

# Attending Downing Centre Local Court for an AVO

Taking out an AVO can be stressful for both parties involved. An Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) is a court issued document that is designed to protect an individual from becoming a victim of violence or intimidation at the hands of someone else. AVO matters are heard at [Downing Centre Local Court](#), generally in court 4.3, but it is always a good idea to double check when you arrive.

## **If you are the person taking out the AVO (PINOP)**

If you are taking out an AVO or the police are taking one out on your behalf, you will be required to attend court at least once. If the defendant has been served with the AVO before the court date, the matter may be finalised at the first appearance. If the defendant was not served with the AVO prior to the court date, the court may be adjourned to a later date. In cases where the defendant chooses to disagree with the AVO, there will be a hearing at a later date and you may be required to attend court on a few separate occasions.

If the defendant has been previously served with an AVO but does not attend court an order can be made in their absence. The police can also make an interim order on your behalf until the matter is finalised.

## **If you are the defendant**

If you have been served with an AVO or you have received notification of your court date for an AVO matter, it is important that you attend at the designated date and time. Make sure you arrive early and allow enough time if you need to wait around for your matter to be heard. If you agree with the terms of the AVO, the matter will probably be finalised on the first appearance. Agreeing with the AVO does not mean you

are admitting to the allegations contained within it.

If you disagree with the AVO it is a good idea to seek legal advice. The matter will then be adjourned for six weeks so that both parties can prepare their evidence, which will then be presented at a hearing.

Having an AVO against you can affect your lifestyle and family relationships, as well as prevent you from getting a firearms licence and working in certain occupations. If you have been served with an AVO, it is important to think carefully about the impact it would have and whether it is justified. It is possible to defend yourself against an AVO, but it is a good idea to speak with a lawyer to find out what your best defence is and how likely it is that you will succeed.

### **Where can I get support?**

There are a number of different support services at Downing Centre Local Court, including the Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, which offers legal assistance and support to women who are taking out private AVOs or in cases where the woman is the defendant in an AVO. There is also a [legal aid](#) office situated on Level 4 of the Downing Centre Local Court. If you have legal representation, your lawyer will be able to discuss the process with you and direct you to support organisations where appropriate.