

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPTIONAL NOTICE OF RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Read these instructions carefully.

This form is optional. You are not required to use it.

Whether you choose to use this form or not, lots of helpful information is available in a guide called *ORDERS OF PROTECTION IN WYOMING: Helpful Information for a Respondent to Know*. You can find that guide on the forms pages of the Wyoming Judicial Branch website.

Before You Get Started

This form, the Optional Notice of Respondent Information, can be used by a person who was named as the Respondent in a Petition for Order of Protection. This means that someone has asked the Court for an Order of Protection against you.

If you have been served with a Petition for Order of Protection – that means if the Court had a Petition delivered or given to you – you can use this form to tell the Court some basic information about yourself.

It is important to remember that the Court will hold a hearing (a meeting with the judge), and that is when you will have the chance to tell the judge your side of the story. This optional form is only used to tell the Court a few pieces of basic information.

This form is optional. That means you are not required to fill it out or file it with the Court. You will decide whether to use this form or not.

If you want to fill out this form, the instructions below will help.

The top of the page on the Optional Notice of Respondent Information.

The top of the page has blanks for the name of the county that the Court is in (for example, County of Big Horn) and the number of the judicial district (for example, Fifth Judicial District). This information will be on the top of the Petition you received.

The next blanks are for the name of the Petitioner and the name of the Respondent. If you are named as the Respondent on the Petition, you are the **Respondent**. Write your name on the Respondent line. On the Petitioner line, write the name of the person who is listed as Petitioner on the Petition.

The next blank is for the Case Number. Copy the number that is written on the Petition. (The number may include letters.)

Section 1 is for information about the Petition you received.

In the blanks, write the date the Petition was filed. That date will be on a stamp near the top of the first page of the Petition.

Sections 2, 3, and 4 are statements you will be making.

If you choose to sign and file this form, you will be telling the Court that you are the Respondent. That is statement # 2.

In statement # 3, you will be telling the Court that you plan to take part in all of the hearings (meetings) that are about the Petition and about an Order of Protection.

Important Note: Even if you do not file this form, the Court will notify you about all of the hearings. That means the Court will tell you in advance when and where a hearing will happen. You will be given the chance to take part. In some situations, you will be required to take part.

Statement # 4 tells the Court that the form is not an admission. That means you are **not admitting** anything. When you go to the hearing about the Petition, you may choose to talk to the judge about what happened, and about which parts of the Petition are true and which parts are not true. This form is not used to admit or deny what the Petitioner wrote.

Do not change any of the words in Sections 2, 3, and 4. Do not add anything to those statements.

Section 5 is for information about you.

The Petitioner wrote personal information about you in the Petition. It is possible that the Petitioner wrote a lot of information or not very much at all. It is possible that some of the information the Petitioner wrote was inaccurate.

In Section 5 of this form, you can tell the Court accurate information about yourself. Giving the Court accurate information about you might help prevent confusing situations for you and your friends, family, roommates, or coworkers.

Signature Section – Important!

On the line labelled DATED, write the date you are signing the form.
Sign your name on the signature line.

By signing the form, you are telling the Court that everything the form says is true.
Review the information carefully before you sign the form.

Important Things You Need to Know

What do I do after I fill out the form?

If you choose to, you will file the form with the Clerk of Circuit Court in the county named at the top of the Petition for Order of Protection.

The Wyoming Judicial Branch website has a list of circuit court locations. The Clerk's office is at the court.

Is an Order of Protection the same thing as a restraining order?

An Order of Protection might also be called a restraining order, protection order, or protective order. In Wyoming, the formal name is Order of Protection.

What do I do if the information in the Petition is wrong?

Because a Petition was filed, the Court will schedule a hearing (meeting) so that you and the Petitioner can tell the judge what happened. At the hearing, the Petitioner will have a chance to tell their side of the situation, and you will have a chance to tell your side.

What is an Ex Parte Order of Protection?

An Ex Parte Order of Protection (which also might be called a temporary or emergency protection order) is a protection order that a judge might give to the Petitioner soon after the Petition is filed. An Ex Parte Order will last for a short time (usually a few days).

The judge must hold a hearing before deciding whether to replace the Ex Parte Order with an Order that lasts longer.

Important Note: An Ex Parte Order is a special kind of order that the judge is allowed to issue **before** hearing both sides of the situation. It might feel unfair to you, but an Ex Parte Order is real and the law requires you to follow any rules stated in the Ex Parte Order.

Is this a criminal matter?

An Order of Protection and the Petition that is used to ask for one are parts of a **civil case**. A civil case is not a criminal case. But it is important to understand that **there might also be a criminal case** related to this situation.

If there is a criminal case, lawyers for the government may bring charges against you. The Petitioner cannot charge you with a crime.

Could I go to jail?

Yes.

Violating an Order of Protection – that means breaking the rules or restrictions – **is** a crime. If you violate the Order of Protection, you might get arrested.

For more information on Orders of Protection, on what happens at hearings, and on how you can communicate with the Court, read *ORDERS OF PROTECTION IN WYOMING: Helpful Information for a Respondent to Know*. You can find that guide on the forms pages of the Wyoming Judicial Branch website.