

From 30 May 2017, the following amendments to the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* commenced along with changes to some practices at Courts across Queensland. Below is a summary of these changes, with more information available [here](#).

Enhanced support and response to DFV matters

More immediate responses by police

Police can give immediate interim protection to a victim and their **children, relatives and/or associates** through a Police Protection Notice (PPN).

For the duration of a PPN, **weapons** licences held by the respondent are suspended and respondents are required to surrender their weapon. This also applies to **release conditions**.

Police can issue a PPN irrespective of whether the respondent is present. Conditions in the PPN can only be enforced once the respondent is told about them by police.

Police **no longer** need to **detain** a respondent to impose **more protective conditions** such as no contact, ouster or return conditions.

Police have powers to **direct a person to move to or remain at a place** to serve a protection order application, DV Order or issue a PPN.

Improved coordination of services

Courts have strengthened the **safety procedures** for DFV parties at court. A person can request safety measures if they have specific concerns about attending court for DFV matters.

Earlier engagement of **interpreter services** in courts occurs to ensure parties are supported to participate in the court process.

Courts consider **Family Law Orders** when making or amending a DVO to ensure consistency. Courts will attempt to obtain a copy of the family law order where a party cannot supply it.

While obtaining the consent of a person is preferred, government and non-government entities that support DV parties can **share information** without a person's consent, for the purpose of risk assessment and responding to serious DV threats. Provisions also:

- increase collaboration in **high risk teams**
- permit **police** to refer DV parties to **specialist service providers**
- simplify sharing of some **court documents** with **police** and **public prosecutors** as part of a criminal prosecution or investigation.

Perpetrators held to account and victims better protected

Increased penalties

The penalty has increased for respondents who breach conditions set out by Police:

- in a Police Protection Notice (PPN) or
- through specified release conditions

Previously, it was a maximum of two years imprisonment or 60 penalty units. The maximum penalty is now three years imprisonment or 120 penalty units (as at 30 May this equates to a fine of up to \$14628)

Changes to duration and content of orders

The length of a protection order has **increased** from **two to five years**, unless a court is satisfied there are reasons a shorter order should be made.

Voluntary Intervention orders have been renamed **Intervention Orders**. While a respondent must agree to an intervention order, it is **not** voluntary to comply with the order.

Courts *must* consider non-compliance when making or varying a protection order.

Courts *may* consider compliance with intervention orders, however it must not be the sole reason a court relies on to make or vary a protection order.

Tailored protection for victims is a greater focus with an additional requirement for Courts to consider which specific protection order conditions are needed to protect the victim or other named people.

Support for broader change in societal attitudes and awareness of domestic violence

The **definition of 'domestic violence'** in the legislation has been amended to include the broad range of behaviours that constitute domestic violence beyond physical abuse including: psychological, emotional, financial abuse, sexual abuse, threats and coercion.

The laws clarify that a court can issue a DVO based on a victim being **threatened or fearful** for their safety and well-being.

