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How to Self File Divorce Papers

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Instructions

Difficulty: Moderate

1. Obtain from the clerk of the court divorce guidelines and standard forms. Most courts across the United States maintain local court guidelines. The typical court clerk also provides standard forms to be used by people interested in filing a divorce case without the aid of family law attorneys.
2. Complete the initial divorce papers needed to commence a case. All jurisdictions require the filing of a petition. Jurisdictions also normally require the filing of a child support worksheet (if you have children) and a financial affidavit.
3. File a motion for temporary orders. This motion is filed at the same time the petition is presented to the clerk of the court. A motion for temporary orders asks the court to deal with issues like temporary custody and support of the children.
4. Request the clerk's office to arrange to have all of these divorce papers served on your spouse. The clerk should have a standard form for you to complete. Through this request, a deputy sheriff formally serves these documents on your spouse.

Things You'll Need:

Petition for divorce

Child support worksheet

Financial affidavit

Motion for temporary orders

References

- Cornell Law School: Divorce Overview
- "Essential Guide to Divorce;" Emily Duskow; 2008
- "The Divorce Organizer & Planner;" Brette Sember; 2004

Resources

- American Bar Association: Section of Family Law

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