

**RULE 12.610. INJUNCTIONS FOR DOMESTIC AND REPEAT VIOLENCE**

(a) **Application.** This rule shall apply only to temporary and permanent injunctions for protection against domestic violence and temporary and permanent injunctions for protection against repeat violence. All other injunctive relief sought in cases to which the Family Law Rules apply shall be governed by Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.610.

(b) **Petitions.**

(1) **Requirements for Use.**

(A) **Domestic Violence.** Any person may file a petition for an injunction for protection against domestic violence if they certify under oath that

(i) the party filing the injunction and the party against whom the injunction is sought are spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who are presently residing together as if a family or who have resided together in the past as if a family, or persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have resided together at any time;

(ii) the party filing the petition was the victim of, or has reasonable cause to believe he or she is in imminent danger of becoming the victim of an assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death perpetrated by the party against whom the injunction is sought; and

(iii) the specific facts and circumstances upon the basis of which relief is sought are true.

(B) **Repeat Violence.** Any person may file a petition for an injunction for protection against repeat violence if they certify under oath that

(i) two incidents of violence, defined as any assault, battery, sexual battery, or stalking, one of which must have occurred within 6 months of the filing of the petition, have been committed by the person against whom the

injunction is sought against the petitioner or the petitioner's immediate family member; and

(ii) the specific facts and circumstances upon the basis of which relief is sought are true.

(2) **Service of Petitions.**

(A) **Domestic Violence.** Personal service by a law enforcement agency is required. The clerk of the court shall furnish a copy of the petition for an injunction for protection against domestic violence, financial affidavit (if support is sought), Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act affidavit (if custody is sought), temporary injunction (if one has been entered), and notice of hearing to the appropriate sheriff or law enforcement agency of the county where the respondent resides or can be found for expeditious service of process.

(B) **Repeat Violence.** Personal service by a law enforcement agency is required. The clerk of the court shall furnish a copy of the petition for an injunction for protection against repeat violence, temporary injunction (if one has been entered), and notice of hearing to the appropriate sheriff or law enforcement agency of the county where the respondent resides or can be found for expeditious service of process.

(C) **Additional Documents.** Service of pleadings in cases of domestic or repeat violence other than petitions, supplemental petitions, and orders granting injunctions shall be governed by rule 12.080, except that service of a motion to modify or vacate an injunction should be by notice that is reasonably calculated to apprise the nonmoving party of the pendency of the proceedings.

(3) **Consideration by Court.** Upon the filing of a petition, the court shall set a hearing to be held at the earliest possible time. A denial of a petition for an ex parte injunction shall be by written order noting the legal grounds for denial. When the only ground for denial is no appearance of an immediate and present danger of domestic violence, the court shall set a full hearing on the petition for injunction with notice at the earliest possible time. Nothing herein affects a petitioner's right to promptly amend any petition, or otherwise be heard in person on any petition consistent with these rules.

(4) **Forms.**

(A) **Provision of Forms.** The clerk of the court or family or domestic/repeat violence intake personnel shall provide simplified forms, including instructions for completion, for any person whose circumstances meet the requirements of this rule and shall assist the petitioner in obtaining an injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence as provided by law.

(B) **Confidential Filing of Address.** A petitioner's address may be furnished to the court in a confidential filing separate from a petition or other form if, for safety reasons, a petitioner believes that the address should be concealed. The ultimate determination of a need for confidentiality must be made by the court as provided in Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.051.

(c) **Orders of Injunction.**

(1) **Consideration by Court.**

(A) **Temporary Injunction.** For the injunction for protection to be issued ex parte, it must appear to the court that an immediate and present danger of domestic or repeat violence exists. In an ex parte hearing for the purpose of obtaining an ex parte temporary injunction, the court may limit the evidence to the verified pleadings or affidavits for a determination of whether there is an imminent danger that the petitioner will become a victim of domestic or repeat violence. If the respondent appears at the hearing or has received reasonable notice of the hearing, the court may hold a hearing on the petition. If a verified petition and affidavit are amended, the court shall consider the amendments as if originally filed.

(B) **Final Judgment of Injunction for Protection Against Repeat Violence.** ~~Permanent Injunction.~~ A full hearing shall be conducted.

(C) **Final Judgment of Injunction for Protection Against Domestic Violence.** The court shall conduct a hearing and make a finding of whether domestic violence occurred or whether imminent danger of domestic violence exists. If the court determines that an injunction will be issued, the court shall also rule on the following:

(i) whether the respondent may have any contact with the petitioner, and if so, under what conditions;

(ii) exclusive use of the parties' shared residence;

(iii) temporary custody of minor children;  
(iv) whether temporary visitation will occur and whether it will be supervised;  
(v) whether temporary child support will be ordered;  
(vi) whether temporary spousal support will be ordered; and  
(vii) such other relief as the court deems necessary for the protection of the petitioner.

The court, with the consent of the parties, may refer the parties to mediation by a certified family mediator to attempt to resolve the details as to the above rulings. This mediation shall be the only alternative dispute resolution process offered by the court. Any agreement reached by the parties through mediation shall be reviewed by the court and, if approved, incorporated into the final judgment. If no agreement is reached the matters referred shall be returned to the court for appropriate rulings. Regardless of whether all issues are resolved in mediation, an injunction for protection against domestic violence shall be entered or extended the same day as the hearing on the petition commences.

(2) **Issuing of Injunction.**

(A) **Standardized Forms.** The temporary and permanent injunction forms approved by the Florida Supreme Court for repeat and domestic violence injunctions shall be the forms used in the issuance of injunctions under chapters 741 and 784, Florida Statutes. Additional standard provisions, not inconsistent with the standardized portions of those forms, may be added to the special provisions section of the temporary and permanent injunction forms, or at the end of each section to which they apply, on the written approval of the chief judge of the circuit, and upon final review and written approval by the Chief Justice. Copies of such additional standard provisions, once approved by the Chief Justice, shall be sent to the chair of the Family Law Rules Committee of The Florida Bar, the chair of the Family Courts Steering Committee, and the chair of The Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

(B) **Bond.** No bond shall be required by the court for the entry of an injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence. The clerk of

the court shall provide the parties with sufficient certified copies of the order of injunction for service.

(3) **Service of Injunctions.**

(A) **Temporary Injunction.** A temporary injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence must be personally served. When the respondent has been served previously with the temporary injunction and has failed to appear at the initial hearing on the temporary injunction, any subsequent pleadings seeking an extension of time may be served on the respondent by the clerk of the court by certified mail in lieu of personal service by a law enforcement officer. If the temporary injunction was issued after a hearing because the respondent was present at the hearing or had reasonable notice of the hearing, the injunction may be served in the manner provided for a permanent injunction.

(B) **Permanent Injunction.**

(i) **Party Present at Hearing.** The parties may acknowledge receipt of the permanent injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence in writing on the face of the original order. If a party is present at the hearing and that party fails or refuses to acknowledge the receipt of a certified copy of the injunction, the clerk shall cause the order to be served by mailing certified copies of the injunction to the parties who were present at hearing at the last known address of each party. Service by mail is complete upon mailing. When an order is served pursuant to this subdivision, the clerk shall prepare a written certification to be placed in the court file specifying the time, date, and method of service and within 24 hours shall forward a copy of the injunction and the clerk's affidavit of service to the sheriff with jurisdiction over the residence of the petitioner. This procedure applies to service of orders to modify or vacate injunctions for protection against domestic or repeat violence.

(ii) **Party not Present at Hearing.** Within 24 hours after the court issues, continues, modifies, or vacates an injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence, the clerk shall forward a copy of the injunction to the sheriff with jurisdiction over the residence of the petitioner for service.

(4) **Duration.**

(A) **Temporary Injunction.** Any temporary injunction shall be effective for a fixed period not to exceed 15 days. A full hearing shall be set for a date no later than the date when the temporary injunction ceases to be effective. The court may grant a continuance of the temporary injunction and of the full hearing for good cause shown by any party, or upon its own motion for good cause, including failure to obtain service.

(B) **Permanent Injunction.** Any relief granted by an injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence shall be granted for a fixed period or until further order of court. Such relief may be granted in addition to other civil and criminal remedies. Upon petition of the victim, the court may extend the injunction for successive periods or until further order of court. Broad discretion resides with the court to grant an extension after considering the circumstances. No specific allegations are required.

(5) **Enforcement.** The court may enforce violations of an injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence in civil contempt proceedings, which are governed by rule 12.570, or in criminal contempt proceedings, which are governed by Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.840, or, if the violation meets the statutory criteria, it may be prosecuted as a crime under Florida Statutes.

(6) **Motion to Modify or Vacate Injunction.** The petitioner or respondent may move the court to modify or vacate an injunction at any time. Service of a motion to modify or vacate injunctions shall be governed by subdivision 12.610(b)(2) of this rule. However, for service of a motion to modify to be sufficient if a party is not represented by an attorney, service must be in accord with rule 12.070, or in the alternative, there must be filed in the record proof of receipt of this motion by the nonmoving party personally.

(7) **Forms.** The clerk of the court or family or domestic/repeat violence intake personnel shall provide simplified forms including instructions for completion, for the persons whose circumstances meet the requirements of this rule and shall assist in the preparation of the affidavit in support of the violation of an order of injunction for protection against domestic or repeat violence.

Commentary 2002 Amendment. This rule was amended to emphasize the importance of judicial involvement in resolving injunction for protection against domestic violence cases and to establish protections if mediation is used. The first sentence of (c)(1)(C)

contemplates that an injunction will not be entered unless there is a finding that domestic violence occurred or that there is imminent danger of domestic violence. Subsection (c)(1)(C) also enumerates certain rulings that a judge must make after deciding to issue an injunction and before referring parties to mediation. This is intended to ensure that issues involving safety are decided by the judge and not left to the parties to resolve. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, as indicated by subsection (c)(1)(C)(vii), which provides for “other relief,” such as retrieval of personal property and referrals to batterers’ intervention programs. The prohibition against use of any “alternative dispute resolution” other than mediation is intended to preclude any court-based process that encourages or facilitates, through mediation or negotiation, agreement as to one or more issues, but does not preclude the parties through their attorneys from presenting agreements to the court. All agreements must be consistent with this rule regarding findings. Prior to ordering the parties to mediate, the court should consider risk factors in the case and the suitability of the case for mediation. The court should not refer the case to mediation if there has been a high degree of past violence, a potential for future lethality exists, or there are other factors which would compromise the mediation process.