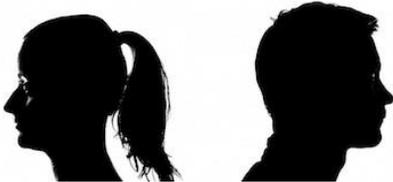


STANCER GOSSIN ROSE LLP

LAWYERS • MEDIATORS

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LAWS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



For victims of domestic violence, layers of issues can complicate the scenario, such as physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse. Victims may need to consider risk factors such as whether there are children involved, possible conflicts arising at the workplace, or current living arrangements.

In escalating situations, there are steps that victims can take to separate themselves from the abuse. Restraining orders can be sought to halt abusers from approaching the victim's home or attending their workplace.

If children are victims of abuse, or threats of abduction have taken place, the *Children's Law Reform Act* allows for an order to restrain the abuser from contacting the children or approaching them at school. The abuser

can also be prevented from taking the children outside of the province.

The Ontario government has, in recent years, taken steps to address the immediate needs of domestic abuse victims by shaping laws to create more stable environments, and funding initiatives for easier accessibility of assistance.

As of 2017, victims of domestic violence can take a workplace leave for abuse that they or their children have experienced. The employee may take a leave in order to either: request support from a victim services organization; seek medical attention; receive psychological counselling; prepare for a temporary or permanent relocation; or to seek legal or law enforcement assistance. Ontario's Bill 157, the *Domestic and Sexual Violence Protection Act*, gives employees the right to receive unpaid leave for up to 10 days at a time (at a maximum of 17 weeks) per calendar year.

Last year, LegalAid Ontario (LAO) announced a three-year action plan to enhance

domestic violence services to provide better accessibility for victims. The plan includes improvements to the training of LAO staff, community legal clinic employees, and lawyers with domestic violence clients.

In 2016, the governments of Canada and Ontario announced the investment of more than \$20 million over the following three years for the Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot. The pilot provides immediate support to 1,000 survivors (and their families) of domestic violence per year. It offers families in need of better flexibility for alternate housing, bypassing a lengthy wait for social housing to become available.

Additional support options are available for victims to help alleviate abusive situations.

To speak with a family lawyer regarding domestic violence, please contact: [Ashley Doidge](mailto:adoidge@sgrllp.com) at 416-224-1996, ext. 217 (adoidge@sgrllp.com), or [Eric Gossin](mailto:egossin@sgrllp.com) at 416-224-1996, ext. 210 (egossin@sgrllp.com)