

A PUBLICATION OF
THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



Do It Yourself

DIVORCE GUIDE

“All courts shall be open, and every person, for an injury done to him in his person, property or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice administered without sale, denial or delay.”

Connecticut State Constitution
Article I, Section 10

This “Do It Yourself Divorce Guide” is designed to help people without formal legal training use Connecticut’s state courts. It is available at any Superior Court Clerk’s Office, the Public Information Desks, the Court Service Centers, and at the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.state.ct.us.

The Connecticut Judicial Branch gratefully acknowledges contributions to this Guide made by the Superior Court Judges, the legal services programs of Connecticut, the Family Law Section of the Connecticut Bar Association, individual attorneys, and court personnel.

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Judicial Branch
State of Connecticut

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to help you represent yourself in a divorce. Legal words and court documents can be confusing. The more you know about how to get a divorce, the more comfortable you will be when you complete the necessary court forms and appear in court. This booklet gives you the information you need to start a divorce or respond to divorce papers. The most commonly used court forms you need to start a divorce are in the *Divorce Guide Supplement* (JDP-FM-180) and should be used with this guide. Court staff can answer procedural questions and help you understand the legal process, but cannot provide you with any legal advice.

The decision to get divorced can be difficult. You may be concerned about money, your children, or finding a place to live. Please check the Additional Information section beginning on page 41 for the names and telephone numbers of organizations which may be available to help you with the emotional and practical issues of divorce.

Note: If you need more information or assistance after reading this guide, you should either consult an attorney or read the appropriate sections of the Connecticut General Statutes and the Connecticut Practice Book. Divorce in Connecticut is governed by General Statutes Section 46b-40 and the sections that follow, and Practice Book Chapter 25. The General Statutes and Practice Book are available in the Superior Court Law Libraries located throughout the state as well as on the Judicial Branch website located at www.jud.state.ct.us.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

WARNING

If you are being physically abused or threatened with physical abuse by your spouse, you should contact the police and the family violence program nearest you. Call Infoline at 211 for information on a family violence program near you. You should speak with an attorney or a family violence program staff person if you are worried that your spouse will become more violent when he or she learns that you are filing for divorce. Family violence program services include: emergency shelter, counseling, 24 hour hot lines, information, support groups, advocacy, and referrals. You may also qualify for a court order called a restraining order to help protect you from physical abuse or the threat of physical abuse. The first step is to fill out an “Application for Relief from Abuse.” You may get this form from the Judicial District clerk’s office or from the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.state.ct.us.



Call Infoline at **211** for a family violence program near you.

The best way to find a marriage counselor is through word of mouth. Get a referral from someone you trust, like a friend, a pastor, or a social worker. You may also look in the yellow pages under any of these headings: Marriage Counselors, Psychologists, Psychotherapists, or Social Workers.

OVERVIEW

Getting divorced is an important decision. Before you decide to get a divorce, you may want to meet with a family counselor. A counselor is someone who can help you identify issues concerning your marriage and your decision to get a divorce.

If you cannot work out your differences, divorce is a way to legally end your marriage. If you decide to end your marriage, this booklet will help you represent yourself. A “Do It Yourself Divorce” is called a *pro se* dissolution. *Pro se* means “for yourself.” Dissolution is the word Connecticut law uses for divorce.

This booklet contains general information for uncomplicated cases. It should only be used when you and your spouse agree on the basic issues. If you and your spouse disagree about child custody or other important issues, you should seriously consider getting an attorney.

Not everyone can afford an attorney and court staff cannot give you legal advice. If you have a low income, you may be eligible for free legal services. To learn if you qualify for free legal services, you may call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320. The intake workers who answer the telephone speak English and Spanish.

There are many stages of a divorce. When you and your spouse agree on basic issues, it takes approximately four months to complete a divorce. One way to reach an agreement on basic issues is to work with a mediator. The clerk’s office has lists of mediators who can help you for free or for a fee. (See Additional Information on page 41.) The Judicial Branch’s Court Support Services Division (CSSD), Family Services Office of the courts, can also mediate divorce cases. Its services are free.

Regardless of who starts the divorce, the judge will listen carefully to you and to your spouse.

You will find a list of all forms referenced in this guide on page 52 in the Additional Information section. The most commonly used court forms you need to start a divorce are provided in the supplement to this booklet. The Divorce Guide Supplement is available at any Judicial District clerk's office. See page 49 for a listing of Judicial District courts. Please review the common words and the descriptions of court personnel that you will need to work with beginning on page 8. Then, to start a divorce, turn to page 13. To respond to divorce papers, turn to page 19.

TIPS

The amount of paper in a court case can be overwhelming. Start out right and follow these tips:

- 1** Always write down the date and the name of the court personnel, state marshal or others who give you instructions or explain things to you.
- 2** When you must mail something, you may wish to send it by "certified mail" with a "return receipt" so you have proof that you mailed it and that it was received.
- 3** Keep all documents, notes and receipts in a file, envelope or binder.
- 4** When you file a document with the court, include the full docket number and case name.
- 5** Always keep a copy of every document for yourself. Do not give away your only copy of a document.

COMMON WORDS IN A DIVORCE



Divorce involves complex laws and procedures. If you are getting divorced, here are some words that you should know.

Alimony	Money a court requires one spouse to pay the other spouse for support before and/or after the divorce is granted. If you do not ask for alimony at the final hearing, you can never get it in the future.
Annulment	A court order declaring that the marriage is invalid.
Arrearages	Money for court ordered alimony and/or child support which is overdue and unpaid.
Automatic Court Orders	Court orders that take effect when the divorce process begins.
Broken Down Irretrievably	The most common reason for granting a divorce. It means there is no hope of the husband and wife reconciling.
Child Support	Money paid by a parent to help meet the financial needs of a child.
Complaint	A legal paper that starts your case and tells the court what you want.
Custody	A court order deciding where a child will live and how decisions about the child will be made. Parents may ask for any custody arrangement that they believe is in the best interest of their child.
Defendant	The person who is served with divorce papers.
Dissolution	The legal end of a marriage, also called a divorce.

Docket Number	A unique number the court clerk assigns to a case. It must be used on all future papers filed in the court case.
Filing	Giving the court clerk your legal papers.
Financial Affidavit	A sworn statement of income, expenses, property (called assets) and debts (called liabilities).
Income Withholding Order	A court order to deduct child support or alimony payments from someone's income.
Judgment File	A permanent court record of the court's final decision.
Legal Separation	A court order describing the conditions under which two married people will live separately.
No-Fault Divorce	The most common kind of divorce, where no one needs to prove that the husband or wife caused the marriage to end.
Parties	The people who are named as plaintiff and defendant on legal papers.
Paternity	Legal fatherhood.
Pendente Lite Order	A court order made before a divorce is granted.
Plaintiff	The person who starts the divorce.

Pro Se	For yourself.
Pro Se Divorce	Do it yourself divorce.
Restraining Order	A court order to protect someone from physical abuse or the threat of physical abuse.
Return Date	The date when the divorce action starts in court and when the 90 day waiting period for a divorce begins. Also, the defendant should file an appearance on or before the second day after the Return Date. Nothing happens in court on the Return Date and no one needs to go to court on the Return Date. The Return Date is always a Tuesday.
Service	The legal method for giving your spouse a copy of the court papers being filed, or notice that court action is being taken or has been taken.
Visitation	A court order deciding the amount of time a noncustodial parent may spend with his or her child; also called parenting time, or access.

COURT PERSONNEL



To get a divorce, you will need to speak to many people who work in the court system. You will know better what to expect from them after you review the descriptions below.

Caseflow Coordinator

Keeps track of your case and manages the scheduling of hearings and trials.

Court Clerk

Maintains the official court record of your case. The clerk's office receives all court papers and may assign hearing dates.

Court Interpreter

Translates court hearings from English to another language. May be provided at state expense for cases enforcing child support orders, if requested. You must provide your own interpreter in a divorce.

Court Recording Monitor

Records the court hearing on audio tape. Prepares a written record of the hearing for a fee, if requested.

Court Reporter

Types everything said during the court hearing. Prepares a written record of the hearing for a fee, if requested.

Family Relations Counselor

Mediates disagreements and negotiates agreements in divorce cases. At the request of the judge, a family relations counselor may evaluate a family situation by interviewing each parent and the children in the family and writing a report for the judge, making recommendations about custody and visitation. Works in the Judicial Branch's CSSD Family Services Office.

Family
Support
Magistrate

Decides cases involving child support and paternity. Can also enforce court orders involving paternity, child support and alimony.

Judge

Hears and decides cases for the courts.

Judicial
Marshal

Responsible for courthouse security including the metal detectors at the entrance of each courthouse and maintains order in each courtroom.

Law Librarian

Maintains legal reference and research materials for public use.

State Marshal

A state marshal can serve (give copies of) the legal papers on the other people named in the lawsuit.

Support
Enforcement
Officer

Supervises child support payments and brings parents to court to enforce child support orders. May also file legal papers to modify or change child support orders.

STEP 1

STARTING A DIVORCE

- Prepare Court Forms
- Take the Forms to the Court Clerk's Office
- Service
- File the Court Forms at the Court Clerk's Office
- Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)

STEP 1

STARTING A DIVORCE

Every official court form has a name and a number like JD-FM-100 in the upper left hand corner of the form.

To start a divorce, you will need three court forms: the Summons Family Actions (JD-FM-3), the Divorce Complaint/Cross Complaint (JD-FM-159), and the Notice of Automatic Court Orders (JD-FM-158). Once you complete your paperwork, you must take it to the court clerk's office. The court clerk will review your completed forms and return them to you. Your spouse must be given a copy of the divorce papers by a state marshal, which is referred to as "serving the papers." Finally, to start a divorce you need to file at the court clerk's office the completed court forms and the proof that a copy of the forms was served on your spouse. You must also pay the filing fee, unless it is waived. All of the court forms underlined below are listed in the back of this booklet. Court forms are available at the clerk's office in any Judicial District courthouse, the Court Service Centers and Public Information Desks at selected courthouses. They are also available on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.state.ct.us.

You may pick a Judicial District which serves either your town of residence or the town where your spouse lives.



Prepare Court Forms

- Complete a Summons Family Actions (JD-FM-3). A Summons directs an officer (usually a state marshal) to notify your spouse that you are starting a divorce. A Summons tells your spouse to file an Appearance (JD-CL-12), so he or she can respond to the lawsuit and receive notices from the court about all future court dates. Do not sign the Summons until you appear before the court clerk. Be prepared to show the clerk photo identification.
- Select the correct Judicial District courthouse and fill it in on the Summons. (See list of Judicial Districts on page 49.)

■ Select a Return Date. It must be a Tuesday and should be at least four weeks after the day you bring the papers to the court clerk. Fill in the Return Date on the Summons, the Complaint and any other papers. Neither party is required to physically appear at court on the Return Date.

■ Prepare a *Divorce Complaint/Cross Complaint* (JD-FM-159). A Complaint is an important legal document because it is the way to tell the court and your spouse what you want. In the Complaint you can ask a judge to end your marriage, grant alimony, award child custody, visitation, child support, divide your marital property and debts, or restore a prior name. Be sure and check the box at the top of the form showing that it is a Complaint and not a Cross Complaint (which can be used by the defendant).

■ Attach a completed copy of the *Notice of Automatic Court Orders* (JD-FM-158). **These court orders take effect at the beginning of a divorce and apply to you when you sign the complaint.** They apply to your spouse when your spouse is served with a copy. These court orders protect you, your spouse and your children from changes in your life, such as one spouse selling the family home or taking the children out of state. (See Automatic Court Orders on page 22 for more information.) You must fill in the case management date at No. 4 on the Notice of Automatic Court Orders. The case management date is set by the court and is at least ninety days after your Return Date. Select the appropriate date from the *Case Management Dates* form (JD-FM-165 A, B, or C depending on your court location) or ask the court clerk for the correct case management date.

■ If you need other court orders, complete the *Motion for Orders Before Judgment* (JD-FM-176), and have it served with the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. (See page 22 for more information.)

The Automatic Court Orders protect you, your spouse and your children from changes in your life, such as one spouse selling the family home or taking the children out of state.

How much does a divorce cost?

Court filing fee	\$225
State Marshal's fee for serving papers <i>(approximate cost)</i>	\$ 50
Parenting Education Class <i>(if you have children)</i>	\$125
Total <i>(for most cases)</i>	\$400

Newspaper publication of legal notice <i>(if you can't find your spouse)</i> <i>(approximate cost)</i>	\$350
Total	\$750

- If you cannot afford the court fees for a divorce, complete an *Application for Waiver of Fees/Appointment of Counsel* (JD-FM-75). The form asks for information about your income and expenses. This is your chance to show the court why you cannot afford to pay the filing fee, the state marshal's charge, and other costs such as the fee for the parenting education class. Do not sign the form until you are in front of a court clerk, a notary public or someone else who is qualified to hear your promise or oath that what you report about your financial situation is true. A judge will review your application and decide whether or not to grant it. If the judge denies your application to have the filing fee and the state marshal's fee paid by the state, you may request a hearing. Complete the appropriate section on the Application for Waiver of Fees. If you need a fee waiver, you should complete this process **before** the papers are served.
- If your spouse lives outside the state and you know his or her address, complete a *Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases* (JD-FM-167) and give it to the clerk, accompanied by the *Order of Notice in Family Cases* (JD-FM-168). The clerk will review the forms and sign the Order of Notice in Family Cases. You can start the case by having a state marshal send copies of the following documents to your spouse by certified mail: the Summons; Complaint; Notice of Automatic Orders; Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases; and the Order of Notice in Family Cases; or by having the state marshal provide notice in whatever other manner is ordered.
- If you do not know your spouse's address, try to find it through friends and relatives. If you cannot find the address, you must get permission from the court to publish a notice about starting the divorce in a newspaper in the area where your spouse lives or was last known to live. If you do not know the name of a newspaper, a librarian at a public library should be able to help you. Call the newspaper to find out the cost of printing a legal notice. If you cannot afford to pay this amount, include it on your Application for Waiver of Fees. Complete a *Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases* (JD-FM-167) and give it to the clerk, accompanied by the Order of Notice in Family Cases and get the order signed by the court clerk. The court may order notice to be given to your spouse as it deems reasonable. If so, you must notify your spouse in the manner the court has ordered.

Take the Forms to the Court Clerk's Office



- Court clerk signs Summons.
- Court clerk can witness your sworn signature on your Application for Waiver of Fees. The clerk will tell you whether the judge will rule on your application that day, or whether you should leave all of your court forms for the judge to review.
- The court clerk will return the original Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders to you to be served.
- Get a list of state marshals for the Judicial District where your spouse lives and works from the clerk's office.

Service

- Contact a state marshal in the judicial district where your spouse lives or works. You may get a list of state marshals from the court clerk.



- Most state marshals will charge approximately \$50 to serve a Summons, Complaint and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. The state marshal may require payment in advance or may be willing to bill you.
- Speak to the state marshal to be sure he or she is available to serve your spouse at least 12 days before the Return Date. Ask the state marshal about payment and arrange to give the state marshal the court papers.
- The state marshal will either return the original papers to you once he or she serves a copy on your spouse or will file them with the court. Find out ahead of time if the state marshal will be filing the original papers with the court and, if so, how the filing fee will be paid to the clerk.
- The state marshal will prepare a document called a "Return of Service" which is proof that the papers were served. This document along with the original papers you brought to the state marshal must be filed with the court clerk at least six days before the Return Date.

- If you or your spouse ever received public assistance from the State of Connecticut, send a copy of the court forms and state marshal's return of service to: Attorney General's Office, 55 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106. Complete a *Certification (Public Assistance)* (JD-FM-175) that tells the court that you mailed the papers to the Attorney General.

- If you or your spouse ever received public assistance from a town in Connecticut, send a copy of the court forms and state marshal's return of service to the town clerk located in the town hall of that town. The blue pages of the telephone book will have the address. Complete a Certification (Public Assistance) that tells the court that you mailed the papers to the town clerk.

File the Court Forms at the Court Clerk's Office



- The original Summons, Complaint, Notice of Automatic Court Orders, state marshal's return of service and the filing fee (or the original Application for Waiver of Fees if it was granted by the judge) must be brought or mailed to the court clerk's office. The court clerk must receive it at least six days before the Return Date. Also, if public assistance was received, bring the completed certification. You will have to pay the filing fee unless it has been waived. The current filing fee is \$225. You may pay by cash, money order, or a personal check made payable to "Clerk, Superior Court." If you are paying by personal check, bring photo identification and make sure your address is pre-printed on the check. The address on your check should match the address on your photo identification. Please note that the courts may accept certain credit cards. It is recommended that you verify this in advance.

Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)

- You may ask the court at any time to enter court orders concerning alimony, child support, custody, visitation, and exclusive possession of property. You do not have to wait until the final divorce hearing. You would have to file a written request (called a motion) with the court clerk. (See pages 21 and 30 for more information.) The earliest that you may file a motion is with the original Summons, Complaint and Notice of Automatic Court Orders.

Pendente Lite means during the case, i.e., before the judgment of divorce.

STEP 2

RESPONDING TO A DIVORCE

- File an Appearance Form
- File an Answer and/or Cross Complaint
- Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment
(Pendente Lite)

STEP 2

RESPONDING TO A DIVORCE

The Automatic Court Orders apply to you when you receive the Summons and Complaint, even if they are not handed to you personally by the state marshal.

You are a defendant in a divorce case if you have been served with a copy of the court forms called a Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. A state marshal may hand them to you or leave them at your home. It is important that you read all documents. Read the notice in the middle of the Summons carefully. Read the Notice of Automatic Court Orders attached to the Complaint very carefully. They apply to you when the Summons and Complaint are served on you. The Automatic Court Orders also give you a case management date. You and your spouse must complete a Case Management Agreement and file it with the clerk before that date. If you disagree about custody or visitation of your children, you and your spouse must go to court on the Case Management Date.

After you get a copy of the court papers, you may contact an attorney to represent you or follow the steps below to represent yourself. Even if you agree with what your spouse says in the complaint, follow the steps below to participate in your case. If you take no action, the judge may order what your spouse requests in the Complaint.

File an Appearance Form



- File an *Appearance* (JD-CL-12) to tell the court that you are acting as your own attorney. Although you may file an Appearance anytime before the final hearing, it is best to file it in person or by mail with the court clerk no more than two days after the Return Date. The Return Date is in the upper right corner of the Summons form. The Return Date is not a trial date. *No one has to go to court on the Return Date.*

- There are legal consequences to filing an Appearance. Once you file an Appearance you will receive all court calendars and papers filed regarding your case. After you file your Appearance, the court will send you notice of the docket number assigned to your case. Once you receive this number, use it on all papers you file with the court, and provide it to court personnel when you make an inquiry about your case.

File an Answer and/or Cross Complaint



- You do not have to file an *Answer* (JD-FM-160) to the complaint, but it is a good idea to do so. Your Answer will tell the court whether you agree or disagree with each numbered statement in the Complaint.
- You do not have to file a *Divorce Complaint/Cross Complaint* (JD-FM-159), but filing a Cross Complaint lets the court know what you want. It also allows the divorce to continue even if your spouse decides to stop or withdraw the case. If you do file a Cross Complaint, make sure to check the appropriate box at the top of the form.
- Complete your court papers and file them with the court clerk. Be sure to make a copy for yourself and send a copy to the plaintiff.
- There is no court fee for filing an Answer or a Cross Complaint.

Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)

- You may ask the court at any time to enter court orders concerning alimony, child support, custody, visitation, and exclusive possession of property. You do not have to wait until the final divorce hearing. You would have to file a written request (called a motion) with the court clerk. (See pages 18 and 30 for more information.)
- By now, both you and your spouse must comply with the Automatic Court Orders, which are discussed in Step Three of this Guide. The Notice of Automatic Court Orders form is included in the *Divorce Guide Supplement* (JDP-FM-180) and a summary of the Automatic Court Orders is reproduced on page 24. Please be sure that you read and understand them.

The Cross Complaint is the same court form as the Complaint. Be sure to check the box at the top of the form showing that you are filing a Cross Complaint.

STEP 3

AUTOMATIC COURT ORDERS

▲ Automatic Court Orders

STEP 3

AUTOMATIC COURT ORDERS

Filing divorce papers triggers certain automatic court orders that protect you, your spouse and your children (if you have any born of this marriage). If you start the divorce, the automatic orders apply to you when you sign the Complaint. If you are responding to a divorce, the automatic orders apply to you when you are served with the Summons and Complaint. (See page 24 for a summary of the automatic court orders.)

Once the automatic orders take effect, you may not go into unreasonable debt, sell your property without your spouse's agreement, change medical or life insurance coverage, or force your spouse to leave your home. If you have children, automatic orders prevent you from moving your children out of state and require you to participate in a parenting education program. The automatic court orders apply to you unless there is already a court order which contradicts one of these orders. See the *Notice of Automatic Court Orders* (JD-FM-158). If you do not obey the automatic court orders, you can be found in contempt of court.

If you want to change the automatic orders, you may file a motion to modify them using the *Motion for Modification* (JD-FM-174). Be sure to check the "other" box and state the automatic court order you want changed.

If you need other court orders, complete the *Motion for Orders Before Judgment* (JD-FM-176) and serve it with the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. (See pages 18, 21, and 30 for more information.)

SUMMARY OF AUTOMATIC COURT ORDERS

The court orders on the reverse side/page 1 apply to both parties in this case, unless there is already a court order which contradicts one of these orders. The automatic court orders apply to the plaintiff or the applicant when the attached Complaint or Application is signed. They apply to the defendant or respondent when a copy of the Complaint or the Application and the Notice of Automatic Court Orders are served (delivered to the defendant/respondent by an authorized person). The automatic court orders are summarized below, but you are subject to the full text of the orders on the reverse side/page 1. If you do not understand the full text of the automatic court orders, you may want to talk to an attorney.

Neither party shall:

- Sell, mortgage, or give away any property without written agreement or a court order. **(Only applies to divorce, annulment, and legal separation cases.)**
- Go into unreasonable debt by borrowing money or using credit cards or cash advances. **(Only applies to divorce, annulment, and legal separation cases.)**
- Permanently take your children from Connecticut without written agreement or a court order.
- Take each other or your children off any existing medical, hospital, doctor, or dental insurance policy or let any such insurance coverage expire.
- Change the terms or named beneficiaries of any existing insurance policy or let any existing insurance coverage expire, including life, automobile, homeowner's or renter's insurance.
- Deny use of the family home to the other person without a court order, if you are living together on the date the court papers are served.

Both parties shall:

- Complete and exchange sworn financial affidavits within thirty days of the return date. **(Only applies to divorce, annulment, and legal separation cases.)**
- Participate in a parenting education program within sixty days of the return date or, for a custody or visitation case, within sixty days from the filing of the Application (if you share children under 18 years old).
- Attend a case management conference on the date specified on the reverse/page 1, unless you both agree on all issues and file a Case Management Agreement form with the court clerk on or before that date.
- Tell the other person in writing within forty-eight hours about your new address or a place where you can receive mail if you move out of the family home (if you share children under 18 years old).
- Help any children you share continue their usual contact with both parents in person, by telephone and in writing.

IF YOU DO NOT OBEY THESE ORDERS WHILE YOUR CASE IS PENDING, YOU MAY BE PUNISHED BY BEING HELD IN CONTEMPT OF COURT. IF YOU OBJECT TO THESE ORDERS OR WANT THEM CHANGED, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A HEARING BEFORE A JUDGE WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME, BY FILING A MOTION TO MODIFY THESE ORDERS WITH THE COURT CLERK

STEP 4

THE 90 DAY WAITING PERIOD

- ◆ Prepare and Exchange Financial Affidavits
- ◆ Attend Parenting Education Classes
- ◆ Special Issues with Children
- ◆ Contact Military if Your Spouse's Location is Not Known
- ◆ Case Management Process
- ◆ Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)
 - Prepare Motion
 - File the Motion
 - The Court Hearing
 - Custody
 - Visitation
 - Alimony
 - Child Support
 - Educational Support Orders
 - Health Insurance for Your Child
 - Parenting Education Program
 - Paternity

STEP 4

THE 90 DAY WAITING PERIOD

Remember, you are bound by the Automatic Court Orders when you sign the Complaint, if you are the plaintiff; and when you are served with the Summons and Complaint, if you are the defendant. (See page 23.)

You must wait a minimum of 90 days after your divorce action starts (Return Date) to get a judgment of divorce. The Return Date is noted on the Summons and the waiting period generally ends on the Case Management Date noted in the Notice of Automatic Court Orders.

During the waiting period, you should try to reach an agreement with your spouse on the financial issues and issues related to your children. A private mediator or a family relations counselor from the Judicial Branch's CSSD Family Services Office may be able to help you reach an agreement. Use the *Divorce Agreement* (JD-FM-172) to help you document your agreement.

During the waiting period, you should also complete and file a *Case Management Agreement* (JD-FM-163). If you and your spouse agree on the issues, or if your spouse has not filed an Answer or an Appearance, your case is called "uncontested." You may select a date for an uncontested divorce hearing and write it on the Case Management Agreement form, Section II. To select a date for your hearing, check with the court clerk or the family casflow coordinator. In some court locations, you may get a final divorce hearing on your case management date, if your case is uncontested.

If you are the plaintiff, you will get a docket number for your case in the mail, about two weeks after filing the Complaint. If you are the defendant, you will get the docket number after you file an Appearance. Use the docket number on all legal papers you file in court. The docket number in all divorce cases begins with FA.

If you decide you do not want a divorce and you are the plaintiff, you may stop the case by filing a *Withdrawal* (JD-CV-41) at the clerk's office. However, if your spouse has filed a Cross Complaint, the case will continue unless your spouse also files a Withdrawal form.

At the end of the waiting period, your case may be scheduled for a final divorce hearing. The schedule depends on how much you and your spouse agree on the issues. If you and your spouse agree on all the issues, your case is “uncontested” and the divorce hearing may be scheduled immediately. If you and your spouse agree on everything except money and property division, your case is called “limited contested.” If you and your spouse disagree on the custody of your children or visitation, your case is called “contested.” Contested and limited contested cases are more complicated than uncontested cases, they also involve more court rules and procedures, and they are beyond the scope of this guide. You must tell the court, using the Case Management Agreement, about the status of your case (for example, uncontested) and when you will be ready for the final divorce hearing.

Follow the checklist below during the waiting period to get ready for your divorce hearing:

Prepare and Exchange Financial Affidavits

■ Both spouses must complete and exchange with each other a *Financial Affidavit* (JD-FM-6) within 30 days of the Return Date. Remember, this form must be signed in front of a notary public, an attorney, or a court clerk. An updated Financial Affidavit must be filed with the court at least five days before the hearing of any motion involving alimony, support or counsel fees or at the time your divorce is scheduled for a hearing.

■ Financial Affidavits are sealed upon filing and, unless otherwise ordered by the court, are disclosable only to the judicial authority, to court personnel, to the parties to the action and their attorneys, and to any guardians ad litem and attorneys appointed for any minor children involved in the matter. However, if there is any hearing at which financial issues are in dispute, the court shall terminate the sealing. Also, any person may file a motion to unseal the Financial Affidavits.

Attend Parenting Education Classes

■ If you have children, you must participate in a court-approved parenting education program. You must do this within 60 days of the Return Date on your Summons. The required form and a list of court-approved providers are available at the court clerk's office or in the Judicial Branch's CSSD Family Services Office. (See page 35 for more information.)

Special Issues with Children

If you and your spouse have children, it is very important to make a parenting plan to work out parenting responsibilities. Your plan should address custody and visitation. A judge will decide custody based on what the judge thinks is in the best interest of the child. Usually these orders are the result of agreements between the parents about where the children will live and how much time they will spend with each parent. The amount and type of visitation, or parenting time, may depend on the age of your child and how close you live to the other parent. Visitation may also depend on the kind of relationship you and the other parent have with your child.

Financial support of your child is also important. You and your spouse should try to agree on child support payments, your responsibilities for medical and health insurance, and for medical bills not covered by insurance.

These important issues are discussed on pages 32 through 35.

Contact Military if Your Spouse's Location is Not Known

■ The court protects people who cannot respond to a Divorce Complaint because they are in the military service. If the defendant does not file an Appearance form, you will need to prove to the court that he or she is not in the U.S. military service. You must prepare an *Affidavit Concerning Military Service* (JD-FM-178), swearing that the defendant is not in the

military. If you do not know whether the defendant is in the military, you must write a letter to Defense Manpower Data Center, 1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400, Attn: Military Verification, Arlington, VA 22209-2593 to verify that the defendant is not currently in the military. You must include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your letter.

Case Management Process

- Every divorce case filed in Connecticut must have a Case Management Date. This date is at least 90 days after your Return Date and must be recorded on the Notice of Automatic Court Orders. This date gives the court and you a chance to review your case and set a schedule for resolving the issues in your case. It is also used to set a date for the final divorce hearing.
- On or before your Case Management Date, you and your spouse must complete and sign the Case Management Agreement and file it with the court clerk's office. If you file your Case Management Agreement with the clerk, you do not need to go to court on the Case Management Date, unless you and your spouse disagree about custody or visitation issues.
- If your spouse has not filed an Appearance form, the court will treat your divorce as "uncontested." You will not need to go to court on the Case Management Date, unless your court location holds uncontested divorce hearings on that date and you have selected that date for your divorce hearing.
- When completing the Case Management Agreement, you will need to think about the following questions. Do you agree with your spouse on all the issues? If not, how will you try to reach agreement? Use the Case Management Agreement to describe the steps you will take to try to

reach agreement. Could a mediator (including a court family relations counselor) or a special family master (a volunteer attorney) help you reach agreement? Do you need more information from your spouse before reaching agreement? Asking for more information is called “discovery.” You may use the form to show what information you and your spouse need and when you will give or receive it.

- If your case is uncontested, you may select a divorce hearing date depending on the court’s schedule. If you are not sure what date to pick, ask the court clerk or the casflow coordinator. In some court locations, it is possible to have your final divorce hearing on your Case Management Date. Check with the court clerk or casflow coordinator in your court.

- If you are unsure about how to complete the Case Management Agreement, contact the casflow coordinator or court clerk for your court location or go to court on the Case Management Date.

Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)

At any time during a divorce case you or your spouse may ask the court to order many things, including: custody or visitation of your children; payment of child support or alimony; and who gets to live in the family home. To do so, you must make a written request for a court order. The written request is called a “motion.” If you are the plaintiff, you may have this motion served on the defendant with the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. (See pages 18 and 21 for more information.)

The earliest that you may file a Motion for Orders Before Judgment is along with the original Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders.



Prepare Motion

- Complete the *Motion for Orders Before Judgment* (JD-FM-176) and sign it.
- Sign the bottom of the form, stating that you will give or mail a copy of the form and any attachments that day to your spouse or to your spouse's attorney if he or she filed an Appearance. If you are the plaintiff, you may ask a state marshal or other proper officer to serve these documents at the same time as the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders.
- Include a completed Financial Affidavit with your motion, if your request for court orders is about money.
- Include an *Affidavit Concerning Children* (JD-FM-164) with your motion, if your request for court orders is about custody or visitation of children.

File the Motion

- Take or mail the motion to the court clerk's office.
- There is no court entry fee for filing this motion.

The Court Hearing

- Follow the instructions on pages 39 and 40 for attending your court hearing.

Joint custody works best if both parents are able to discuss what is best for their child.

Custody

- ***Joint custody*** means that both parents make the major decisions in a child's life together, like the child's education, religious upbringing, or major medical care. Daily decisions like bedtime or what the child will wear are generally made by the parent who is with the child at the time. It should be noted that joint custody does not mean that the child must live half the time with one parent and half the time with the other.
- ***Sole custody*** means that the child will live primarily with one parent. That parent has the final decision making responsibility for the child and is called the custodial parent. The custodial parent may, however, consult with the noncustodial parent. Usually, the judge will make sure the child has ongoing contact, or visitation, with the noncustodial parent.

Visitation

- ***Reasonable visitation*** means you and your spouse want to arrange parenting time with your child yourselves. This works well when the parents and the child do not need a fixed schedule, and both parents are flexible and agreeable. Some judges may require you to prepare a written plan.
- ***Fixed schedule visitation*** means setting definite hours during the week for the child to spend time with the noncustodial parent. Fixed schedules can include overnight visits, weekends, weekday evenings, and sharing holidays, school vacations, and summers.



- *Supervised visitation* means that some responsible adult must be present when the child is visiting a parent. The judge may order supervised visitation if the safety of the child is a concern.
- A *no contact order* means that the noncustodial parent may not see the child because the judge has decided contact with the parent is not in the child's best interest.

Alimony

- Alimony is the money a judge orders one spouse to pay for the support of the other spouse. There are no formal guidelines for how much alimony to award. The judge decides each case after looking at the facts, including the length of the marriage, the age, health, income, and job skills of each spouse. If there are children, the judge may look at whether the custodial parent works outside the home. If you do not ask for alimony at the final hearing, you can never get it in the future. If alimony is awarded by the court, either party may be able to ask the court to change (or modify) the amount in the future. If you want alimony, tell the court how much you want, how long you want to get alimony, and for what reason. For example, you may want alimony because you plan to go to school or because you need it to meet household expenses.

All child support orders are paid through an income withholding order unless the parties agree or the court orders otherwise.

Child Support

- Connecticut has child support guidelines which set the amount of child support to be paid by the noncustodial parent. The chart in the guidelines tells you the amount of child support to be paid based on the number of children and the combined net income of both parents. The guidelines also list reasons the judge or family support magistrate can use for deviating from the chart.

You can get a copy of the child support guidelines from the court clerk's office. Before your court hearing, you will need to fill out the *Child Support Guidelines Worksheet* (CCSG-1). A family relations counselor can help you fill this form out in court before your hearing. If you are going to family support magistrate court, a support enforcement officer can help you fill this form out. All child support orders are paid through an income withholding order unless the parties agree or the court orders otherwise.

Educational Support Orders

- Either parent may make a motion asking the court to order educational support for a child to attend an institution of higher education or a private occupational school for up to four academic years or until the child attains twenty-three years of age, whichever is sooner. If no educational support order is entered at the time of your divorce, and your divorce decree does not specifically provide that a later motion for educational support may be filed, no educational support order may be entered thereafter.

Health Insurance for Your Child

- Medical and dental insurance can be just as important to your child as financial support from the other parent. Usually, at least one parent must provide health insurance for your child if it is available through work or another group insurance plan at a reasonable cost. The judge or family support magistrate

decides what is a reasonable cost. The judge or family support magistrate also decides how uninsured medical and dental expenses will be shared, if you and your spouse cannot reach agreement.

There is a state health insurance program for children called the HUSKY Plan (Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth). The court may order you to apply for the HUSKY Plan for your child(ren) if other insurance is not available to you or your (ex)spouse at a reasonable cost. You may also apply for the HUSKY Plan on your own. For more information call toll-free 1-877-CT HUSKY or visit www.huskyhealth.com.

Parenting Education Program

■ You must participate in an approved parenting education program if you have minor children and are getting a divorce unless otherwise ordered by the court. You must do this within sixty days of the Return Date on your Summons. The goal of the class is to explain how divorce affects children and how you and your spouse can help your child adjust to changes in your family life. You may ask to attend a different class than your spouse. Unless a judge finds that you cannot afford to pay the fee, each parent must pay \$125 for the program. The fee is paid directly to the person or agency providing the training. The required form and pamphlet, including a list of approved providers, are available at the court clerk's office or in the Judicial Branch's CSSD Family Services Office. Applications to waive the program fee are also available at the court clerk's office if you cannot afford to pay.

Paternity

■ In Connecticut, the law views the husband as the father of any child born to the wife after the date of the marriage. If this is not true in your case, you may need to get a court order for a genetic test to help determine legal fatherhood. (See pages 18, 21, and 30 on court orders before the divorce judgment.)

If you have minor children, you must participate in an approved parenting education program unless otherwise ordered by the court. Failure to attend a parenting education program may delay your divorce.

STEP 5

FINALIZING YOUR DIVORCE

- ◆ Prepare the Court Documents for the Uncontested Hearing
- ◆ The Court Hearing
- ◆ Judgment Form

STEP 5

FINALIZING YOUR DIVORCE

The steps described here *only apply to an uncontested divorce* – when you and your spouse agree on all issues or your spouse has not responded to the case by filing an Appearance form. You should make every effort and use every available resource to try to reach agreement so that your case will be uncontested. Consider using the court’s free resources: special family masters; family relations counselors; or the court-annexed mediation program. (See Additional Information section on page 41.)

Prepare the Court Documents for the Uncontested Hearing



- Both the plaintiff and the defendant must prepare a current Financial Affidavit at least five days and not more than 30 days before your court hearing. This form must be signed in front of a notary public, an attorney, or a court clerk. Financial Affidavits are sealed upon filing and, unless otherwise ordered by the court, are disclosable only to the judicial authority, to court personnel, to the parties to the action and their attorneys, and to any guardians ad litem and attorneys appointed for any minor children involved in the matter. However, if there is any hearing at which financial issues are in dispute, the court shall terminate the sealing. Also, any person may file a motion to unseal the Financial Affidavits.
- You and your spouse may use the completed *Divorce Agreement* (JD-FM-172) form to tell the judge what you want to do about custody, visitation, child support, educational support, alimony, life insurance and medical insurance for you and your children, and how you want to divide up your property and debts.

- Prepare an *Affidavit Concerning Children* (JD-FM-164).
- Prepare a *Child Support Guidelines Worksheet* (CCSG-1).
- Prepare an *Advisement of Rights Re: Income Withholding* (JD-FM-71).
- Prepare an *Affidavit Concerning Military Service* (JD-FM-178) if the defendant has not filed an Appearance form.
- Send a copy of all the preceding completed forms to your spouse or your spouse's attorney.
- Prepare a *Dissolution of Marriage Report* (JD-FM-181). Fill in Part One only. This form is for the court's use only. Do not send it to your spouse or your spouse's attorney.
- If income withholding has been ordered and you are not receiving child support services now, you should be aware that state and federal law requires all child support payments to be processed through the state. Payments must be made to the State Disbursement Unit even if the state has never been involved with your case before. This will help keep a record of child support paid for your children. You must:
 - Complete the *Case Input Record, Non IV-D Income Withholding* (JD-FM-150).
 - Complete the *Order to Withhold Income for Child Support* form (JD-FM-1).
 - Take the completed Order to Withhold Income for Child Support to the Judicial District clerk's office for review and for the clerk's signature.

- Make a copy of both forms for your records.
- When the original signed Order to Withhold Income for Child Support form is returned to you by the clerk's office, mail it and the Case Input Record to the Child Support Information and Problem Resolution Unit (IPRU) at P.O. Box 320680, Hartford, CT 06132.
- Report in writing any change of address to the IPRU.

If you follow the preceding steps, the state will:

- Send you a notice confirming that your court papers were received.
- Set up an account for you in the child support system.
- Serve a copy of the Order to Withhold Income for Child Support form on the employer or other payer of income.
- Credit your account with all child support payments received and send out a child support check to the custodial parent within two business days of receipt.
- Provide full child support services, if you apply with the Department of Social Services. Full child support services include locating non-custodial parents, establishing paternity, obtaining and modifying child support orders, and enforcing child support orders.

The Court Hearing



- To select a date for your hearing, if one has not already been assigned, check with the court clerk or family caseload coordinator.
- Take the completed forms identified in the previous section with you to court on the day of your divorce hearing.

Go to the courthouse before the time the hearing is scheduled to start. It can take ten to twenty minutes to get into the building because everyone must go through a security station with a metal detector. Go to the assigned courtroom and sit down. If you don't know which courtroom, ask the judicial marshal at the metal detector or any court staff.

- When the judge calls the name of your case, stand up and say “Ready, Your Honor.” Judges usually require you to meet with a family relations counselor, who is a trained mediator, if you have not reached an agreement. Even if you reach an agreement with the help of a family relations counselor, be sure to go back and report it to the judge so that it can become a court order. If you do not reach an agreement, return to the courtroom and report the status of your case to the judge.
- When your case is called, go to the front of the courtroom with your completed documents. The judge will tell you what to do next. Answer respectfully any questions the judge asks and do not interrupt the judge.

Judgment Form



- Some courts will not prepare a written record of your divorce for you, in which case the plaintiff must complete a *Divorce Judgment* form (JD-FM-177) and file it with the court clerk's office within 60 days of the divorce. If you are not sure about the exact court orders, you can look at the notes of the court hearing recorded in the file by the court clerk. Give the completed Divorce Judgment form to the court clerk. After the Judgment is signed, you may get a certified copy of it for your records for \$25, or a non-certified copy for \$15.
- If you only need written proof that you are divorced, you may ask for a *Certificate of Dissolution of Marriage/Certificate of Change of Name* (JD-CL-34) from the court clerk's office. There is a \$2 fee.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Enforcing Your Court Order](#)
- [Modifying Your Court Order](#)
- [Mediation](#)
- [Legal Advice or Representation](#)
- [Family Violence](#)
- [Advocacy/Support Groups](#)
- [Statutes](#)
- [Court Rules](#)
- [List of Legal Holidays](#)
- [Connecticut Judicial District Courts](#)
- [Court Forms Discussed in this Guide](#)

To apply for help enforcing your court order, call the Department of Social Services office nearest you or 1-800-228-5437.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Enforcing Your Court Order



Most people are law abiding citizens and follow court orders. If your (ex-)spouse disobeys the court order (for example, the orders about custody, visitation, child support payments, health insurance, or selling property), you may ask the court to help enforce the order. You may first want to try to talk to your (ex-)spouse and work out the problem. You may also ask a family relations counselor at your local court to help you try to mediate or solve the problem.

If you cannot work out the problem, you may ask a judge to enforce a court order by filing a written motion for contempt. A motion is a request in writing. Contempt is a court decision that someone disobeyed a court order on purpose. There is a ***Motion for Contempt*** (JD-FM-173), which can be obtained from any Judicial District clerk's office.

This booklet does not explain how to prepare a motion for contempt. Ask the court staff about other booklets or resources which may be helpful.

If your (ex-)spouse is disobeying the child support, health insurance or alimony part of the court order, you may ask for help from the state agency responsible for enforcing these court orders. The Support Enforcement Services Unit of the court can prepare and file a Motion for Contempt for you. To apply for the state child support services call the Department of Social Services office nearest you or 1-800-228-5437.

Modifying Your Court Order

You may need to request a change of a court order because of changes in your life or the lives of your (ex-)spouse or child. You may want to change child support payments, or the parenting arrangements you have made with your (ex-)spouse for custody or visitation. Only a judge or a family support magistrate can change a court order. Even if you and your (ex-)spouse agree to the change, it is important to ask the judge in writing to make the change legal.

Asking a judge or family support magistrate in writing to change something in the court order is called making a motion to modify. You may use the *Motion for Modification* (JD-FM-174).

This booklet does not explain how to prepare a motion to modify. Ask the court staff about other booklets or resources which may be helpful and about the court fees involved.

The legal standard for granting a modification is whether there has been a substantial change in circumstances.

Mediation

A trained mediator can help you and your spouse reach an agreement on major issues, including property division, child custody, child support payments, and a visitation (or parenting time) schedule. You may want to use one of the following resources to find a divorce mediator in your area:



■ **Alternative Dispute Resolution Private Provider**

Directory - A list of private mediators who charge a fee is available at the clerk's office in every Judicial District courthouse.

■ **Court Annexed Mediation Program** - A list of senior judges and judge trial referees who will mediate for free is available at the clerk's office in every Judicial District courthouse.

■ **Connecticut Council for Divorce Mediation** - Maintains a list by geographical area of members who mediate for a fee. Their toll free number is 1-888-236-CCDM (2236).

■ **Special Masters** - In many courts you may be able to schedule your case before local attorneys who are knowledgeable in family matters and who will try to help you settle your disputes. Check with your local caseload coordinator or clerk's office to see if this option is available.

Legal Advice or Representation

You are encouraged to review your case with an attorney before you take any court action. Some lawyers only charge a small fee for a consultation or to review court papers. To find an attorney, you may look in the Yellow Pages in the telephone book or call the lawyer referral service of your local county bar association.

If you have a low income, you may qualify for free legal help from one of the many legal services programs in Connecticut. To find out if

Local bar associations offer lawyer referral programs for a small fee in the following locations:

Fairfield County
203-335-4116

Hartford,
Litchfield,
Middlesex, Tolland
and Windham
Counties
860-525-6052

New Haven County
203-562-5750

New London
County
860-889-9384

you qualify, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 (English and Spanish), Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. They may be able to match you with a local attorney or legal aid office, tell you about any local workshops or clinics about divorce cases, or discuss your court papers over the telephone.

If you are an inmate at any Connecticut Department of Correction facility, you may be able to get free legal help from Inmates Legal Assistance, 78 Oak Street, P.O. Box 260237, Hartford, Connecticut 06126, at 860-246-1118. Requests for help are preferred in writing.

Family Violence



If you are being physically abused or threatened with abuse, you are encouraged to contact your local family violence program. They offer emergency shelter, counseling, and support. Call Infoline at 211, a 24-hour confidential help line (Voice/TDD) to get the telephone number for the family violence program nearest you.

Call Infoline at 211, a 24-hour confidential help line (Voice/TDD) to get the telephone number for the family violence program nearest you.

Advocacy/Support Groups

If you would like to talk with other people who may share your situation, contact one of the organizations listed below:

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund
135 Broad Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
860-247-6090

Divorced Men's Association of Connecticut
P.O. Box 734
Manchester, Connecticut 06045-0734
860-643-8516

Infoline
211
(Statewide Information and Referral to all Social Service Agencies.)

Statutes

(General Statutes of Connecticut, Title 46b)

“A decree of dissolution of a marriage...shall be granted upon a finding that one of the following causes has occurred: (1) the marriage has broken down irretrievably; (2) the parties have lived apart by reason of incompatibility for a continuous period of at least the eighteen months immediately prior to the service of the complaint and that there is no reasonable prospect that they will be reconciled....” Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b-40(c)

- § 46b-40(c) Fault and no fault grounds for divorce or legal separation
- § 46b-44 Residency requirements
- § 46b-45 Service and filing of complaint
- § 46b-46 Notice to nonresident party
- § 46b-51 Stipulation of parties and finding of irretrievable breakdown
- § 46b-53 Conciliation procedures; privileged communications
- § 46b-67(a) 90-day waiting period

Court Rules

(Connecticut Practice Book, Chapter 25)

Chapter 25. Procedure in Family Matters

- § 25-2 Complaint for dissolution of marriage, legal separation
- § 25-3 Action for custody of minor children
- § 25-5 Automatic orders upon service of complaint
- § 25-7 Pleadings
- § 25-27 Motion for contempt
- § 25-28 Order of notice
- § 25-30 Statements to be filed
- § 25-49 Definitions of uncontested, limited contested and contested matters
- § 25-50 Case management
- § 25-57 Affidavit concerning children
- § 25-58 Reports of dissolution of marriage

WARNING

This is only a guide to some resources available and is provided with the understanding that it represents only a starting point for research.

Courthouses are open every weekday from 9 am - 5 pm, except on legal holidays. Some courthouse lobbies open before 9 am, although no business is conducted until 9 am.

List of Legal Holidays

Courts are closed on the following state legal holidays:

New Year's Day	Independence Day
Martin Luther King Day	Labor Day
Lincoln Day	Columbus Day
Washington's Birthday	Veterans' Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas

Connecticut Judicial District Courts

You may file a divorce case in the judicial district where you live or where your spouse lives. If your spouse lives out of state, file the case in the judicial district serving your town. There are thirteen judicial districts. As you can see below, certain towns have a choice of judicial districts.

JUDICIAL DISTRICT	TOWNS SERVED
Ansonia-Milford Judicial District 14 West River Street Milford, CT 06460 203-877-4293	Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Milford*, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, West Haven*. (<i>* Towns may also use New Haven Judicial District.</i>)
Danbury Judicial District 146 White Street Danbury, CT 06810 203-207-8600	Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield and Sherman.
Fairfield Judicial District 1061 Main Street Bridgeport, CT 06601 203-579-6527	Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford and Trumbull.

<p>Hartford Judicial District (Family) 90 Washington Street Hartford, CT 06106 860-706-5100</p>	<p>Avon**, Bloomfield, Canton**, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor*, Enfield*, Farmington**, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Manchester*, Marlborough, Simsbury**, South Windsor*, Suffield, West Hartford, Windsor and Windsor Locks. <i>(* Towns may also use Tolland Judicial District. **Towns may also use New Britain Judicial District)</i></p>
<p>Litchfield Judicial District 15 West Street Litchfield, CT 06759 860-567-0885</p>	<p>Bantam, Barkhamsted, Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, New Milford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Winchester and Winsted.</p>
<p>Middlesex Judicial District 1 Court Street Middletown, CT 06457-3374 860-343-6400</p>	<p>Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Portland and Westbrook. <i>(Cromwell may also use Hartford Judicial District.)</i></p>
<p>New Britain Judicial District 20 Franklin Square New Britain, CT 06051 860-515-5180</p>	<p>Berlin, Bristol, Burlington, New Britain, Newington*, Plainville, Plymouth, Rocky Hill*, Southington, and Wethersfield*. <i>(*Towns may also use Hartford Judicial District, except for actions where venue is in the geographical area. Plymouth may also use Waterbury Judicial District.)</i></p>
<p>New Haven Judicial District 235 Church Street New Haven, CT 06510 203-503-6800 New Haven Judicial District at Meriden 54 West Main Street Meriden, CT 06450 203-238-6666</p>	<p>Bethany*, Branford, Cheshire, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Wallingford and Woodbridge*. <i>(* Towns may also use Ansonia-Milford Judicial District.)</i></p>

New London Judicial District

70 Huntington Street
New London, CT 06320
860-443-5363

**New London Judicial District
at Norwich**

1 Courthouse Square
Norwich, CT 06360
860-887-3515

Bozrah, Colchester, East Lyme, Franklin,
Griswold, Groton, Lebanon, Ledyard,
Lisbon, Lyme, Montville, New London,
North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme,
Preston, Salem, Sprague, Stonington,
Voluntown and Waterford.

Stamford-Norwalk Judicial District

123 Hoyt Street
Stamford, CT 06905
203-965-5308

Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan,
Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport
and Wilton. *(All towns may also use
Fairfield Judicial District.)*

Tolland Judicial District

69 Brooklyn Street
Rockville, CT 06066
860-896-4920

Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Coventry,
Ellington, Hebron, Mansfield, Somers,
Stafford, Tolland, Union, Vernon and
Willington.

Waterbury Judicial District

300 Grand Street
Waterbury, CT 06721
203-591-3300

Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect,
Southbury, Waterbury, Watertown*,
Wolcott and Woodbury*. *(* Towns may
also use Litchfield Judicial District.
Southbury may also use Ansonia-Milford
Judicial District.)*

Windham Judicial District

155 Church Street
Putnam, CT 06260
860-928-7749

Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin,
Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield,
Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling,
Thompson, Windham and Woodstock.

Court Forms Discussed in this Guide

Available at all Judicial District Court Clerks' Offices and on the Judicial Branch website, www.jud.state.ct.us. The forms that are followed by an asterisk(*) are included in the ***Divorce Guide Supplement*** (JDP-FM-180).

FORM NAME (In alphabetical order)	FORM NUMBER
Addendum to Affidavit Concerning Children	JD-FM-164A
Advisement of Rights Re: Income Withholding	JD-FM-71
Affidavit Concerning Children*	JD-FM-164
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Do It Yourself Divorce Guide

Published by

The Commission on Official Legal Publications

Judicial Branch, State of Connecticut

Graphics by Nina Ritson, DAS Electronic Publishing

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