

A Victim's Right to Request that Personal Information Be Withheld from the Court Record

As the victim of or witness to a crime, some of your personal information is needed by the court in order to prosecute your offender. This personal information may include your home address and telephone number. As part of the court record this information is open to the public and can be accessed by anyone.

However, as the victim of or witness to a crime, you have a right to request that this personal information be removed from the public court record. (**Maryland Rules, Rule 16-1009**). You have a right to file this request on your own; you do not need a lawyer to request that your personal information be kept private. To make this request you must:

1. Make a request in writing. This request is called a **Motion to Shield**. Be sure to use the form for the appropriate court; Circuit or District.
2. Send the form to the State's Attorney assigned to your case and to the defendant's attorney. At this point your personal information will be temporarily unavailable to the public through the court record.
 - A. You can get the name and address of the State's Attorney and the Defendant's attorney from the clerk's office. Call the Clerk's Office of the Criminal Division in the Circuit or District court.
 - B. Give the clerk the case number and ask them for the name and address of the State's Attorney assigned to the case and the name and address of the Defendant's attorney.
 - C. If the clerk asks you why you require that information tell them you are filing a **Motion to Shield** and you must serve the motion on the State's Attorney and the Defendant's attorney.
3. After filing the request you will attend a court hearing in which you will explain to the judge why your personal information should be permanently shielded in the court record or not available in electronic form. Your offender has the right to be present at this hearing and his or

her attorney has a right to question you about your request at the hearing. You may contact the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center to help you with this hearing.

4. Please note that the Motion to Shield applies only to keeping your personal address and phone number from public access by third parties. **This Motion to Shield does not apply to the defendant in your case.** If you want to shield your personal address and phone number from the defendant in your case please call the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center at (301) 952-0063 or toll free at 1-877-VICTIM-1.