



What happens next?

The injunctions taken out by the police (exclusion order, orders not to communicate or make contact, restraining order) initially apply for a few days (normally 10 days). Ring the police immediately if the offender breaches any of these orders.

Hearing

If preliminary criminal proceedings are instigated against the offender, the police will summon you to the hearing. We recommend that you attend the hearing so that you can describe what has happened to you without interruption. A lawyer or a trusted person may accompany you to this hearing.

Local courts

The expulsion of the offender by the police applies for a limited period. To remain safe from the offender for a longer period of time, independently of a complaint to the legal claims office (Rechtsantragstelle) of the responsible local court, you may also apply for the following measures to be taken under the Protection Against Violence Act:

- Protection order (orders prohibiting contact or communication by the offender and restraining order)
- Allocation of the home for your sole use

You may apply to the family court for protection orders to be issued not only in the event of violence within close social relationships, but also in cases of persistent stalking.

Legal advice/assistance

You should contact one of the named advice centres or a lawyer for questions relating to the transfer of parental custody, the suspension of visitation rights or your right of residence. They will also give you information on how to apply to the responsible local court for legal advice and legal aid if you are on a low income or have no income. Should it come to a court hearing, you will receive support from the witness contact services at the court and from the public prosecution service. Your summons to attend the hearing will tell you about the duties and availability of witness contact services.

Medical examination/preservation of evidence

Irrespective of a complaint to the police, the following outpatient clinics offer free examinations, documentation and preservation of evidence:

- Uniklinik Mainz Forensic Outpatient Clinic for adult and child victims of physical and sexual violence. Information is available by calling: 06131 / 17-9550 or 06131 / 17-0 (24-hr on-call service)
- Klinikum Saarbrücken (Forensic Medicine) Outpatient Clinic for children and adults who have been the victims of violence. Information is available by calling: 0681 / 963-2913, -2914, -2915

What should you do without fail?

- Have your injuries certified by a doctor and release the latter from patient/physician confidentiality
- Keep any incriminating evidence (e.g. letters, SMS, emails)
- Use a diary to make a note of any violations, together with the date and (if possible) the names of witnesses
- Do not become isolated; stay in touch with friends, relatives and neighbours
- Leave a copy of essential documents with a friend/relative
- Protect yourself and your children. Leave the house/apartment if you fear renewed violence or call the police in good time

Do you have any more questions?

Should you still be unsure of anything, please contact

- Your police station
- Intervention agencies
- Women's refuges (Frauenhaus)
- Advice services in women's refuges
- Independent women's helplines
- A lawyer
- The legal claims office (Rechtsantragstelle) at your local court

All authorities and organisations will be happy to help you.

Police Service

VIOLENCE IN CLOSE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND STALKING



Help and advice - general
information from the police



You have the right and the opportunity to defend yourself if you are or have been mistreated, beaten, injured, threatened, locked up, kept imprisoned, forced into sexual acts or raped by someone with whom you have close personal contact.

This also applies if anyone persistently preys on you, follows you or harasses you by SMS, telephone or internet (stalking).

It is important that you are fully informed of the following:

What do the police do?

The police are obliged to avert danger and to instigate preliminary proceedings if any criminal offences (such as physical assaults, sexual crimes, threats) are suspected. This obligation applies to the police regardless of your wishes; if necessary, you must declare your personal interest in a criminal prosecution (initiation of a criminal complaint).

The police

- Question offenders, victims and witnesses separately to find out exactly what has happened
- Take initial measures to preserve evidence (e.g. forensics, photographs)
- In certain cases may remove the offender from the home or take him into custody
- Will request your consent for your data to be forwarded to an intervention agency, which will assist you with further measures
- Advise you on the best way to protect yourself in the future

What rights do you have?

- You can ask the police to safeguard specific evidence
- You have the freedom to give or withhold evidence from the police, i.e. you may or may not make statements about the case. You may also undergo a physical examination
- A trusted person or a lawyer may accompany you to report an offence to the police
- If you are in danger from the offender, you may take action to keep your address secret
- In certain circumstances, you may apply for benefits under the Crime Victims Compensation Act (Opferentschädigungsgesetz [OEG]) from the Office for Social Affairs (Amt für soziale Angelegenheiten) in Koblenz, Landau, Mainz or Trier

Who will help you next?

Intervention agencies

If you give the police your consent to pass your address on to the nearest intervention agency, staff from the agency will contact you within a few days of the police operation. The intervention agency offers you:

- Initial psychosocial support
- Clarification of the situation once initial protective measures have been taken by the police
- Information on what you can do to protect yourself (and to protect your children)
- Legal information, e.g. on the Protection Against Violence Act (Gewaltschutzgesetz)
- Information on other local support services and a referral to these if required

Women's refuges (Frauenhaus)

Should you decide to leave your home, you can find protection and accommodation in a women's refuge (Frauenhaus). The intervention agency or the police will - should you wish - make contact for you. The addresses of women's refuges are anonymous and men are not admitted.

- The women's refuge will provide comprehensive advice and support for you and your children, so that you can develop a new outlook on life and determine your own future
- You will receive information on legal, financial and health matters here
- You can be given help and advice in dealing with authorities and other institutions

Take with you as many personal items as possible, e.g.:

- Your identity card or passport and those of your children
- Birth certificate, marriage certificate, family register
- Health insurance card, record of vaccinations
- Documents relating to your residence permit
- Tenancy agreement, employment contract, pension certificates, letters from the employment office, social insurance statement
- Letters from the social welfare office, parental orders
- Account files, cash, EC card, credit card

- Medication
- Personal items for you and your children (clothes, toiletries, toys, school things, diary)

Support services in women's refuges (Frauenhaus)

Whether or not you are staying in a women's refuge (Frauenhaus), its support services will advise you in the event of a crisis in your partnership, violence in close social relationships, forced marriage and stalking. You will receive help in the form of crisis intervention and long-term psychosocial support here. You can find out about your rights. You will also be given general advice on social welfare, on how to secure the basic means of support if you separate for instance.

Independent women's helplines – Specialist agencies for sexual violence

Women's helplines provide help for women and girls and their family members in cases of sexual violence. This includes sexual harassment, sexual coercion and rape - also within partnerships, families and in the form of stalking.

The specialist agencies provide psychosocial support and crisis intervention. You may also seek advice and assistance here if you have experienced sexual violence as a child. You will also receive legal information, for example on reporting an offence or on the Protection Against Violence Act. If required, staff will accompany you to the police station, to court hearings, to the doctor and to hospital. Women's helplines also provide self-help services and advice for your trusted persons.

How do you gain access to the help on offer?

You will find information on the availability of

- Intervention agencies
- Women's refuges (Frauenhaus)
- Advice services in women's refuges
- Women's helplines and
- Other advice and support organisations

in Rhineland Palatinate under www.rigg.rlp.de in the section „Hilfangebote“. The site also has downloads and further information available. The homepage www.gewaltschutz.info provides additional information.