

§ IN THE DISTRICT COURT
§
§ 257 TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
§
§ HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Standing Order Regarding Self-Represented Litigants

To assist the Court in conducting its uncontested docket in an efficient manner, IT IS ORDERED that self-represented litigants in uncontested family law cases filed in the 257th District Court after May 1, 2022 may have their proposed final orders reviewed by the Harris County Domestic Relations Office (DRO).

Required criteria:

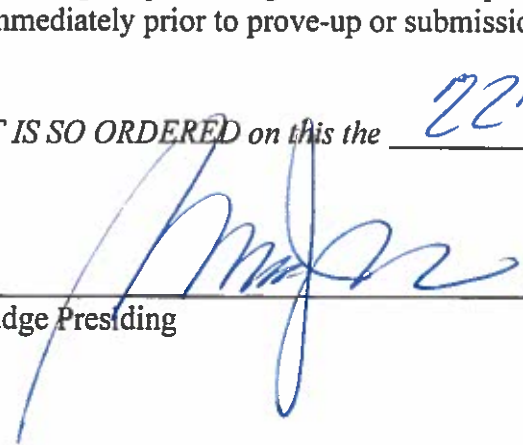
- A petition for divorce, a suit affecting parent child relationship, or other family law case is currently pending in Harris County.
- The suit is uncontested, either by agreement (decree/order is signed by the other party) or default (other party has signed a global waiver or has been served and failed to file an answer following the prescribed time-period); and
- Neither party to the suit is presently represented by an attorney.

For cases meeting the above criteria that are ready to be finalized, the self-represented litigant(s) shall contact the Domestic Relations Office, Legal Services Division (713-274-7301) to request a review.

As available, the DRO staff attorney shall review the final order/decree, any necessary attachments, and any other necessary documents. When satisfied the forms are complete, the attorney shall provide the self-represented litigant with a completed *Uncontested Docket Checklist*. The DRO staff attorneys do not provide legal advice or represent the self-represented litigant(s).

The litigant presenting the suit shall provide the *Uncontested Docket Checklist* to the court immediately prior to prove-up or submission.

IT IS SO ORDERED on this the 22nd day of April 2022.



Judge Presiding

HARRIS COUNTY DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE
LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

A Harris County Family Court has requested that the Domestic Relations Office (DRO) review your final order to ensure the form meets the Court's standards. As a service to the Court, the DRO provides legal information to assist self-represented litigants with understanding their duties and obligations. The DRO and its attorneys **DO NOT REPRESENT** you, the other party, or the child (ren). Providing information does not constitute or create an attorney client relationship between you and the DRO. You may seek independent legal counsel at any time. By signing below, you acknowledge the purpose of the services and understand the instructions as outlined below.

To begin this service, email: (1) this signed form and (2) your final paperwork to:

DROselfhelp@dro.hctx.net

Signed Petitioner: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Cause No: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

THE DRO WILL ONLY REVIEW UNCONTESTED CASES THAT MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- 1) **AGREED:** Both parties agree on all terms of the case,
- 2) **WAIVER:** The defendant has waived service, OR
- 3) **DEFAULT:** Requirements are met for a default judgment.

BEFORE E-MAILING YOUR PAPERWORK, YOU MUST ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) **Show that the other party has notice of the lawsuit by either:**
 - a. Filing a Waiver of Service signed by the other party,
 - b. Securing a filed Answer from the other party with a signed final decree, OR
 - c. Securing service of the other party with the lawsuit.
- 2) **Wait until the mandatory waiting period has passed for your type of suit.**
 - a. In divorce cases, the petitioner must wait 60 days after the case is filed to finalize and meet (b) below.
 - b. In other cases involving service, the petitioner must wait until the Monday following 20 days after service to finalize.

WHEN YOU SEND IN THE PAPERWORK, DO THESE THINGS:

- 1) Email a copy of your Final Decree or Order to DROselfhelp@dro.hctx.net. Final orders involving children generally must include conservatorship, rights & duties, possession/access, child support, medical support, and dental support language, unless they are a modification.
- 2) Include a BVS Form (Austin form) a Record of Support Order Form if there is child support, and a copy of any Affidavit if required in your Court.
- 3) If you are seeking a default judgement, include a signed Certificate of Last Known Address and a signed and notarized Military Status Affidavit.
- 4) Send the documents - do not send pictures of the documents taken by a phone.

AFTER YOU SEND IN THE PAPERWORK, EXPECT THESE THINGS:

- 1) The DRO will contact you within five (5) business days.
- 2) After the review is complete, the DRO will either (1) give you further legal information or (2) provide a signed document that you can present to the Court advising that the your final paperwork appears to meet the Court's standards.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS THAT REQUIRE LEGAL ADVICE, CONSULT TEXASLAWHELP.ORG OR CONSULT WITH A PRIVATE ATTORNEY.