

Just as courtrooms are open to the public, the public has a right to find out information about court cases. However, in some situations, you can ask that the public not see information about you in a case. This brochure explains two methods of asking the court to keep the public from seeing information in your court case: A request and a petition.

Other ways to protect information about you:

- Peace or Protective Orders: See *Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Peace or Protective Order Case?*
- Criminal defendants: See *How Can I Expunge My Criminal Record?* and *Can I Limit Access to Information about Certain Criminal Convictions?*
- Juvenile defendants: See *How Can I Expunge My Juvenile Record?*

Filing a request

Who: If you are a **victim** or **witness** in a criminal case, or if you have filed for a Peace Order or Protective Order, and you want to limit public access to information such as your **address** or **telephone number**.

How:

- Complete a **request** to limit the public's access to information. Criminal witnesses use form CC-DC-052. Peace Order petitioners use form CC-DC-PO-021 and Protective Order petitioners use form CC-DC-DV-026.
- **File your request** with the clerk's office or commissioner's office of the court in which the case was heard.



If the court **grants** your request, the public will not be able to see that information about you.

If the court **denies** your request, you can file a **petition** to limit the public's access to the information.

Talk with a lawyer for free at a
Maryland Court Help Center

Call: 410-260-1392

Chat: mdcourts.gov/helpcenter

[Read more on access to court records](#)



mdcourts.gov/legalhelp/courtrecords

[People's Law Library of Maryland](#)
peoples-law.org

[Public law libraries](#)
410-260-1430
mdcourts.gov/lawlib

[Read the law](#)
Md. Rule 16-934; Maryland Code, Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 3-1503; Maryland Code, Family Law § 4-504.

[Clerk's office](#)
Find the court that heard your case.
mdcourts.gov/courtsdirectory

mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.

Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Court Case?



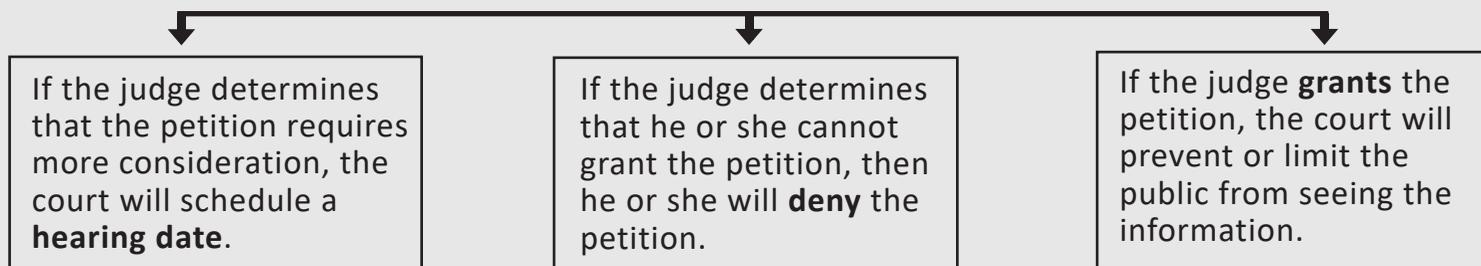
■ Filing a petition

Who: If you are a party (the plaintiff or defendant) in a civil case; you are the subject of a civil case; or you are specifically identified in a civil case.

What: If a judge grants your petition, he or she will order that the clerk's office remove the case record from public view. The clerk's office places the entire record or document in an envelope. The public cannot open the envelope without a judge's signature.

How:

1. Complete a Petition to Seal or Otherwise Limit Inspection of a Case Record (form CC-DC-053). You must prove that a special or compelling reason exists to prevent or limit the public from seeing the information.
2. File the petition by mail or in person with the District or circuit Court that heard the case.
3. Notify all parties and others named in the case by sending them all the documents you filed with the court. This gives the other parties a chance to respond to your petition.
4. A judge will review the petition and any responses. The public will not be able to see the information while the judge is reviewing your petition. One of three things will then happen:



What's the difference between a request and a petition?

Usually . . .

A request:

- can be granted by a clerk or commissioner; and
- requires no hearing.

A petition:

- is always decided by a judge;
- requires notice to all affected parties; and
- may require a hearing.