?

Concern for the safety of the person, or of the public, may demand that action be taken before the scheduled hearing date, to protect against the threat of immediate danger.

At the request of law enforcement, a judge may issue a risk protection order that restricts a person's access to firearms before the person has been notified of the petition, and before a full hearing is held.

Will a risk protection order go on someone's criminal record?

No. A risk protection order is a civil court order. Its sole purpose is to remove firearms from a person who is at high risk of causing harm to themselves or to others. The court's decision to issue the order does not cause the person to have a criminal record.

What if I am not able to request a risk protection order myself? Is there anything I can do?

Even if you don't fall into any of the categories mentioned above, you can still take action in moments of crisis. If you are worried about someone who is showing warning signs of being at risk of self-harm or harming someone else, you can contact a law enforcement officer and ask that they seek a risk protection order.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, **text or call 988** for 24/7 connection to free, confidential support. If you have immediate safety concerns, **call 911**.