

INSTRUCTION SHEET

A. WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU:

1. **Telephone Hours.** Office hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. We will try to process your case as efficiently as possible, but we have a large number of clients to serve. Your attorney has court appearances, client interviews, trial and hearing preparation, drafting of documents and a variety of other tasks throughout the day. Your attorney has a paralegal who is able to assist you when your attorney is not available. If nobody is available to take your call please leave a message and somebody will get back to you as soon as possible.
2. **Paralegal.** The paralegal in this office is specially trained to process client files. She works under the close supervision of the attorney on your case. She is your contact in this office. If you have specific questions, or if a problem develops in your case, contact the paralegal.
3. **Your Address and Phone Number.** We must have your current address and phone number at all times during the course of our relationship with you. If you move or change your phone number, especially if you change to an unpublished number, call this office and leave a message. You may write us a note with your new address and phone number if calling is inconvenient for you. Also, please be aware that a custodial parent must give a parent with placement rights 60 days' notice of any intention to establish residence outside the state or to remove the child from the state for more than 90 days.
4. **Your Spouse's Address.** You must also inform us of any changes in your spouse's address. In the course of a legal action, certain papers must be served on your spouse. We cannot serve the necessary papers unless you notify us of your spouse's current whereabouts.
5. **Letters and/or emails from This Office.** Respond quickly to letters and/or emails from this office whether you are asked to call a staff person or to come in to sign papers. If you fail to cooperate by not coming to sign or by not calling the staff person, you will be delaying the processing of your case, creating additional expenses, and giving this office cause for temporarily closing your case. If ever you don't receive a response to an email you sent within 24 hours, please contact this office immediately.
6. **Keeping Appointments.** It is up to you to keep all appointments with this office and to appear at court when necessary. If you do not keep appointments, this office will not be able to process your action, and you may seriously injure your legal rights.
7. **Read and Examine All Papers Prepared for You.** You must read all papers carefully before you sign them! Sometimes we do make mistakes, and it is up to you to catch the mistakes so that we can correct the papers before they are filed with the court.

Also, some papers that will be prepared for your signature must be signed in front of a notary public. If the papers need to be signed before a notary, the person who gives them to you will instruct you to bring them back after you examine them and before you sign them. Please follow those instructions.
8. **Pregnancy.** If you or your spouse becomes pregnant during the course of this action, regardless of who the father is, please notify us *at once!*

9. **Reconciliation.** Reconciliation should be given the most careful consideration by you at all stages of this proceeding. If you wish to get back together with your spouse, please call your spouse; but please call your legal assistant *before* you do so. There are a number of ways that the action can be handled--for example, you may prefer a suspension of the divorce action for a period of time or its dismissal. We can help you decide what is the best method to handle your action and protect your legal interests.
10. **Papers from the Court.** If you receive *any* papers from the court or if you are served with *any* papers by the sheriff, please notify this office immediately. Sometimes the court will contact you but will not contact your attorney. We may not know you have received any papers and will not be prepared to defend your rights.
11. **Contact by Your Spouse's Attorney.** Under no circumstances should you initiate contact with your spouse's attorney or that attorney's agents, or allow your spouse's attorney or agents to contact you without your attorney's consent. If such contact is attempted, do not respond but notify your attorney immediately.

B. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT YOUR ACTION

1. **How long will it take?** In general, it takes about eight months to get a divorce judgment. If your case becomes complicated, it will take longer. A divorce judgment is effective the day it is granted. (Note: Wisconsin law prevents you from marrying again for six months after the date the divorce judgment is granted.)
2. **How many times will I have to go to court?** You will have to go once to a judge's courtroom for your trial. If you have requested temporary relief, you will have to appear before a court commissioner.
3. **How many times after this interview will I have to come to this office?** This varies from case to case, but you will have to come back at least twice. First, you will come to sign the initial papers. You will have to come to this office for a pretrial interview with your legal assistant. If we need to bring special motions in your case, you will also have to come in to sign those papers and perhaps to meet with your attorney.
4. **What if I get pregnant while my divorce is in progress?** If you become pregnant by your husband, you may proceed with the divorce *as long as* your husband agrees the baby is his and doesn't try to contest the divorce on the basis that your becoming pregnant by him shows you've reconciled.

But, if the baby is *not* your husband's, your divorce may be delayed, and an attorney will be appointed for the baby. That attorney will investigate the baby's paternity. You will have to sign additional papers and make an extra trip to the courthouse if you become pregnant by a man not your husband during the divorce.
5. **What about attorney fees?** We enter into a written agreement with all clients. Please review this agreement before signing and let us know if you have any questions. Fees *must* be paid in full according to the agreement.
6. **What is a default hearing?** There are two options available to you and your spouse regarding the manner in which you conclude your divorce. If you and your spouse are

not able to agree on the terms of your divorce, a trial in front of the judge assigned to your case will be scheduled. The judge will then decide on the terms after both parties plead their case. If you and your spouse are able to agree on the terms of your divorce, a Marital Settlement Agreement will be prepared and executed by both parties. The Marital Settlement Agreement will be filed with the Court and reviewed by the judge. A default hearing will then be scheduled, which is a very brief appearance before the judge. The judge will confirm with both parties their desire to divorce and their agreement with the terms of the divorce as set forth in the Marital Settlement Agreement.

7. What needs to be filed with the Court before a default can be scheduled?

- A. The Marital Settlement Agreements (described in #6 above).
- B. Each parties Financial Disclosure Statement (completed and signed).
- C. Parenting Plan (applicable if parties have minor children together).
- D. Completion of Family First Program and Sandcastles Programs (applicable if parties have minor children and minor children are within the age requirements to attend Sandcastles).