

achieved, victims who see law enforcement working in their best interests will feel safer and better served.

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UDC 343.9:343.26

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GEORGIA'S EXPERIENCE IN COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The state of Georgia defines domestic violence as an act of family violence. The law protects against physical, sexual, and emotional abuse among family members. You don't have to be married to someone in order to be a victim of domestic violence in Georgia

Georgia's Family Violence Act is a law designed to protect individuals who are abused by present or past spouses, parents of the same child, parents and children, stepparents and stepchildren, foster parents and foster children, or other persons living or formerly living in the same household. It can also be used to get temporary custody, financial support, and other assistance for the abused person. Additionally, victims that do not qualify under Georgia's Family Violence Act may seek protection pursuant to Georgia's stalking laws.

Domestic violence charges are treated very seriously in Georgia. The court can issue a Family Law Protective Order. This order prohibits the offender from having contact with the victim for a specified period of time. If a person is found to violate a restraining or protective order, he or she could be jailed and charged with a separate crime, including aggravated stalking.

A Family Violence Protection Order can: order an abuser to leave the victim alone; give the victim possession of the house and force the abuser to leave (you can ask the court to have the sheriff send someone home with you to enforce this part of the order); order assistance to help a victim get his or her personal property; make the abuser provide alternate housing for a spouse, former spouse, or parent and children; give the victim temporary custody of shared children and set temporary visitation rights;

award temporary child support and/or spousal support from the abuser;

order the abuser to go to counseling; award costs and attorney's fees to either party; lead to the abuser's arrest if he or she breaks the order.

A protective order normally lasts 12 months. If you file a Motion before your Protective Order ends, the Court, after a hearing with you and the person who abused or stalked you, may give you a Three Year or Permanent Order.

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