PFAD

PENNSYLVANIA PROTECTION FROM ABUSE DATABASE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Whether you're new to using PFAD or an existing user with questions, this guide will help you learn more about the database and its features. Click on any question below to find answers to common inquiries. If you don't find the answer you are looking for, contact pfad@pcadv.org.

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Mission and Users

- **What is the Protection from Abuse Database (PFAD)?**
  The Pennsylvania Protection From Abuse statute authorizes a database to implement its goals of protecting victims of abuse and preventing future abuse. 23 Pa.C.S. § 6101 et seq.; see § 6108. Relief.

- **What is PFAD used for?**
  PFAD is a registry of all valid protection orders across the Commonwealth. PFAD is used to inform courts, dispatchers, and law enforcement of valid protection order involving any defendant. PFAD is not used for research (e.g., background checks and criminal investigation). Nor is PFAD meant to provide easier access to prothonotary records that are available for public inspection at county courthouses.

- **Who has access to PFAD?**
  The staff of courts, domestic violence programs, legal and law enforcement agencies, and private attorneys who routinely and regularly assist victims of domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in PFA matters can apply for accounts at https://www.pfad.pa.gov/. Users have access to special views/information based on their roles.

Authorized Use

- **How does one set up their PFAD user profile?**
  Users are required to read and agree to the Terms of Use (summarized below) during password setup before they can use PFAD. Proof of their agreement becomes part of their user profile.

- **Who sets up one's PFAD user profile?**
  Each user must have a PFAD account with a unique email address. Agencies may not share one username and/or password among all users. Users may not share information with unauthorized users by any means. (If someone asks for PFAD information, but is not an authorized user, they should be referred to the prothonotary's office.)

- **What must users do to keep their PFAD sessions secure?**
  Users must always supervise or secure their PFAD session, logging out of PFAD when leaving their workspace even briefly. Password-saving software is forbidden. If there is any breach in database security, users should immediately notify PFAD Technical Support.

- **What actions will result in PFAD account deactivation?**
  PFAD will remove users for such illegal activities or those that may endanger domestic violence victims. In the event of unauthorized use, the user's account will be immediately deactivated, followed by a written notification from PFAD.

Data Entry

- **How does PFAD work with other state and national databases?**
  PFAD data is transmitted to CLEAN (Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network) and NCIC (National Crime Information Center). The defendant's Date of Birth (DOB) is an important identifier. Upon receipt of the filed order from the county, the state police communications operator (PCO) is charged with verifying the defendant's information in other related databases. Other numeric identifiers could be social security and driver's license numbers, in addition to physical identifiers such as race, gender, height, weight, hair color, and eye color.

- **How can users enter additional identifying information on a defendant?**
  From the order entry screen, some users can access the Supplemental Information sheet to additional identifying information, including aliases and misspellings of names. The supplemental information sheet is automatically transmitted with the datasheet.

- **How can PFAD assist in creating proposed orders?**
  Depending on their role, users can prepare, enter, and delete proposed orders. The PFAD system automatically flags errors that must be corrected before the orders are sent to the prothonotary's office for official filing. Unfiled orders can be deleted at any time. Filed orders can only be deleted up until the datasheet is sent.

- **What technical assistance/training is available on using PFAD?**
  The PSP and PCADV jointly manage the PFAD system. PFAD and PSP make every effort to help participants get appropriate technical support within 48 business hours. In addition, PCADV legal staff are available for questions about the PFA process, statutory mandates, and case law. A criminal justice trainer can assist law enforcement and sheriffs with best practices regarding issues such as service and firearms requirements. Training is available at no cost for new and current users.

Attachment A

- **How are firearms, weapons, and ammunition identified for relinquishment?**
  The petitioner (plaintiff) completes Attachment A which the judge uses to list firearms the defendant must relinquish to law enforcement. The court reviews Attachment A and files it on PFAD with the Temporary and Final orders.

- **How is law enforcement informed about outstanding orders?**
  The PFA order names the law enforcement jurisdiction(s) responsible for investigating when defendants are "non-compliant," (fail to relinquish weapons on time). The PSP CLEAN system notifies that jurisdiction daily to investigate. Errors or questions may be sent to RA-Clean@pa.gov.

- **What must be entered when a defendant relinquishes firearms?**
  Law enforcement or the sheriff must enter a "receipt of firearms relinquishment" in PFAD to show the defendant's compliance. When the defendant denies having weapons, law enforcement or sheriffs still must enter a "receipt of firearms relinquishment" in PFAD to show that the defendant was notified and responded.

- **What if a defendant cannot be reached or found?**
  In these cases, law enforcement should contact CLEAN at RA-Clean@pa.gov. Generic receipts should not be entered to stop non-compliance notifications, and law enforcement is responsible for confirming firearms were relinquished, even in out-of-state cases. ***The non-compliance box should never be checked.***