

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 motion.

Other ways to protect information about you:

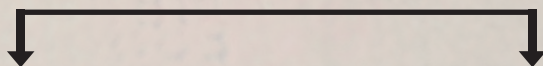
- **Peace or Protective Orders:** See *Can I Keep the Public from Seeing Information about Me in a Peace or Protective Order Case?*
- **Criminal Defendants:** See *How Can I Expunge My Criminal Record?* and *Can I Limit Access to Information about Certain Criminal Convictions?*
- **Juvenile Defendants:**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

**How:**

- Complete a **request** to limit the public's access to information. Criminal witnesses use form CC-DC-052. Peace or Protective Order petitioners use form CC-DC-DV-PO-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 **motion** to limit the public's access to the information.

## For more information

### Read the law

Md. Rule 16-912

### Maryland Court Self-Help Centers

Free legal advice on civil cases and expungements

410-260-1392

[mdcourts.gov/selfhelp](http://mdcourts.gov/selfhelp)

### Court forms

[mdcourts.gov/courtforms](http://mdcourts.gov/courtforms)

### People's Law Library of Maryland

[peoples-law.org](http://peoples-law.org)

### Public law libraries

410-260-1430

[mdcourts.gov/lawlib](http://mdcourts.gov/lawlib)

### Clerk's offices

Visit or call the court that heard your case.

[mdcourts.gov/courtsdirectory](http://mdcourts.gov/courtsdirectory)

[mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice](http://mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice)

410-260-1258

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



[mdcourts.gov](http://mdcourts.gov)



## ■ Filing a motion

**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 motion, 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 Motion 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 motion 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 motion.
4. A judge will review the motion and any responses. The public will not be able to see the information while the judge is reviewing your motion. One of three things will then happen:

If the judge determines that the motion requires more consideration, the court will schedule a **hearing date**.

If the judge determines that he or she cannot grant the motion, then he or she will **deny** the motion.

If the judge **grants** the motion, the court will prevent or limit the public from seeing the information.

## What's the difference between a request and a motion?

Usually . . .

### A request:

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

### A motion:

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