

# Risk Protection Orders in Connecticut



When a person with access to firearms is making threats or behaving in a manner that creates a risk of harm to self or others, consider filing for a Risk Protection Order (RPO), which is a civil court order that temporarily prohibits a person from possessing or purchasing firearms.

- State's attorneys and police officers may file a complaint for an RPO.
- Family and household members or medical professionals may file an application for an RPO investigation with the court.
  - The court will review the application and order a law enforcement agency to investigate.
  - If the law enforcement agency determines that there is probable cause that the person poses an imminent risk of personal injury to self or others they must file a complaint for an RPO.
- An RPO will require an individual to temporarily surrender any guns in their possession and prohibit them from purchasing guns.
- It is not required that the individual currently own firearms before an RPO may be sought or issued.

RPOs are temporary and are a civil process distinct from arrests and prosecutions, mental health commitments, and other civil or criminal restraining orders. An RPO may be requested on its own or alongside another type of intervention.

RPOs may be an appropriate intervention in the following circumstances:

- Threats of self harm/suicide
- Threats of harm to others, including domestic/family violence
- Threats of mass harm, including school shootings

**If there is probable cause to believe that a person “poses a risk of imminent personal injury to such person’s self or to another person” consider filing a complaint for an RPO.** When the complaint is filed, the court will schedule a hearing within 14 days to determine whether the RPO should continue and provide notice to the individual.

**The court shall consider any of the following in determining whether to issue an RPO:**

- Recent threats or acts of violence directed toward other persons
- Recent threats or acts of violence directed toward such person's self
- Recent acts of cruelty to animals

**The court may also consider the following:**

- Reckless use, display or brandishing of a firearm or other deadly weapon
- History of the use, attempted use or threatened use of physical force against other persons
- Prior involuntary confinement in a hospital for persons with psychiatric disabilities
- Illegal use of controlled substances or abuse of alcohol

A law enforcement officer serving an RPO should request that all firearms in their possession be immediately surrendered to the officer.

**To effectuate safe service of RPOs and relinquishment of firearms:**

- Conduct a threat assessment prior to service, including coordinating with the individual's family/friends when appropriate to identify the safest options for service.
- Clearly explain the terms of the RPO, including what the individual must do to comply and that noncompliance is a crime.
- Provide a receipt for any guns surrendered.

**Warrants:**

The court may issue a search warrant if there is probable cause to believe that the person possesses firearms at a specific location. Two officers must sign off on the warrant request.