

# How to Convert a Final Legal Separation Order to a Final Divorce Order

Use this packet ONLY if:

At least six (6) months has passed since the Final Legal Separation Order was signed by a Judge/Commissioner. Either party can ask the Court to convert the Final Legal Separation Order to a Divorce Order. Advance notice to the other party is generally required.

## **WARNINGS!**

Due to COVID-19, all hearings are being done by phone or video and most offices are only providing remote services. You should consult the King County Superior Court webpage for the most up to date information. <https://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/superior-court.aspx>.

### **Talk to a lawyer, if you can**

These instructions have been developed by the King County Superior Court Family Law Information Center. They are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice. They provide only legal *information*. It's a good idea to talk to a lawyer before you file any forms.

If you **cannot** afford a lawyer, you can:

- You can obtain a list of low-cost and free legal resources.  
<https://kingcounty.gov/~media/courts/superior-court/docs/family/facilitator/family-law-resources.ashx?la=en>
- Get help from the Family Law Facilitators office. You can get information about their services at <https://kingcounty.gov/courts/superior-court/family/facilitator.aspx>.

## **Step 1: Fill out these forms.**

All of the forms in Step 1 can be downloaded at: [www.courts.wa.gov/forms/](http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/)

Motion to Convert Legal Separation Order to Final Divorce Order (Dissolution Decree)	FL Divorce 251		<input type="checkbox"/>
Order Converting Legal Separation Order to Final Divorce Order (Dissolution Decree)	FL Divorce 253		<input type="checkbox"/>
Proof of Mailing or Hand Delivery form	FL All Family 112	Needed if parties do not agree to convert	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Step 2: Have the other party Served (if necessary)

If you and the other party do not agree to convert your legal separation to a dissolution, **OR** if you cannot get the other party's signature on the Order, **you will need to mail or deliver** a copy of the completed motion and order listed in step 1 at least 14 calendar days prior to submitting your final forms to the facilitators (if you are mailing the documents add an additional 3 days).

You can deliver or mail them yourself (provided that no order restrains you from having contact). After you have delivered the forms to the other party, fill out the *Proof of Mailing or Hand Delivery* form. Make one copy of this form for your records and file the original with the Clerk's Office.

If you and the other party agree to convert your legal separation to a dissolution, you will not need to serve the other party, but you will need to have the other party sign the *Order Converting Legal Separation Order to Final Divorce Order* form. At the bottom of the form they will check the boxes that say "is an agreement of the parties" and "may be signed by the court without notice to me." They need to sign the form.

## Step 3: How to finalize your case by agreement or default:

If both parties are **self-represented** and you are ready to finalize your case, you **must** schedule an appointment with the facilitators.

**Call 206-263-FLIC (3542)** from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 to schedule an appointment.

At the appointment, the facilitators will review your final documents.

- If all documents are complete and ready to finalize the facilitators will process the documents and present them to a judicial officer for approval.

- If the documents are incomplete or there are other issues to fix before finalizing, you will be given instructions and scheduled for a return appointment.

### **How to prepare for your appointment:**

**Complete the documents listed in Step 1.**

**6 month waiting period:** The soonest you can convert your legal separation to a divorce is 6 months from the date that your legal separation was finalized.