

# **Important Things to Know About VPO**

## **❖ The Law**

Effective January 1, 2010, Md. Code Ann., Family Law §4-504 requires law enforcement to electronically notify the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) of the service of an interim or temporary protective order on the respondent within two (2) hours after the service. If the petitioner has requested notification of the service, DPSCS must (1) notify the petitioner of the service on the respondent of an interim or a temporary protective order within one (1) hour after a law enforcement officer electronically notifies DPSCS of the service and (2) notify the petitioner of the service on the respondent of a final protective order within one (1) hour after knowledge of service of the protective order on the respondent. The law also requires the Court clerk or Commissioner to provide the notification request form to the petitioner.

## **❖ Different Systems**

VINE Protective Order (VPO) and Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) are **not the same system** and are not connected in any way. VPO is for the notification of served protective orders while VINE is for custody status notification of offenders. A victim who wants to register for both systems must do so separately, using different case numbers.

## **❖ Birth Dates and Addresses**

The system was updated so that the base “stub” record of a protective order issued by the court is sent directly to VPO, allowing victims to register for an order immediately. However, if there is no known birth date for the respondent on the protective order, the order cannot go into METERS. Once the order is served, a birth date will be obtained by law enforcement, but this will be after the interim or temporary order has been served. Once the order is entered into METERS, the “stub” record will be overridden. Please do the best you can to obtain a birth date from the petitioner; however, please do not make up a birth date in an attempt to get the order into the system. Also, if there is no address given, the order cannot be entered into METERS and more importantly, most likely cannot be served.

## **❖ Out-of-State Respondents**

If the respondent lives out of State, law enforcement are not subject to Maryland law pertaining to service of protective orders. This means that the order will not go into METERS until after it has been served by law enforcement and the 2 hour window that the law requires cannot be enforced.

## **❖ Out-of-County Orders**

Orders that belong to one agency but are to be served in another county or State must go to the originating agency first in order for that agency to enter or, in the case of an extension, update the order. The serving agency cannot enter or update the order because it does not belong to them. If an order is sent to the serving agency without first being entered by the originating agency, the data will not be updated in a timely manner, and in some cases, the order may expire.

## **❖ Peace Orders**

VPO is for the service of protective orders only and does not pertain to the service of peace orders.

### ❖ **Entry Into METERS**

Law Enforcement must enter orders into METERS immediately when they are received. Orders are not to be held until the end of the day and are not to be held until after they have been served. Also, if an order is extended, but expires in METERS before it is modified as extended, the entire order must be entered in again with a new expiration date. Recently, the system was updated so that the base record of a protective order issued by the court is sent directly to VPO, allowing victims to register for an order immediately. However, this does not pertain to updates or extensions to orders, which must still be completed by law enforcement. To prevent confusion, law enforcement should continue to operate as normal with regards to the updating of protective orders.

### ❖ **Data Must Match**

The data entered into the Direct Notification Form and METERS **MUST** match. METERS is the final port of information and the last record entered into METERS will override anything that is already in the system.

### ❖ **Real Time Data Transmission**

The transmission of data for the VPO process is in real time and is seamless. Court clerks entering orders into the Maryland courts system and some of that data is transferred. The same is (mostly) true for law enforcement; the modification of METERS will transmit the data immediately, however, law enforcement can also use the Direct Notification Form to send the data immediately to VPO and update METERS at another time. If you have the option, the easiest way to update the system is through METERS.

### ❖ **Final Order Registration**

While VPO is most immediately effective for notification of temporary protective orders, victims who receive a final protective order will also receive a notification approximately 30 days before that order is set to expire. This notification will alert the victim that their protective order is about to expire, but it will also let them know that they may be entitled to an extension of their order if there has been subsequent acts of abuse during the duration.