

The Family Independence Agency (FIA) has special rules to help victims of domestic violence.

**What does FIA consider to be domestic violence?**

- Physical injury
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual involvement of a minor child
- Mental abuse
- Neglect or deprivation of medical care

**If you or your children have been abused, you may not have to work in order to receive benefits from FIA.**

You may not have to work if you present proof of threatened or actual domestic violence against yourself or your children. This is called a deferral. A deferral means you do not have to meet work requirements for 3 months. This deferral applies if you have applied for or are receiving, cash assistance from FIA.

**If you or your children have been abused, you may not have to seek child support from the abuser.**

Domestic violence is “good cause” for failing to cooperate with child support and paternity requirements.

If FIA determines you have good cause, FIA will either not pursue child support, or will not require you to participate if you or your child is in danger.

**A minor parent, who is a victim of domestic violence, may not have to attend school to be eligible for FIA benefits.**

When a minor parent is a victim of domestic violence, and believes the school administration and/or the police cannot guarantee the minor parent’s safety at school, that is a “good cause” reason for failing to attend school. FIA workers will verify “good cause” reasons.

**How do I document or prove that I have experienced domestic violence?**

FIA workers must accept your statement as proof of domestic violence. A statement from a shelter worker is also acceptable proof. Your caseworker cannot require you to provide police reports or proof of medical treatment without a good reason.

**What if my child is living somewhere else while I am in a domestic violence shelter?**

Your child’s absence from the household is considered temporary. Your child will remain eligible for benefits on your grant.

**How can I keep my abuser from getting information from FIA about me?**

FIA will not release any information, if you present an affidavit stating that:

- You were physically and/or emotionally abused by a current or former spouse or companion **and**
- you fear that being identified will lead to a recurrence of such abuse.

For extra privacy protection, you can also ask for form FIA-970; *Affidavit for Withholding Name, Address and Amount of Assistance from Disclosure to the General Public.*

**What if my FIA worker refuses to understand or help?**

Domestic violence victims who encounter unsympathetic or unhelpful caseworkers should complain to a supervisor and seek legal help.

**If you have experienced domestic violence, you should:**

- Apply for exceptions based on domestic violence.
- Claim “good cause” based on domestic violence if told you must pursue child support or paternity, or if you’ve failed to comply with work/Work First requirements.
- File the Affidavit of Withholding Name form.
- If your FIA caseworker is not helping you, contact an FIA supervisor or seek legal advice.
- If your request for deferral is denied, or you are penalized by FIA, request a hearing and seek legal help immediately.

**LEGAL SERVICES  
OF  
EASTERN MICHIGAN**

In **Midland, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella** or **Gratiot** counties, contact:

148 E. Main, Suite 207  
Midland, MI 48640  
(989) 832-7987  
(800) 322-9142

In **Saginaw, Bay** or **Arenac** counties, contact:

320 S. Washington, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
(989) 755-4465  
(800) 322-4512

In **Genesee** or **Lapeer** counties, contact:

436 S. Saginaw  
Flint, MI 48502  
(810) 234-2621  
(800) 339-9513

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**DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE**

**The Effects of  
Domestic Violence on  
Public Benefits**



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