

Domestic Violence Increased in South Florida

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Domestic violence is a first-degree misdemeanor, which would result in a permanent criminal record if you are convicted. Contact a criminal defense lawyer to help you understand what happens after you're arrested.

[Domestic violence cases](#) involve charges of assault and battery against a familial relation or a person who lives with you, such as a wife, child, husband, boyfriend, girlfriend, mother, or father. Domestic violence is a first-degree misdemeanor, which would result in a permanent criminal record if you are convicted.

The long-term consequences of a domestic violence conviction can be very serious. Employers routinely conduct background checks of prospective employees and few would want to hire an employee who has a conviction for domestic violence. In Florida, landlords also conduct background checks because they could be liable for a civil lawsuit if they rent to a person with violent tendencies.

As reported in [Sun-Sentinel by By Peter Franceschina](#), domestic violence cases have increased in South Florida.

Advocates with the three state-certified domestic violence centers in Broward and Palm Beach counties say demand for their services — emergency shelter beds, counseling services and crisis hotline calls — is up for the second year in a row. And, advocates say, they are seeing a disturbing uptick in the viciousness of some attacks.

"Not only are there more people coming for services, but the incidents that are occurring are more violent and more lethal, and that is disturbing," said Mary Riedel, president of Women in Distress of Broward County.

The year-over-year numbers, advocates say, point to more domestic abuse incidents taking place during stressful economic times, even if they don't always involve a call to police or an arrest. The domestic homicide rates in Broward and Palm Beach — among the top five in the state in recent years — reflect the far extreme of the violence.

Tough financial times and the resulting stresses on families may be the most significant contributing factor. Job losses, reduced income, falling behind on rent or mortgage payments, credit card bills piling up; money

problems easily translate into anxiety, frustration and even rage.

At one shelter in southern Palm Beach County, Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, there was a 37 percent jump in the number of people seeking an emergency place to stay, from 276 people to 379. And there was a 56 percent increase in people who received counseling and other services.

"In our shelters, we are seeing a tremendous increase in the people coming in," said Pam O'Brien, the shelter's president. "We had seen a tremendous increase last year, then on top of it, this year we saw another increase."

Many [domestic violence cases](#) can be resolved without a criminal record if your lawyer has you immediately enroll in an anger management program or battery intervention program (BIP) and refrain from harmful contact with the victim. This can result in the charge being dismissed or "nolle prosequi" without a conviction or a criminal record.

Charges of spousal abuse and domestic violence are often made because there is a pending divorce or child custody matter. In these cases, lawyer Andrew Stine can set a trial date knowing that either the victim will not show up or can use the evidence from our investigation to impeach the victim.

Being proactive in a domestic violence case can often make the difference between facing a first-degree misdemeanor charge and having the charge dismissed.

Free consultation 24/7: Call [West Palm Beach criminal defense lawyer Andrew D. Stine, P.A.](#) at (561) 832-1170. Se habla español.

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