

STEPS TO INCREASE SAFETY DURING INJUNCTION HEARINGS FROM THE WISCONSIN BENCHCARD ON SAFETY ISSUES AT INJUNCTION

BEFORE . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a specialized entrance for petitioners which respondents cannot access; • Provide security check points for all parties including weapons screening; • Consider a security escort for petitioner to and from courtroom. If not possible in all cases, provide in cases of highest threat as identified by petitioner and/or advocate; • Have court security present before hearing to interrupt any contact between petitioner and respondent. Remind all parties contact is a violation of the law; • Keep parties separate before each hearing, preferably in different locations; • Notify security as to expectations for behavior and when to make an arrest for violation of the temporary restraining order, and make sure all parties are aware; • Allow the petitioner to have someone accompany him or her for support; and • Provide information to petitioner and/or advocate at time of issuance of the temporary restraining order as to what security measures are possible and how to obtain them in your county.
DURING . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide seating arrangements to keep petitioner and respondent separated in the courtroom. For example, have court security between parties during the hearing; • Seat petitioner and respondent such that respondent cannot make any eye contact with petitioner to minimize being stared at or intimidated by the respondent; • Take control of courtroom behavior. Stop tactics such as asking irrelevant questions on cross, interrupting petitioner during testimony, accusing petitioner of behaviors irrelevant to hearing, begging petitioner to return to respondent or their child(ren), asking if petitioner still loves respondent, or revealing petitioner's private information; • Do not allow respondent to ask for petitioner's address or allow petitioner to provide; • Educate petitioner to look at the judge or court commissioner while testifying; and • Impress upon the parties that there are legal penalties for violation of the temporary restraining order or injunction, whether those violations happen within the court or outside of the courtroom.
AFTER . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagger departures, with victim leaving first. Escort victim to vehicle in high-risk cases; • Have respondent, their family, and friends wait at least 15 minutes after hearing; and • Monitor respondent while he/she is waiting; inform respondent when he/she can leave.

Reprinted with permission from the Center for Court Innovation's Domestic Violence Benchbooks: A Guide to Court Innovation (2015).
The original Wisconsin bench card was created by the Wisconsin STOP Grant Advisory Committee and is reprinted here with its permission.