



Do It Yourself

DIVORCE GUIDE

Judicial Branch Mission Statement

The mission of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch is to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.

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.ct.gov.

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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DIVORCE GUIDE

**Judicial Branch
State of Connecticut**

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to help you represent yourself in a divorce; in other words, a dissolution of marriage or a dissolution of civil union. 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 fill out the necessary court forms and come to 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 give you 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 able to help you with the emotional and practical issues of divorce.

Note: If you need more information or help after reading this guide, you should either talk with 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.ct.gov.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

FOR YOUR SAFETY

If you are being physically abused or threatened with physical abuse by your spouse, you should contact the police and a family violence program near you. Call the Statewide Domestic Violence hotline at 1-888-774-2900 or Infoline at 211 for a family violence program near you. You should talk 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, the threat of physical abuse, stalking or a pattern of **threatening. 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.ct.gov.

Family Violence – Need Help?

Call the Statewide Domestic Violence hotline at 1-888-774-2900 or Infoline at 211 for a family violence program near you.

OVERVIEW

The best way to find a marriage/family 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/Family Counselors, Psychologists, Psychotherapists, or Social Workers.

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 or civil union and your decision to get a divorce.

If you cannot work out your differences, divorce is a way to legally end your marriage or civil union. Dissolution is the word Connecticut law uses for divorce. If you decide to end your marriage or civil union, this booklet will help you represent yourself. When a person represents himself or herself, he or she may be referred to as a “self-represented party” or a “pro se party.”

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 think about 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 able to get free legal services. To learn if you can get free legal services, you may call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320. The people who answer the telephone speak English and Spanish.

There are many steps to a divorce. When you and your spouse agree on basic issues, it takes about 3 to 4 months to complete a divorce. One way to reach an agreement on basic issues is to work with a mediator. (See additional information on page 44.) The Family Services Office of the Judicial Branch’s Court Support Services Division (CSSD) can also mediate divorce cases. Its services are free.

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

You will find a list of all of the forms referred to in this guide on pages 52 and 53 in the Additional Information section. The most commonly used court forms you need to start a divorce are in the supplement to this booklet. The Divorce Guide Supplement is available at any Judicial District clerk's office, Court Service Center and on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov/pub.htm. See a listing of Judicial District courts on pages 49 – 51. Please review the common words and the descriptions of court personnel that you will need to work with on pages 8 – 12. Then, to start a divorce, turn to page 13. To respond to divorce papers, turn to page 20.

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 want 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 or civil union 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 getting back together.

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; the person who did not file the divorce in court.

**Dissolution/
Divorce**

The legal end of a marriage or civil union by a court.

Docket Number	A 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 statement of income, expenses, property (called assets) and debts (called liabilities) made under oath.
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 people still joined by marriage or civil union will live separately.
No-Fault Divorce	The most common kind of divorce, where neither party needs to prove that the other party caused the marriage or civil union 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 files for divorce.

Pro Se	For yourself (see “self-represented party”).
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 form on or before the 2 nd 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.
Self-Represented Party	A person who decides to speak for, and represent, himself or herself in court.
Service	The legal method for having your spouse given a copy of the court papers being filed, or notice that court action is being taken or has been taken. Service can be made by a state marshal, a constable, or other proper officer authorized by statute.
Spouse	Either person in a marriage or civil union.
Visitation	A court order deciding the amount of time a parent who does not have custody of a child may spend with his or her child; also called parenting time or access.

COURT PERSONNEL

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

Caseflow Coordinator

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

Court Clerk

Keeps 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.

Court Recording Monitor

Records the court hearing on audio tape or disk. 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.

Court Service Centers

Self-help centers that provide services for self-represented parties, attorneys, and the community. They are located in Judicial District courthouses and are staffed by Judicial Branch employees. Several Court Service Centers have bilingual staff.

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 keeps order in each courtroom.

Law Librarian

Keeps legal reference and research materials for public use.

**Public
Information
Desks**

Part of the Court Service Center program and located in some Judicial District and Geographical Area courthouse lobbies. These Desks have daily calendar and docket information, court forms, and information about community services.

State Marshal

Can serve 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 change or modify child support orders.

STEP 1

STARTING A DIVORCE

- **Fill Out Court Forms**
- **Take the Forms to the Court Clerk's Office**
- **Service (Delivery of forms and papers to your spouse)**
- **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: ❶ the *Summons Family Actions* (JD-FM-3), ❷ either the *Divorce Complaint (Dissolution of Marriage)* (JD-FM-159) or the *Dissolution of Civil Union Complaint* (JD-FM-159A), and ❸ the *Notice of Automatic Court Orders* (JD-FM-158). Once you fill out the forms, you must take them to the court clerk's office. The court clerk will review your 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 the court has granted an Application for Waiver of Fees (see page 16). 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 the Public Information Desks at selected courthouses. They are also on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov.

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

Fill Out Court Forms

- Fill out a *Summons Family Actions* (JD-FM-3). A Summons directs an officer (usually a state marshal) to notify your spouse that you are filing for a divorce. A Summons tells your spouse to file an *Appearance* form (JD-CL-12), so he or she can respond to the lawsuit and be sent notices from the court about all future court dates. Do not sign the Summons until you go see the court clerk. Bring photo identification to show the clerk.
- Choose the correct Judicial District courthouse and fill it in on the Summons. (See list of Judicial Districts on pages 49 – 51.)

- Choose 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 come to court on the Return Date.
- Fill out a ***Divorce Complaint (Dissolution of Marriage)*** (JD-FM-159) or a ***Dissolution of Civil Union Complaint*** (JD-FM-159A). 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 or civil union, give you alimony, child custody, visitation (also called parenting time or access), child support, divide your 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 23 for more information.) You must fill in the case management date on the Notice of Automatic Court Orders. The case management date is set by the court and is at least 90 days after your Return Date. Choose 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, fill out the ***Motion for Orders Before Judgment (Pendente Lite) in Family Cases*** (JD-FM-176), and have it served with the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. (See pages 23 – 24 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
\$350

Fee for serving court papers
\$50
(approximate cost)

Parenting Education Class \$125
(if you have children)

Total \$525
(for most cases)

Newspaper publication of legal notice \$350
(if you can't find your spouse)
(approximate cost)

Total \$875

- If you cannot afford the court fees for a divorce, fill out the *Application for Waiver of Fees/Appointment of Counsel Family* (JD-FM-75). The form asks for information about your income and expenses. This is to show the court why you cannot afford to pay the filing fee, the cost for service (delivery), 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 waived and the service (delivery) fee paid by the state, you may request a hearing by filling out the appropriate section on the Application for Waiver of Fees. If you need a fee waiver, you should finish this process **before** the papers are served.
- If your spouse lives outside of Connecticut and you know his or her address, fill out a *Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases* (JD-FM-167) and give it to the clerk, together with 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 Court Orders; Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases; and the Order of Notice in Family Cases; or by having the state marshal give notice in whatever other way the court orders.

Important: Fees may change. You should ask the clerk's office what the current fees are before filing your papers.

- 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 the 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. Fill out a *Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases* (JD-FM-167) and give it to the clerk, together with 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 in a way it thinks reasonable. You must notify your spouse in the way the court has ordered.

Take the Forms to the Court Clerk's Office

- The court clerk signs the Summons.
- The court clerk can witness your sworn signature on your Application for Waiver of Fees, if you have one. The clerk will tell you if the judge will rule on your application that day, or if 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 delivered to (served on) your spouse.
- Get a list of state marshals for the Judicial District where your spouse lives and works from the clerk's office or the Court Service Center.

Service (Delivery of forms and papers to your spouse)

- 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 or the Court Service Center.
- There is an approximate cost of \$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.
- Talk with the state marshal to be sure he or she is available to deliver the papers to 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 6 days before the Return Date.
- If you or your spouse ever received public assistance from the State of Connecticut, or if anyone in your family ever received HUSKY health insurance, 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. Fill out 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. Fill out a **Certification (Public Assistance)** (JD-FM-175) 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 6 days before the Return Date. Also, if public assistance or HUSKY health insurance was received, bring the completed certification. You will have to pay the filing fee unless it has been waived. The current filing fee is \$350. 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, but it is recommended that you check this in advance.

Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)

- You may ask the court at any time to make orders about 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 22 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 before the divorce is granted.

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

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 of the documents. Read the notice in the middle of the Summons and the Notice of Automatic Court Orders attached to the Complaint very carefully. The Automatic Court Orders 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 fill out a Case Management Agreement and file it with the clerk before that date or you must go to court on the Case Management Date. If you disagree about custody or visitation (also called parenting time or access) of your children, you and your spouse must go to court on the Case Management Date even if you filed a Case Management Agreement.

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 take part 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*** form (JD-CL-12) to tell the court that you are representing yourself. 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 2 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 court calendars and copies of papers filed in your case.

If you are the defendant, 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.

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.

File an Answer and/or Cross Complaint

- You do not have to file an Answer (JD-FM-160) to the Complaint, but if you do your Answer will tell the court if you agree or disagree with each numbered statement in the Complaint. There is no filing fee for an Answer.
- You do not have to file a Cross Complaint, which is contained in either the Divorce Complaint (Dissolution of Marriage) (JD-FM-159), or the Dissolution of a Civil Union Complaint (JD-FM-159A), but filing a Cross Complaint lets the court know what you want. In the Cross Complaint you can ask a judge to end your marriage or civil union, give you alimony, child custody, visitation (also called parenting time, or access), child support, divide your property and debts, or restore a prior name. 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 correct box at the top of the form. The current fee for filing a Cross Complaint is \$200. If you cannot afford the filing fee, see page 16 for how to apply for a waiver of fees.
- Fill out 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.

Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)

- You may ask the court at any time to make orders about 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 19 and 30 for more information.)
- By now, both you and your spouse must obey the Automatic Court Orders, which are discussed in Step 3 of this guide. The Notice of Automatic Court Orders form is included in the Divorce Guide Supplement (JDP-FM-180). Please be sure that you read and understand it.

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 any children of this marriage or civil union. If you are the plaintiff, the automatic orders apply to you when you sign the Complaint. If you are the defendant, the automatic orders apply to you when you are served with the Summons and Complaint.

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 take part in a parenting education program. The automatic court orders apply to you unless there is already a court order which is different than 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 and punished.

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, fill out the **Motion for Orders Before Judgment (Pendente Lite) in Family Cases** (JD-FM-176) and have it served (delivered) with the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders. (See pages 19, 22, and 30 for more information.)

STEP 4

THE 90 DAY WAITING PERIOD

- ◆ **Fill Out and Give Each Other Financial Affidavits**
- ◆ **Attend Parenting Education Classes**
- ◆ **Special Issues with Children**
- ◆ **Contact Military if You Do Not Know Your Spouse's Location**
- ◆ **Case Management Process**
- ◆ **Court Orders Before the Divorce Judgment (Pendente Lite)**
 - Prepare Motion
 - File the Motion
 - Custody
 - Visitation (Also called parenting time or access)
 - 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 24.)

You must wait at least 90 days after your divorce action starts (Return Date) to get a judgment of divorce. The Return Date is on the Summons and the waiting period generally ends on the Case Management Date 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 about 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. If you reach an agreement use the *Dissolution Agreement* (JD-FM-172) form.

During the waiting period, you should also fill out and file a *Case Management Agreement/Order* (JD-FM-163). If you and your spouse agree on the issues, or if your spouse has not filed an Appearance, your case is called "uncontested." You may choose a date for an uncontested divorce hearing and write it on the Case Management Agreement form, Section II. To choose a date for your hearing, check with the court clerk or the family caseflow 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 2 weeks after filing the Complaint. Both the plaintiff and the defendant must use the docket number on all legal papers filed with the court.

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 have disagreements about money, property division, custody of your children or visitation, your case is not covered by this guide because it is more complicated than an uncontested case and would involve more court rules and procedures. 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 steps below during the waiting period to get ready for your divorce hearing:

Fill Out and Give Each Other Financial Affidavits

- ◆ Both spouses must fill out and give 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 5 days before the hearing of any motion involving alimony, support or attorney fees or at the time your divorce is scheduled for a hearing.
- ◆ Financial Affidavits are sealed by the court when they are filed and, unless otherwise ordered by the court, can be shown only to the judge, 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 about financial issues that the parties do not agree about, the court will order the Financial Affidavits unsealed. Also, any person may file a motion to unseal the Financial Affidavits.

Attend Parenting Education Classes

- ◆ If you have children, you must take part 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 parenting education program providers are available at the court clerk's office, at the Judicial Branch's CSSD Family Services Office, at the Court Service Center, and on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov. (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 (also called parenting time or access) 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 – 35.

Contact Military if You Do Not Know Your Spouse's Location

- ◆ 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 have to prove to the court that he or she is not in the U.S. military service. You must fill out an **Affidavit Concerning Military Service** (JD-FM-178), swearing that the defendant is not in

the military. If you do not know if the defendant is in the military, go to Defense Manpower Data Center website at www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/scra/scraHome.do to find out. If you need assistance contact any Judicial Branch Court Service Center.

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 put 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 fill out 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 (1) you did not file a Case Management Agreement or (2) your court location holds uncontested divorce hearings on that date and you chose that date for your divorce hearing on the Case Management Agreement.
- ◆ When filling out 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 choose 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 caseflow 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 caseflow coordinator in your court. If your spouse has not filed an appearance form, you must give him or her reasonable notice of the date of the hearing.
- ◆ If you are not sure about how to fill out the Case Management Agreement, contact the Court Service Center, caseflow 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 19 and 22 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

- ◆ Fill out the *Motion for Orders Before Judgment (Pendente Lite) in Family Cases* (JD-FM-176) and sign it.
- ◆ Sign the bottom of the form, which tells the court that you will give or mail a copy of the form and any attachments to your spouse or to your spouse's attorney if he or she filed an Appearance form. If you are the plaintiff, you may ask a state marshal or other proper officer to serve (deliver) these documents at the same time as the Summons, Complaint, and Notice of Automatic Court Orders.
- ◆ Include a filled-out 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 fee for filing this motion.
- ◆ A hearing date for your motion will be assigned and you will be notified of when to appear.

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 usually made by the parent who is with the child at the time. 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 (Also called parenting time or access)

- ◆ ***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 or civil union, the age, the health, the income, and the job skills of each spouse. If you do not ask for alimony at the final hearing, you can never get it in the future. If alimony is ordered 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 pay household expenses.

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

Child Support

- ◆ Connecticut has child support guidelines which help the court set the amount of child support to be paid by the noncustodial parent. The chart in the guidelines tells you the amount of the basic child support obligation 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 not following the chart.

You can get a copy of the child support guidelines from the court clerk's office, Court Service Center and on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov. Before your court hearing, you will need to fill out the ***Child Support Guidelines Worksheet*** (CCSG-1, JD-FM-220). 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 differently.

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 4 academic years or until the child reaches 23 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 motion for educational support may be filed later, no educational support order may be entered afterwards.

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 have health insurance for your child if it is available at a reasonable cost.

The judge or family support magistrate will decide how any 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 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 take part in an approved parenting education program if you have minor children and are getting a divorce, unless the court decides differently. You must do this within 60 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 program. The required form and pamphlet, including a list of approved program providers, are available at the court clerk's office, at the Judicial Branch's CSSD Family Services Office, at the Court Service Center and on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov. If you cannot afford to pay the program fee, applications to waive (not pay) the program fee are also available.

Paternity

- ◆ If there is a dispute about who the father of a child is, you may need to get a court order for a genetic test to help determine legal fatherhood. (See pages 19, 22, and 30 on court orders before the divorce judgment.)

If you have minor children, you must take part in an approved parenting education program unless otherwise ordered by the court. If you do not go to a parenting education program your divorce may take longer.



STEP 5

FINALIZING YOUR DIVORCE

- **Fill Out the Court Documents for the Uncontested Hearing**
- **The Court Hearing**
- **Judgment Form**

STEP 5

FINALIZING YOUR DIVORCE

The steps described here are *only for 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 pages 41 – 53.)

Fill Out the Court Documents for the Uncontested Hearing

- ◆ Both the plaintiff and the defendant must fill out a Financial Affidavit at least 5 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 by the court when they are filed and, unless the court orders differently, can be shown only to the judge, 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 about financial issues that the parties do not agree about, the court will order the financial affidavits unsealed. Also, any person may file a motion to unseal the Financial Affidavits.
- ◆ You and your spouse may use the filled out *Dissolution 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 split up your property and debts.

- Fill out an **Affidavit Concerning Children** (JD-FM-164).
- Fill out a **Child Support Guidelines Worksheet** (CCSG-1, JD-FM-220).
- Fill out an **Advisement of Rights Re: Income Withholding** (JD-FM-71).
- Fill out an **Affidavit Concerning Military Service** (JD-FM-178) if the defendant has not filed an Appearance form.
- Send a copy of all the completed forms to your spouse or your spouse's attorney.
- Fill out a **Dissolution of Marriage Report** (JD-FM-181) or a **Dissolution of Civil Union Report** (JD-FM-181A). Fill in Part 1 only and give it to the court at the final hearing. This form is for the court's use only.

The Court Hearing

- To choose a date for your hearing, if one has not already been assigned, check with the court clerk or family caseload coordinator.
- Take the filled out forms listed above with you to court on the day of your divorce hearing.
- 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 that to the judge.

- When the name of 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.
- If income withholding has been ordered and you are not receiving child support services now, you should know 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:
 - Fill out the *Case Input Record, Non IV-D Income Withholding* (JD-FM-150).
 - Fill out the *Income Withholding for Support* form (JD-FM-1).
 - Take the filled-out Income Withholding for Support form to the Judicial District clerk’s office for the clerk to review and for the clerk to sign.
 - Make a copy of both forms for your records.
 - When the original signed Income Withholding for Support form is returned to you by the clerk’s office, mail it and the Case Input Record to the address on the form. You must also report in writing any change of address.

If you follow the steps above, the state will:

- Send you a notice telling you that it received your papers.
- Set up an account for you in the child support system.
- Serve a copy of the Income Withholding for 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 2 business days of receipt.

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 do not know which courtroom, ask the judicial marshal at the metal detector or any court staff.

- 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.

Judgment Form

- ◆ The court may not always make a written record of your divorce for you, in which case the plaintiff must fill out a **Dissolution of Marriage (Divorce) Judgment** form (JD-FM-177) or a **Dissolution of Civil Union Judgment** form (JD-FM-177A) 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 written in the file by the court clerk. Give the filled-out Judgment form to the court clerk. After the Judgment is signed, you can 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) or a **Certificate of Dissolution of Civil Union/Certificate of Change of Name** (JD-CL-82) from the court clerk's office. There is a \$2 fee.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Enforcing Your Court Order**
- **Modifying/Changing 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 a court order for child support, 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 with 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 solve or mediate the problem.

If you cannot work out the problem, you may file a written motion for contempt and ask a judge to enforce the court order. 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/Contempt Citation*** (JD-FM-173) form, which you can get from any Judicial District clerk's office, Court Service Center, and on the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov.

This booklet does not explain how to fill out 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 fill out and file a Motion for Contempt for you in Family Support Magistrate court. To apply for the state child support services call the Department of Social Services office nearest you or 1-800-228-5437.

Modifying/Changing Your Court Order

You may need to ask for a change of a court order because of substantial changes in your life or the life of your (ex-)spouse, or because of changes in what your child needs. 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 submit the agreement in writing to the court for it to be approved. Otherwise, the agreement may not be enforceable.

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) form. It is important to note that a motion to modify custody would be decided by a judge, not a family support magistrate.

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

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

Mediation

A trained mediator can help you and your spouse agree 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:

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 Non-Adversarial Divorce – Keeps a list by geographical area of members who mediate for a fee. Their toll free number is 1-888-236-2236.

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 for free. Check with your local caseflow 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 very low income, you may be able to get free legal help from one of the many legal services programs in Connecticut. To find out if you can, call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 (English and Spanish), Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Wednesday 1:00 p.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.

Women who are inmates at a Connecticut Department of Correction facility 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, threatened with abuse, or stalked, you are encouraged to contact the police and your local family violence program, which offers emergency shelter, counseling, and support. Call the Statewide Domestic Violence hotline at 1-888-774-2900 or Infoline at 211, a 24-hour confidential help line (Voice/TDD) to get the telephone number for a family violence program near you. (See page 5 for more information.)

Family Violence – need help?

Call the Statewide Domestic Violence hotline at 1-888-774-2900 or Infoline at 211 for a family violence program near 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
(CWEALF)**

One Hartford Square West, Suite 1-300
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
860-247-6090

Divorced Men's Association of Connecticut

P.O. Box 734
Manchester, Connecticut 06045-0734

Infoline

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

Statutes

(General Statutes of Connecticut, Title 46b)

Section 46b-40. Grounds for dissolution of marriage; legal separation; annulment “... (c) 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 ...”

- Section 46b-44 Residency requirement.
- Section 46b-45 Service and filing of complaint.
- Section 46b-46 Notice to nonresident party. Jurisdiction over nonresident for alimony and support.
- Section 46b-51 Stipulation of parties and finding of irretrievable breakdown.
- Section 46b-53 Conciliation procedures; privileged communications.
- Section 46b-67 Waiting period. Effect of decree.

Court Rules

(Connecticut Practice Book, Chapter 25)

Chapter 25. Procedure in Family Matters

- Section 25-2 Complaints for Dissolution of Marriage or Civil Union, Legal Separation, or Annulment
- Section 25-3 Action for Custody of Minor Child
- Section 25-5 Automatic Orders upon Service of Complaint or Application
- Section 25-7 Pleadings in General; Amendments to Complaint or Application
- Section 25-27 Motion for Contempt
- Section 25-28 Order of Notice
- Section 25-30 Statements to Be Filed
- Section 25-49 Definitions
- Section 25-50 Case Management
- Section 25-57 Affidavit Concerning Children
- Section 25-58 Reports of Dissolution of Marriage or Civil Union and Annulment

NOTE:

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

Courthouse buildings are open every weekday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., except on legal holidays, although some offices are not open for business until 9:00 a.m.

If court closes due to an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, contact the court clerk's office for further information or instruction.

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's Birthday	Columbus Day
Washington's Birthday	Veterans' Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Day

If a state legal holiday falls on a Saturday, courts are closed on the Friday before the holiday; if a state legal holiday falls on a Sunday, courts are closed on the Monday after the holiday.

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 13 judicial districts. 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*.
(Towns may also use New
Haven Judicial District.)*

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.

JUDICIAL DISTRICT**TOWNS SERVED**

Hartford Judicial District (Family)
90 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106
860-706-5100

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. (**Towns may also use Tolland Judicial District. **Towns may also use New Britain Judicial District.*)

Litchfield Judicial District
15 West Street
Litchfield, CT 06759
860-567-0885

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.

Middlesex Judicial District
1 Court Street
Middletown, CT 06457-3374
860-343-6400

Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Portland and Westbrook. (*Cromwell may also use Hartford Judicial District.*)

New Britain Judicial District
20 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051
860-515-5180

Berlin, Bristol, Burlington, New Britain, Newington*, Plainville, Plymouth**, Rocky Hill*, Southington, and Wethersfield*. (**Towns may also use Hartford Judicial District, except for actions where venue is in the geographical area. **Plymouth may also use Waterbury Judicial District.*)

New Haven Judicial District
235 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203-503-6800

Bethany*, Branford, Cheshire, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Wallingford and Woodbridge*. (**Towns may also use Ansonia-Milford Judicial District.*)

New Haven Judicial District at Meriden
54 West Main Street
Meriden, CT 06450
203-238-6666

JUDICIAL DISTRICT**TOWNS SERVED****New London Judicial District***

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

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.

New London Judicial District at Norwich

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

* All family matters are heard at the Norwich courthouse.

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, Court Service Centers, and on the Judicial Branch website, www.jud.ct.gov. 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
Affidavit Concerning Military Service	JD-FM-178
Appearance	JD-CL-12
Application for Waiver of Fees/Appointment of Counsel Family*	JD-FM-75
Case Input Record Non IV-D Income Withholding	JD-FM-150
Case Management Agreement/Order*	JD-FM-163
Case Management Dates (for courts with a Monday Schedule)	JD-FM-165A
Case Management Dates (for courts with a Tuesday Schedule)	JD-FM-165B
Case Management Dates (for courts with a Thursday Schedule)	JD-FM-165C
Certificate of Dissolution of Civil Union/ Certificate of Change of Name	JD-CL-82
Certificate of Dissolution of Marriage/ Certificate of Change of Name	JD-CL-34
Certification of Notice in Family Cases (Public Assistance)	JD-FM-175
Child Support Guidelines Worksheet	CCSG-1, JD-FM-220
Dissolution Agreement	JD-FM-172
Dissolution Answer	JD-FM-160

Form Name	Form Number
Dissolution of Civil Union Complaint*	JD-FM-159A
Dissolution of Civil Union Judgment	JD-FM-177A
Dissolution of Civil Union Report	JD-FM-181A
Dissolution of Marriage (Divorce) Judgment	JD-FM-177
Dissolution of Marriage Report	JD-FM-181
Divorce Complaint (Dissolution of Marriage)*	JD-FM-159
Financial Affidavit*	JD-FM-6
Income Withholding for Support	JD-FM-1
Motion for Additional Order of Notice in Family Cases	JD-FM-169
Motion for Contempt/Contempt Citation	JD-FM-173
Motion for Modification	JD-FM-174
Motion for Order of Notice in Family Cases	JD-FM-167
Motion for Orders Before Judgment (Pendente Lite) in Family Cases	JD-FM-176
Notice of Automatic Court Orders*	JD-FM-158
Order of Notice in Family Cases	JD-FM-168
Summons Family Actions*	JD-FM-3
Withdrawal	JD-CV-41

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Do It Yourself Divorce Guide

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