

Who can file a Petition for Protection from Abuse?

You can file a PFA petition against any person with whom you have any of the following types of relationship:

- ✓ Spouse or former spouse
- ✓ Persons living together and holding themselves out as a couple (with or without a child in common),
- ✓ Persons living separate and apart but who have a child in common;
- ✓ Persons in a current or former dating relationship;*
- ✓ *This would be a person you “dated”, “went out with”, or were in a “courtship” with. You might call them your “boyfriend”, “girlfriend”, or “fiancé”, or maybe just a person you were “seeing” and spent time together in a potentially romantic way.
- ✓ Any of these family relationships:
 - Parent or child (including step- and in-law),
 - Brother or sister (including in-law),
 - Son or daughter (including in-law and where parental rights have been terminated),
 - Grandparent or grandchild; or
- ✓ Any other family member you are related to by blood, adoption or marriage but only if you reside “in one home under one head”.*

*For example, cousins renting separate rooms in a boarding house might not qualify. But those same cousins residing in the home of their grandparents would qualify.

In your petition you must describe the abuse your family member or intimate partner committed upon yourself, or upon your biological or adoptive child, or upon a child over which you have guardianship.*

*The Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families (DSCYF) can also file a PFA petition alleging abuse of a child. The Division of Adult Protective Services (DAPS) can file a PFA petition alleging abuse of an impaired adult. DSCYF and DAPS petitions are uncommon.