



SUPPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

Navigating the Process

Live Recorded Video

April 29, 2026

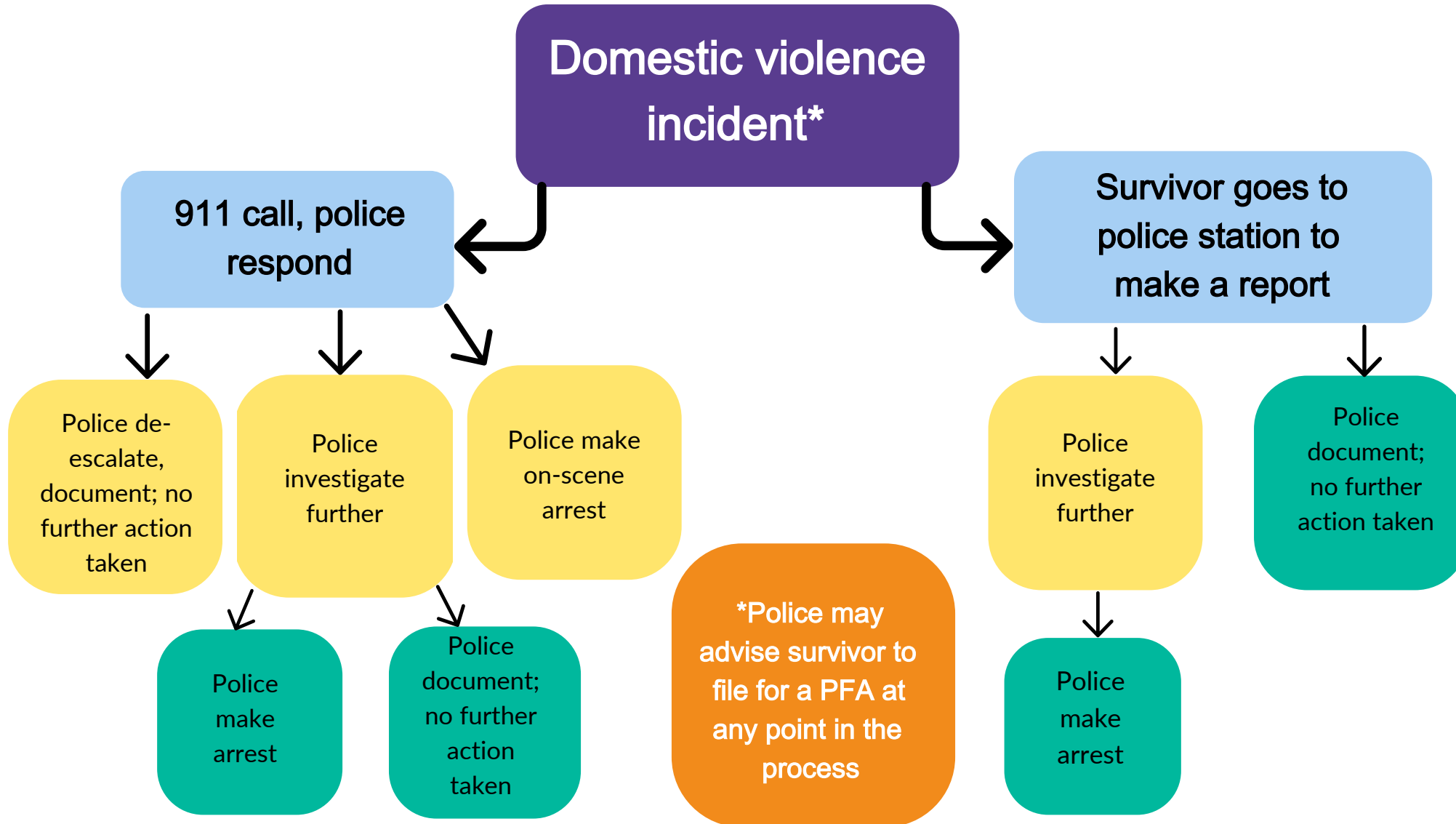
Township Administration Building

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

- 106 victim deaths reported in 2024
- 69% of those killed were by a current or former intimate partner
- 1 in 3 Pennsylvania women and 1 in 4 men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime
- Springfield Township Police Department reported 475 calls and 19 arrests related to DV (2023-2025)



Intervention Paths Following a Domestic Violence Incident



POLICE RESPONSE

VIA 9 11

Domestic violence calls are some of the most dangerous calls that police officers respond to.

- Two or more officers will respond; they have been trained to respond in a culturally competent, trauma-informed way
- Parties are separated and officers will interview each party and attempt to identify the primary aggressor. Any witnesses present will be interviewed as well
- Injuries will be treated at Abington Hospital if needed, and if a sexual assault occurs, specially trained nurses will treat the patient/victim
- Montgomery County's Lethality Assessment Questionnaire will be utilized during the interview
- The Laurel House's Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) will be notified to respond if needed, or the victim will be encouraged to contact Laurel House, and police will work closely with the organization to ensure the safety of the victim
- Police will investigate the incident thoroughly, document persons and the scene, take statements, and arrest the offender, if appropriate
- The victim will be advised that they can apply for a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order



POLICE RESPONSE

VIA WALK-IN

- Officer and/or detective will meet with the individual
- If the victim is a female and requests to speak with a female officer, an available officer will attend the meeting
- Victim will be referred to support services, including Laurel House or the Women's Center of Montgomery County
- Detective will investigate the incident:
 - Interview the individual regarding the incident and prior history
 - Interview involved parties, take a statement
 - Charge the offender appropriately if a crime has occurred



UNDERSTANDING PROTECTION FROM ABUSE (PFA) ORDERS

- In PA, a PFA order from a court can give protective relief for a victim
- PFA orders can work to deter certain abusers
- A PFA is just one tool in a larger plan to be safe from abuse
- Decision to apply for the PFA always lies with the victim
- Decision to charge/arrest always lies with the police



WHO CAN GET A PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDER?

In PA, You may be eligible to get a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order for yourself or on behalf of your minor child if you and the alleged abuser are:

- Spouses or former spouses
- Domestic Partners
- Current or former sexual or intimate partners
- Family members



THREE TYPES OF PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS

- Emergency PFA
- Temporary PFA
- Final PFA

P1

RESTRAINING ORDER

Temporary Order
Order will expire on the _____ of _____ at _____ a.m./p.m.

Order After Hearing
Order will expire on the _____ of _____ at _____ a.m.

COURT HEARING

Time:
Room:
Case:

EMERGENCY ORDER

FILING FOR AN EMERGENCY PFA ORDER

If Courts are closed and you believe you or your minor child are in immediate and present danger of abuse, call 911 or go to your nearest police station to ask about filing for an Emergency PFA Order.

Emergency PFA Order Process

- Your local police will talk to you about the PFA petition and give you paperwork to complete.
- You will have a hearing with a judge (likely online).
- If granted, an Emergency PFA may restrict the defendant from any contact, from coming to your home, school, or work and may also evict them from your home.
- The Emergency PFA Order is valid until the close of business the next day the courts are open. You will then have to file for a Temporary PFA Order.
- If granted, law enforcement will serve a copy of the PFA to defendant.

STARTING THE PFA PETITION PROCESS

In-Person

- Victim presents to the Montgomery County Court Administration office (One Montgomery Plaza, 425 Swede St. Norristown) to pick up the PFA Packet
- Complete PFA packet



Take the finished packet to the Prothonotary Office's PFA Indexing Department, in One Montgomery Plaza, across the street from the Courthouse.

Starting Online

- Go to the Montgomery County Prothonotary Office's webpage: montgomerycountypa.gov/prothy
- Select "Protection from Abuse" from the menu to the left
- Follow the link to complete and submit your electronic PFA packet
- Go to the Court Administration within four days. Bring a photo ID to collect a printout of the electronic PFA packet
- If a packet is incomplete, it can be finished by hand



TEMPORARY AND FINAL ORDER HEARINGS

- Attend your hearing for a Temporary Order after filing your initial paperwork
- If Temporary Order is granted, return to the Prothonotary Office for copies of the paperwork
- Bring Temporary Order to the Sheriff's Department on the first floor of the Courthouse. Sheriff's deputies will serve the order to the defendant.
 - Recommended the petitioner also bring a copy of the Temporary Order to the local police department.
- Final hearing typically scheduled within 10 days of the Temporary Order hearing



AFTER FINAL PFA ORDER IS GRANTED

- Both the petitioner and the defendant will receive copies of the Final Order in the courtroom
- Petitioner and defendant will also receive Final Order copies from the Prothonotary's office
- Final PFA orders are usually in place for 1-3 years
- Keep final PFA order paperwork in a secure location for as long as the order is in effect
- Free Hope Cards are immediately mailed to the protected person(s)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Laurel House

- 1-[800-642-3150](tel:8006423150) or Text "HOPE" to 85511
- Emergency safe house, counseling, education, advocacy

The Women's Center

- 24/7 hotline w/ Language Line services (more than 300 languages available)
- Guidance w/completing the Protection from Abuse packet
- Connections with additional NGO resources (e.g., Laurel House shelter)
- Volunteer support in the courtroom on hearing days

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- 1-800-799-7233

PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- <https://www.pcadv.org/find-help/>

Victim Services Center of Montgomery County

- 1-888-521-0983 (24/7 crisis support)