



FAMILY VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS: SHUTTLE CONFERENCES

If you and your ex-partner have a Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO) case some Magistrates Courts have the option of going to an FVRO shuttle conference.

In this fact sheet the term ex-partner is used because this is the most common situation, but an FVRO can also be made between you and another family member, such as a parent, sibling, or cousin.

What is an FVRO shuttle conference?

An FVRO shuttle conference is a type of mediation which takes place at court with you and your ex-partner sitting in separate rooms in different parts of the court building. You and your ex-partner would not see each other during the conference. The conference is run by a registrar who goes back and forth or “shuttles” between your room and the room of your ex-partner to help you try and reach an agreement without the need for a trial.

Do you have to go to an FVRO shuttle conference?

You and your ex-partner will only have an FVRO shuttle conference if you both agree to take part. If you are the applicant (the person who applied to court for an FVRO) you can say whether or not you want to take part in a conference when you fill in your paperwork applying for an FVRO.

If you are the respondent (the person who has lodged an objection to the FVRO) you can say whether or not you want to take part in a conference when you fill in your paperwork objecting to the FVRO.

What does the registrar do?

FVRO shuttle conferences are run by registrars who work for the court. Registrars are independent. This means they are not on your side or your ex-partner's side. Registrars are experienced in helping people try to reach an agreement.

Registrars are also experienced in family violence cases and will not pressure you to agree to anything during the shuttle conference.

Who can go to the FVRO conference with you?

A lawyer can go to the FVRO conference with you to give you legal advice and represent you. A support person can also go to the conference with you.

What are the benefits of going to an FVRO shuttle conference?

The benefits of attending an FVRO shuttle conference include:

- registrars can help you reach an agreement that suits your situation and get the best outcome in your case,
- the waiting time to have a shuttle conference is a lot shorter than waiting for a final order hearing (also often called a trial),
- the focus of the conference is reaching an agreement with your ex-partner rather than at a trial where you are on opposite sides each trying to prove your case to the court, and
- if an agreement is reached at the conference, you will not need to go to a trial avoiding a lot of stress, cost, and time.

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What safety measures are in place at an FVRO shuttle conference?

As well as you and your ex-partner being in separate rooms for the conference, the court will arrange for you both to arrive at court at different times, so you don't come into contact with each other. There is also a security officer in each conference location in the court.

If you are worried about your safety at the conference you can contact the court before your conference date to arrange extra safety measures.



Where can you get help?

Free legal advice and representation at FVRO shuttle conferences is available for both applicants and respondents.

Applicants

Applicants can find out where to get help by calling the Legal Aid WA Infoline on 1300 650 579.

Respondents

Respondents who have cases in the Perth Magistrates Court can call the Sussex Street Community Law Service (SSCLS) on (08) 6253 9500.

Respondents who have cases in other Magistrates Courts can find out where to get help from the Community Legal Western Australia website

www.communitylegalwa.org.au

Legal Aid WA Website

You can also find a range of information, videos and fact sheets about FVROs on the Legal Aid website

www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

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