

ONE THING YOU CAN DO.

Vermont

When someone you love is showing warning signs that they might try to harm themselves, it can feel like there is nothing you can do in such a high-stakes and emotional situation.

But there is one thing you *can do*: you can request an extreme risk protection order to temporarily remove guns from the situation and help keep your loved one safe.

In a moment of crisis, access to a gun can be the difference between life and death. If you're seeing signs that someone you love is considering harming themselves, you can seek an extreme risk protection order to temporarily suspend their access to firearms, which are the most lethal form of suicide - until the crisis passes.

Access to a gun can be the difference between life and death in a moment of crisis. Keep your loved one safe with an extreme risk protection order.

What does Vermont's *extreme risk protection order* do?

An extreme risk protection order is a court order that enables courts to temporarily restrict a person's access to guns when a person poses a risk to themselves or others.

Extreme risk protection orders are designed to help law enforcement and concerned family members intervene quickly in dangerous situations.

Who can request an extreme risk protection order in Vermont?

Under Vermont law, only prosecutors — a State's Attorney or the Office of the Attorney General — may file a petition for an extreme risk protection order. However, the process generally includes the assistance of law enforcement, who can work with prosecutors and concerned members of the public to file petitions.

How can I seek an extreme risk protection order?

The first step when seeking an extreme risk protection order is to contact a member of law enforcement and discuss your concerns with them. Law enforcement can then investigate your concerns and work with prosecutors to request the extreme risk protection order from the court.

What happens after an extreme risk protection order is filed?

Once the court receives a request (called a "petition") for an extreme risk protection order, the court will notify the person and schedule a court hearing about whether the order should be issued.

If, at the hearing, the court finds that a person presents a risk in the near future of suicide or of causing physical injury to another person, the judge can issue a court order that requires the person's firearms to be held by law enforcement, a federally licensed firearms dealer, or a third party approved by the court, for as long as the order is in effect.

Also, the person will not be able to purchase new firearms while the order is in effect.

How long does an extreme risk protection order last?

A final extreme risk protection order lasts for up to six months. At the end of that time, a renewal of the order may be requested. The order can only be extended after a court hearing.

I'm afraid to wait until a court hearing is scheduled. What if the person is in immediate danger of harming themselves or someone else?

Concern for the safety of the public or of the person may demand that action be taken before the scheduled hearing date, to prevent immediate danger.

To protect a person or public safety during this time, a judge may issue a temporary extreme risk protection order that restricts a person's access to firearms before the person has been notified of the petition, and before a full hearing is held. A temporary order will only be issued if the judge has determined that the temporary order is necessary to prevent imminent danger.

How long do temporary orders last?

A temporary order only lasts until the court hearing on a final extreme risk protection order.

Because temporary orders only stay in place for a short period of time — up to 14 days— these orders balance the urgent need for public safety with the due process rights of all involved.

Will an extreme risk protection order go on someone's criminal record?

No. An extreme risk protection order is a civil court order. Its sole purpose is to remove firearms from a person who is at high risk of causing harm to themselves or to others. The court's decision to issue the order does not cause the person to have a criminal record.

If you have immediate safety concerns, call 911 for emergency assistance.

If you believe that a loved one is a risk to their own safety, you may wish to encourage them to seek expert help. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, seven days a week at:

**www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
text HOME to 741741**