



How to Get Things Done in King County Superior Court During COVID-19 When You Do Not Have an Attorney

This document is to help you understand how to access the court during the COVID-19 Pandemic. During this time, people are encouraged not to travel to the courthouses. The court has temporarily changed some processes to make it easier to participate in a court case from home.

Most of the information you need is found in different places on the court's website. This document summarizes the information you may need in one place, providing links to the website for more details.

Click on the links below to take you to the part(s) of this document that apply to you:

[Information about Domestic Violence Protection Orders](#)

- [Start a Case](#)
- [DVPO hearings](#)
- [Surrender Weapons Hearings](#)

[Information About Other Protection and Restraining Orders](#)

[Information for Family Law Cases](#)

- [Get Help](#)
- [Start a Family Law Case](#)
- [Motions](#)
- [Finalize Your Case](#)

[Information for Probates and Wills](#)

[Information for Guardianships](#)

[How to File Documents into an Existing Case](#)

[Getting Legal Advice](#)



Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO):

Start a case:

1. **Get Help:** If you need help filing a Domestic Violence Order for Protection (DVPO), you may contact the Protection Order Advocacy Program (POAP) at:
 - Seattle 206-477-1103, or
 - Kent 206-477-3758.

More information about how to get help from POAP can be found [here](#).

2. **File on your own:** If you want to file a DVPO on your own, you will need to:
 - a. **Fill out the Forms:** The forms can be downloaded [here](#).
 - b. **File the Documents by Email:** Email the completed forms to the clerk's office at: DJA.DVPO@kingcounty.gov.
 - c. Please note the clerk receiving your documents cannot give you legal advice or tell you how to fill out the forms. If you need help, contact the POAP (see Step 1 above) or one of the domestic violence legal aid programs listed [here](#).
 - d. **Instructions:** Additional instructions filing a DVPO can be found [here](#).

DVPO hearings: All DVPO hearings are by telephone whenever possible. Directions on how to participate by phone are available online as follows:

1. **1st Appearance:** For information about how to appear in the "ex parte" department when asking for a new protection order, click [here](#). If a temporary protection order is approved, a full or "return hearing" will be set 14 days later.
2. **Full Hearing/Return Hearing:** For the full hearing, you must contact the court at least three (3) hours before the hearing by calling or emailing and providing your name, case number, hearing date, and the phone number you can be reached at for the hearing:
 - a. For Kent cases, email FamilyLawStaffMRJC@KingCounty.gov or call (206) 477-2750;
 - b. For Seattle cases, email FamilyLawStaffSeattle@KingCounty.gov or call (206) 477-1523.

For additional information, click [here](#).

3. **Surrender Weapons Hearing:** If you are a respondent who is ordered to appear for a weapons surrender compliance hearing, you must appear by phone. **At least 1 day before your hearing**, email you name, case number, and the date of your hearing to: weapons-surrender@kingcounty.gov. **If you do not have email**,



call (206) 477-1367 for instructions on appearing by phone on the day of your hearing. More information is available on the last half of the document found [here](#).

Other Types of Protection Orders

In addition to Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO), there are other types of protection orders available, including:

- Anti-Harassment and Anti-Stalking Protection Orders,
- Sexual Assault Protection Orders (SAPO),
- Vulnerable Adult Protection Orders (VAPO), and
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders.

1. **Overview:** A description of the different protection orders is provided [here](#).
2. **Which Protection Order is Right for Me?** The flow charts available half-way down the page [here](#) may help you decide which protection order you want. This document also describes the different steps of the process of getting one of these protection orders.
3. **Instructions:** Detailed instructions, explanations, and forms for all types of protection orders are available at <http://protectionorder.org/>.

For Anti-Harassment and Anti-Stalking Protection Orders, SAPOs, VAPOs, and Extreme Risk Protection Orders, under Emergency Order #15 your hearing will be telephonic. For SEATTLE information, please visit [here](#). For KENT case information, please visit [here](#). Or, you may call the numbers listed below on the Friday or Monday before your hearing to get the judge assigned, phone number, and PIN needed to call in for your hearing: Seattle 206-477-1400; or Kent 206-477-2600.

Family Law Cases

“Family Law Cases” include divorces, establishing or changing parenting plans, establishing parentage/paternity, de facto parentage, relocation, and establishing or modifying child support.

Get Help:

1. **Facilitator’s Office:** A facilitator in the Family Law Information Center/Family Law Facilitator’s Office can:



- Help you identify what type of family law case you might want to file;
- Help you find the forms you need;
- Give you free instructions for the case or motion you want to file;
- Give you information about court processes; and
- Help you fill out the legal forms.

You can call a facilitator between 8:30 AM and noon, Monday through Friday:

- For Kent Cases, call 206-477-2781, or
- For Seattle cases, call 206-477-2553.

For more information about getting help from the facilitators, click [here](#).

2. Legal Advice: [Click here to go to “Getting Legal Advice” section below.](#)

Start a Family Law Case:

1. Fill out Forms:

- a. Instructions:** The family law facilitators have published instructions online for most family law cases. In the instructions, there are links to the forms you will need. Instructions can be found [here](#).

Also, you can call the facilitators with any questions about what instructions or forms you need. See the facilitator contact information in this document [here](#).

- b. Get your forms online:** Required family law forms can be found [here](#).

2. File Your Case:

- a. With a fee waiver:** Read the instructions [here](#) if you need to ask the court to waive the filing fee to start a new family law case.

- b. Without a fee waiver:** Read the instructions [here](#) if you want to start a new family law case and you are going to pay the filing fee.

Family Law Motions:

- 1. File an Emergency Motion:** At this time, the court is only hearing emergency family law motions, according to [this order](#). Information about how to file an emergency motion can be found [here](#).



- 2. Agreed Temporary Orders:** Some agreed temporary orders can be submitted to the court for approval. Information on how to submit these agreed orders is [here](#). *Please note: agreed orders require signatures from both parties.*
- 3. How to Participate in a Family Law Hearing:** Information on how to participate in your family law hearing is available [here](#).

Finalize your Family Law Case:

- 1. Trial:** All family law trials have been continued to June 8th or after. If you have not received a new trial date, contact your trial judge. Your trial judge's name is on the case scheduling order you received when your case was first filed and/or served.
- 2. By Agreement:** Some cases may still be finalized by agreement. Information regarding how to finalize a family law case by agreement is available [here](#).
- 3. By Default:** The court is not granting default orders at this time. The emergency order banning defaults can be found [here](#) and [here](#). and Unless this ban is lifted earlier, you may file your motion for default or request final orders by default after the court's emergency order is lifted.

Probates and Wills:

These cases include new probates with or without a will (intestate cases).

- 1. Start a Case:** To start a new probate, a new case in King County Superior Court needs to be started. General information about starting a new case is described [here](#).
NOTE: Petitions for new probates involving a will must have the original will submitted.
- 2. Notice:** When starting a new probate, you need to determine whether any other people are entitled to notice of your petition.
 - a. Without Notice:** To start a probate without prior notice to any other person or party, the petition and other documents must be submitted electronically using the Court's Ex Parte via the Clerk (EPVC) process.

Ex Parte Via the Clerk (EPVC): More information is available [here](#) by scrolling down and selecting "Probates." General information about EPVC is [here](#).



- b. With Notice:** You must schedule a hearing to open a probate *with* notice to others on the 10:30 AM Ex Parte calendar. You may set the hearing for any day of the week with 14 days' notice to the court and to the other parties. All appearances are by telephone as described [here](#).
- 3. More Information:** A useful resource which outlines the probate/wills process and offers free forms to use is www.kingcountyprobates.com, although the processes there have not been updated to reflect new COVID-19 procedures.

Guardianships

These cases involve a request that the Court appoint a guardian for a person thought to be unable to care for him/herself.

- 1. Forms and Instructions:** The Court has a detailed guardianship web page with guardianship forms, instructions and many useful links, available [here](#).
- 2. Start a Case:** General information about starting a new case is described [here](#).
- 3. Guardianship cases involving a party with minimal property or resources may be filed without paying a filing fee. Also, the appointment of a guardian ad litem (GAL), which is required in most cases, may be done at public cost. For more information, click [here](#). Scroll down that page and select "Guardianships/Trusts."**
- 4. Filing your Annual or Periodic Report:** Parties submitting annual or other periodic guardianship reports which do not require prior notice to any party or entity may submit those for approval using the Ex Parte via the Clerk (EPVC) process. For more information, click [here](#).

How to File Documents or a New Case During COVID-19

- 1. If you have an existing case, or would like to start a new case you can file documents in the following ways:**
 - a. E-file:** The court encourages you to turn in your documents electronically, which is called e-filing. Directions on how to e-file documents are [here](#). Click [here](#) for the website to e-file.
 - b. Mail:** If you cannot e-file, you may turn in your documents by mailing them to the clerk's office at the courthouse your case is assigned to. Addresses to the Clerk's Offices can be found [here](#).



If you want a receipt showing your papers were filed, you must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope and an extra copy of the document you are filing. That extra copy will be stamped “received” and mailed back to you in the stamped envelope you provide. Make sure you list the case number on the front page of each document you want to be filed. Mail your documents at least three (3) days before the day they are due to permit enough time for the documents to be received and processed.

- c. **Drop Off:** If you cannot e-file or mail in your documents, you may still turn in papers in person at the courthouses; the clerk’s office addresses can be found [here](#). Because of COVID-19 social distancing rules, you may be required to drop off your paperwork rather than handing them to a staff person. If drop off is required, there will be signs explaining where and how to drop off your papers. Be sure to keep an extra copy of all documents you file, for your own records.
2. **More information:** Additional instructions on how to file documents are [here](#).
 3. **Ask a Clerk:** If you have questions, you can contact the King County Superior Court Clerk’s office by phone, email or electronic instant message. Click [here](#) for contact information.

Getting Legal Advice

While many programs are limiting in-person help at this time, you can still get legal help, including legal advice, at the programs listed below. Please note that these programs are separate from the King County Superior Court, and the court cannot guarantee that assistance will be available or offered to you. These are not the only programs offering legal assistance; you are encouraged to do your own research to find other resources.

Northwest Justice Project Programs:

The Northwest Justice Project (NJP) offers legal advice, assistance, and advocacy in many different types of cases. To access its programs, including a legal advice hotline, during COVID-19, click [here](#).

Washington Law Help: A wealth of legal information and instructions is available [here](#). At that website, NJP offers “drop down” menus with links to information about your legal rights specific to health, housing, family law, employment, and more.

King County Bar Association Programs:

The King County Bar Association (KCBA) offers a variety of free legal help programs. For up-to- date information, click [here](#).

General Legal Advice and Help with Paperwork: **Neighborhood Legal Clinics** offer free legal advice and free assistance with legal paperwork in civil (not criminal) cases.



The clinics are operating by phone during COVID-19. Start by calling (206) 267-7070 and leaving a voice mail. KCBA staff will call you back and schedule you for a virtual clinic. Their priorities right now are DV, Housing and Discrimination (employment; age; federal benefits; etc.). More information is available [here](#).

Legal Advice and Help with Family Law Issues: In addition to Neighborhood Legal Clinics, the KCBA has different programs for family law cases if family violence is present; you may call the KCBA at (206) 267-7047, leave a voicemail, and a staff member in the family law programs will call you back.

Legal Advice and Help with Housing Issues: The KCBA also offers the **Housing Justice Project (HJP)**, which is providing phone consultations for people with issues related to housing and eviction. Although in-person HJP clinics are currently closed, they are still available by telephone at (253) 234-4204. Leave a voicemail message and an HJP staff member will call you back. By phone, HJP continues to help people who may need to file a response, a notice of appearance, or other legal documents. HJP can also refer you to a more appropriate assistance program. While there is a statewide moratorium on unlawful detainers in place, HJP can provide information about what that means for you. More information is also available [here](#).

Unemployment and Consumer (Financial) Programs:

Unemployment Law Project has information available online [here](#) for issues related to employment (being laid off, **accessing unemployment benefits**, etc.), You can also call them at (206) 441-9178, or toll free at 1-888-441-9178.

The National Employment Law Project has a fact sheet with information about **eligibility for unemployment insurance for immigrant workers** of varying statuses, including information on status requirements and considerations under the new public charge rule, [here](#).

The Northwest Consumer Law Center has information about legal clinics and webinars related to **debt collection, bankruptcy, foreclosure, evictions, and student loans** during COVID-19 is available here: [here](#).

Probate/Wills Information:

A useful resource that outlines the probate/wills process and offers free forms is www.kingcountyprobates.com, although the processes there have not been updated to reflect new COVID-19 changes.



Please continue to check the various programs' individual websites for updates as the situation with COVID-19 changes.