

EXTREME RISK PROTECTIVE ORDERS



A Life-Saving Tool for Maryland Families, Clinicians, and Law Enforcement

WHAT IS AN ERPO?

A court-issued civil order that temporarily requires a person to surrender firearms and prohibits purchasing firearms—issued when someone poses an imminent danger of injury to self or others.

WHO CAN FILE?

Law enforcement • Family or household members • Dating partners • Co-parents
Licensed medical or behavioral health professionals

FOR FAMILIES & LOVED ONES



**You have the power to act
before it's too late.**

An ERPO creates a critical window of safety while your loved one gets help. It's not about permanently taking away rights — it's about preventing tragedy in a moment of crisis.

FOR CLINICIANS



**Your observations can be the
intervention that saves a life.**

Conduct risk assessment and document observations before filing. You have the power to act before it's too late.

FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



**You don't have to wait for
someone else to act first.**

File a petition directly — without a family member or clinician initiating the process. Gather and document evidence: statements, reports, social media posts, prior incidents. Serve the order immediately, remove and inventory all firearms, and return proof of service to the court.

FROM PETITION TO HEARING: THE STEPS OF AN ERPO CASE

For forms and procedural guidance: **Maryland Judiciary website: mdcourts.gov/district/ERPO**

1

File a Petition

Submit forms at any Maryland District Court or with a District Court Commissioner after hours.

2

Court Review & Initial Order

A judge or commissioner reviews the petition, often the same day, and may ask the petitioner questions. If the legal standard is met, a protective order is issued.

3

Order Served

Law enforcement serves the order and safely removes firearms and ammunition.

4

Final Court Hearing & Order

A final court hearing is held. The respondent may attend and speak directly to a judge. If granted, a final ERPO can last up to one year.

IF YOU ARE THE RESPONDENT

An ERPO is not a criminal charge. You have the right to attend a hearing and speak to a judge. You may ask the court to modify or end the order, and you may have your firearms returned when legally eligible.

Interim orders are issued after hours for 1-2 days, while temporary orders are issued during regular court hours for up to 7 days. Final orders can last up to 1 year.

SUPPORT RESOURCES

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline —
988 (24/7 support)
211 Maryland — Dial 211 or visit 211md.org for food, housing, employment, child care, and more

Maryland Crisis Hotline —
1-800-422-0009

Maryland Courts ERPO Information —
mdcourts.gov/district/ERPO

Anyone Can Help Prevent Gun Violence.

Learn more and find resources at mdpgv.org/extreme-risk-protective-orders

Maryland ERPO Law: Public Safety Article § 5-601 through § 5-610 | Forms & filing:
mdcourts.gov/district/ERPO

This material is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.