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Press Release

DA Morrissey provides information on Obtaining restraining orders during COVID

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People experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, or sexual harassment, can still obtain protective orders from their local district courts, even while those courts are closed to most other business, according to Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey.

Safety planning and referrals to services beyond the court process are also available.

"COVID shutdowns have changed how people access protective orders under Chapter 209A and 258E, but my office has trained domestic violence and sexual assault advocates working in every courthouse – including the Norfolk County Probate Court – available to help with the process," District Attorney Morrissey said.

Residents of Foxborough, Franklin, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, Plainville, Walpole, and Wrentham are served by the Wrentham District Court, located at 60 East Street. Local police can help obtain emergency restraining orders on weekends, holidays, and at night. During business hours, except in situations that require a call to 911 for immediate safety, those seeking assistance can call the court clerk's designated restraining order and harassment prevention order line, 508-384-3106 Ext. 231.

Residents of Stoughton, Sharon, Avon, and Canton are served by the Stoughton District Court, located at 1288 Central Street 781-344-2131 (PRESS: 1, THEN PRESS: 3).

Residents of Dedham, Norwood, Westwood, Dover, Needham, Wellesley, and Medfield are served by the Dedham District Court located at 631 High Street 781-467-7314

Brookline residents are served by the District Court located at 360 Washington Street 617-232-4660 (PRESS 2#, then PRESS 2#).

Residents of Quincy, Milton, Braintree, Weymouth, Cohasset, Holbrook and Randolph are served by the Quincy District Court located at 1 Dennis Ryan Parkway, 617-984-4191.

People can also access blank restraining order and harassment prevention order applications online at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/restraining-orderabuse-prevention-order-court-forms> for intimate partner related abuse or at <https://www.mass.gov/harassment-prevention-orders> for situations including harassment, stalking, or sexual assault. "In addition to providing initial information on the court process, the clerk's office can connect applicants to the appropriate advocate within the District Attorney's Office as well to the civilian advocates affiliated with local sexual and domestic violence community-based programs," District Attorney Morrissey said.

"While their roles in the process are different, both the DA's office advocates and these community-based civilian advocates can help explain the process, provide safety planning, guide people through the forms, provide support during hearings, and smooth the way for those who need help," District Attorney Morrissey said.

People can also contact the civilian advocates directly. To find a nearby program, Jane Doe Inc., the statewide coalition against sexual and domestic violence, has an online directory to search by city/town or zip code at <https://jane-doe.org/findhelp>.

"Those in immediate danger should call 911. Those with the space to do so can also access the process through the district courts – even as they remain closed to most business," DA Morrissey said. "We are still available to help."

Massachusetts' state-wide SafeLink hotline is also still in operation at 877-785-2020 to talk to a trained advocate for free and confidential services.