

New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
2004 Domestic Violence Handbook

Criminal Court And Civil Court

There are two types of courts that are available to provide protection to victims of domestic violence - criminal and civil. Family Court is a civil court with the goal of protecting you and your family. Only people who are legally married to, divorced from, or otherwise related by blood or marriage to their abuser, or people who have a child in common with their abuser, can go to Family Court. If you are eligible to go to Family Court, you have the option of going to Family Court or criminal court, or both at the same time. Supreme Court is also a civil court, used in cases of legal separation or divorce. You can apply for an *Order of Protection* in any of these courts, but each works differently, and understanding the differences can help you decide what is best for your situation.