

# *Frequently Asked Questions about Civil No-Contact Orders (CNCOs)*

## *What is a Civil No-Contact Order (CNCO)?*

A CNCO is a court order that can protect you, your family, or household members from a person who has sexually assaulted or sexually abused you. You do not have to press criminal charges to get a CNCO. A civil court judge can grant this order. You do not have to have a relationship with the perpetrator to get a CNCO and a single incident of sexual assault and/or sexual abuse is all that is required. If the perpetrator violates the CNCO they can be charged with a crime and face jail time.

## *What is the difference between a CNCO and an Order of Protection (OP)?*

Orders of Protection (OPs) are granted in situations of domestic violence, in which the person filing for the OP has a relationship (marriage, dating, co-habitation) with the perpetrator, and can be filed in response to physical violence (not only sexual violence). A CNCO is different because it is specific to sexual assault and you do not have to have a previous relationship to the perpetrator.

## *What can the CNCO order the perpetrator to do?*

A CNCO can order the perpetrator to stay away from you; stay away from your family and/or household members listed on the petition; stop physically abusing you, harassing you, and stalking you and the other protected people; stay away from your school (to some extent) and/or workplace; stay away from the school and/or workplace of protected people.

## *What does the process look like when I get to the courthouse?*

If the incident happened in Cook County, you can go to the Domestic Violence Courthouse located at 555 W. Harrison, off the Clinton Blue Line stop. You will go into Suite 1400 and speak to a receptionist, who will direct you to someone who works for the Cook County clerk's office. You will have to fill out paperwork, asking for basic information like your birthday, address, etc. You will also have to fill out an affidavit. The affidavit details the incident/s of abuse and the side effects you've experienced as a result of the abuse. It is important to make sure that you are as detailed and accurate as possible. It will take about two hours to file this paperwork. Once you are done, you return this paperwork to the clerk for filing. After a wait time you will be assigned to a courtroom. There you present your paperwork to the judicial clerk and you will offer testimony, which cannot diverge from what you put in your affidavit. If the judge finds that there is an emergency, they will grant the emergency order and give you a 21 day court date for status on service of the perpetrator. The judge may grant the CNCO or may say it is "petition only." This means the judge has accepted the paperwork you filed but will not grant a CNCO until the perpetrator is served and comes to court. The perpetrator will get a copy of the petition you filed, whether or not the judge grants you the CNCO on the first day you come to court. If you think the perpetrator may harm you if you don't get the CNCO that first day, tell the judge.

## ***What information do I need about the other person to request a CNCO? What if I don't know their birthday/address/etc?***

While it is helpful, you are not required to have the perpetrator's birthday to get a CNCO. You will need an address at which to serve the perpetrator with the CNCO. The address can be their home, school, or work.

## ***If I'm in Illinois, but the other individual is in another state, would a CNCO in Illinois civil court protect me?***

Yes, if the incident took place in Illinois, a CNCO obtained in Illinois will protect you against the responding party even if they are out of state.

## ***Would there ever be a situation where I would need to work with another state's civil court process for a CNCO there?***

You would have to work with another state if you are not a resident of Illinois and the incident took place in a state other than Illinois.

## ***Do I need a lawyer to get a CNCO?***

You do not need a lawyer to file a petition for a CNCO, you can represent yourself (this is referred to as appearing "pro se," or on behalf of yourself). However, there are great advantages to being accompanied by an advocate or a lawyer.

## ***Who can I go to outside of my school for assistance with the CNCO process?***

The VOICES Project staff can help you obtain a CNCO and accompany you to your court dates. Please call (312) 408-1210 and ask to speak to VOICES staff.

## ***How long does a CNCO last?***

A plenary CNCO can be issued for 6 months, a year, 18 months, or up to 2 years maximum.

## ***What do I do if the perpetrator still bothers me after I am granted the CNCO?***




If the perpetrator contacts you by any means (in person, electronically, or through third parties) this is considered a violation of the CNCO and it is a crime. If you are in immediate danger call 911. Otherwise, document the violation— if they showed up to your home or place of work, take a photo of them; if they texted or called you, make sure to take screenshots. Contact your advocate as soon as possible to discuss the possibility of filing a police report.



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DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE END HERE.

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### ***Contact for more info:***

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