

INSTRUCTIONS: HOW TO FILL OUT FORMS FOR LEGAL SEPARATION WITHOUT MINOR CHILDREN

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: If your spouse does not want a Legal Separation, the court will not order a legal separation. However, the court can change the Petition for Legal Separation into a Petition for dissolution of Marriage (divorce), if you and/or your spouse have lived in Arizona for the last 90 days prior to filling the Petition for Legal Separation and your spouse wants a divorce and not a legal separation.

PETITION FOR LEGAL SEPARATION WITHOUT MINOR CHILDREN STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Use this form **ONLY** if you want a legal separation and there are no minor children involved who are common to you and your spouse. Make sure your form is titled **PETITION FOR LEGAL SEPARATION WITHOUT MINOR CHILDREN**.
2. In the top left corner of the first page, fill out the following: your name (if you are the person filling out the petition and filing the petition with the court); your address (**if not protected**); your city, state and zip code; your telephone number; and your **ATLAS** number, if you are receiving or have received AFDC from the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the attorney bar number if you are represented by an attorney. Then check the box to say whether you are represented or not. If an attorney represents you, write in your name in the space after "Attorney for."
3. Fill in **your** name in the space that says "Name of Petitioner." Remember, you will be the **PETITIONER** through the whole case. (This includes any emergency petitions, temporary petitions, and divorce petitions.) In the space that says "Name of Respondent, fill in the name of your spouse. Your spouse will be the **RESPONDENT** for the rest of this case. (This includes any emergency petitions, temporary petitions, and divorce petitions.)
4. Leave the Case Number _____ blank. When you file your papers, you will receive a case number.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. **Information about you, the Petitioner.** Fill in your name, address (if not protected), date of birth, occupation, and length of time in Arizona.
2. **Information about your spouse, the Respondent.** Fill in your spouse's name, address, (if you know it) date of birth, occupation, and length of time in Arizona.
3. **Information about your marriage.** Fill in the date that you were married, and the city and state or country where you were married
4. **Residency requirements.** This tells the court that you OR your spouse have lived in Arizona, or been stationed in Arizona while in the Armed Forces, prior to the day you filed the Petition for Legal Separation. Before you file for Legal Separation, this **MUST** be true. **IF IT IS NOT TRUE, YOU CANNOT FILE FOR LEGAL SEPARATION.**
5. **Desire to live separate and apart.** Your marriage must be irretrievably broken (over) or you and/or your spouse must desire to live separate and apart. If this is not a true statement, you cannot file for Legal Separation.

6. **Pregnancy.** This tells the court that wife is not pregnant. If wife is pregnant with your child, you must file ***"Petition for Legal Separation with Minor Children."***
7. **Spousal maintenance/support** is the term used to describe money paid from one spouse to the other spouse as part of a divorce, annulment, or legal separation. You may know the term as alimony. Spousal maintenance/support is designed as a safety net for a spouse who cannot provide for his or her needs or who meets other requirements listed on the Petition under paragraph 7. The idea behind spousal maintenance/support is that accomplishments during your marriage, including increases in earning potential and living standards, are shared and earned by **BOTH** parties to a marriage. Look at paragraph 7 to see if spousal maintenance/support applies to you or your spouse. If spousal maintenance/support applies, check the box that most applies to you. If none of the boxes apply, or you do not want spousal maintenance/support, check the first box that says neither party is entitled to spousal maintenance/support. Check as many boxes as apply to your situation.

INFORMATION ABOUT PROPERTY AND DEBT: The information you give in paragraphs 8 and 9 tells the court about your property and debts, and how you think your property and debts should be divided. Community property is generally any property you and your spouse purchased during your marriage or paid for during the marriage, no matter who uses the property or who paid the money. Unless property was a gift or inheritance, all property gotten (acquired) during the marriage is community property, and both you and your spouse are entitled to roughly an equal share of this property. Community debts or bills are generally any debt you and your spouse acquired during your marriage, no matter who spent the money. If you have questions, or have a lot of community property or debt, you should speak with an attorney **BEFORE** filing your Petition and other papers.

You should also know that the Judge will order that the community property rights and liabilities acquired by marriage end as to all property, income, debts, liabilities received or incurred after the entry of a decree of legal separation, unless both parties agree to the contrary.

- 8(a) Property acquired during the marriage. Community property.** If you and your spouse do not have any property from the marriage, check the first box. If you and your spouse have property together, check the second box. If you checked the second box, you must tell the court what property should go to you and what property should go to your spouse. Generally, the court will divide the property 50-50, unless there are good reasons not to. It is unlikely that the court will give most or all of the property to either spouse, so put some thought into what you think would be a fair division before answering this question. Usually, if you and your spouse cannot decide which spouse should receive the property, the court will order that the property be sold and any money received divided between you and your spouse.

First, list the property that you want the court to award to you, the Petitioner and list the property that you want the court to award to your spouse, the Respondent. Put a check in the box that matches the property you want to go to which person. You should describe the property thoroughly for identification purposes. You can use the brand name and model where applicable, and serial numbers.

Types of property:

- a) **Real Property (property or home).** Check who you want to get the property. You can ask the court to give you the home, to give the home to your spouse, or to sell the home and divide the proceeds. You should write the complete address of the property under "Real estate located at." Most property has a legal description such as "LOT 77, PINE TREE ACRES, according to Book 111 of Maps," which appears on your deed papers. You should use this description. A cemetery plot is considered real property.
- b) **Household furniture.** This includes sofas, beds, tables, and so forth.

- c) **Household furnishings.** This includes things in the house other than furniture, for example: dishes, small appliances, rugs, and so forth.
- d) **Other.** List things that you want or you want your spouse to have that have not already been listed.
- e) **Pension/retirement fund/profit sharing/stock plans/401K.** You and your spouse each generally have a right to a one-half interest in the other spouse's plan, for the number of years you were married. The longer the marriage, the greater your financial interest in your spouse's plan. (Your interest, usually, includes up to 50 percent of the benefits/plan if you have been married the whole time the plan has existed.) Check this box if you want to divide your interest in a retirement or profit sharing/retirement/401K plan. If you check this box, you must see an attorney about a document called a Qualified Domestic Relations Order or QDRO. A QDRO is a very specialized legal document that requires professional assistance to prepare. The Self-Service Center and the court **do not** have Qualified Domestic Relations Order forms.
- f) **Motor vehicles.** List the vehicle identification number, the year and make of the car (Ford, Honda) and the model (Mustang, Lumina).

8(b) Property acquired before marriage. Separate property. If you did not have or bring any property into the marriage, check the first box. If your spouse did not have or bring any property into the marriage, check the next box. If you or your spouse brought property into the marriage, check the third and/or fourth box. If you checked the third and/or fourth box, you must tell the court what property you brought into the marriage and what property your spouse brought into the marriage. List the property that you want the court to award to you, the Petitioner and list the property that you want the court to award to your spouse, the Respondent. Put a check in the box that matches the property you want to go to which person. You should describe the property thoroughly for identification purposes. You can use the brand name and model where applicable, and serial numbers.

9(a) Debts incurred during the marriage. If you and your spouse do not owe money on any debts from the marriage, check the first box and go directly to paragraph 9(b). If you and your spouse owe money on any debts from the marriage, check the second box. If you check the second box, tell the court which debts you should pay and which debts your spouse should pay. Generally, the court will attempt to make a fair division of the debts. If you get the property that money is owed on, you probably will be given the debt. Ordering one person to pay all the debt is unusual. Think about what is a fair division of the debts before answering this question. Put enough information to identify each debt.

If you and your spouse have been separated and have acquired new debts on your own before filling for legal separation, you may want the court to order that each of you pay for any new debt after the date you separated. You can make this request on the last page of your Petition under Letter D "Community Debts."

9(b) Separate debts. Debts incurred prior to marriage. If you and your spouse did not owe money on any debts before you were married, check the first box and GO On to number 10. If you owed money on debts before you were married, check the second box. If your spouse owed money on debts before you were married, check the third box. If either you or your spouse owe money on any debts you or your spouse brought into the marriage, describe the debts, and tell the court which debts you should pay and which debts your spouse should pay.

10. **Tax Returns:** Decide what you want to do about any income tax refund and how you want to pay your taxes in the future. If you have questions, you should see a lawyer, an accountant, and/or contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
11. **Written Agreement.** Check this box **ONLY** if you and your spouse have a written agreement regarding spousal maintenance and division of property/debt that **both you and your spouse signed BEFORE** you filed the Petition for Legal Separation. If you have only discussed these issues and do not have a written agreement, do **NOT** check this box.
12. **Conciliation Requirements.** The conciliation requirements do not apply or have been met. This means that you do not think marriage counseling will help you get back with your spouse. If you think marriage counseling may help you, contact the Mediation Center whose contact information is available at the Court's website at www.mohavecourts.az.gov.

REQUESTS TO THE COURT. This section requests that the court grant you and your spouse a legal separation and tells the court other requests you are making:

- A. **Legal separation.** This is your request to legally separate the parties. If you have questions about the advantages and/or disadvantages of filing for legal separation as compared to divorce, you should see a lawyer for help.
- B. **Spousal Maintenance.** This tells the court that you or your spouse should pay money to the other spouse on a monthly basis to help with living expenses. Check the first box if neither you nor your spouse are going to pay spousal maintenance. Check the second box if either you or your spouse will be paying spousal maintenance, and then check the box to say who will be paying spousal maintenance. You can check a box only if you checked the same box in the spousal maintenance section, paragraph 7. If you request spousal maintenance, choose what you believe to be a reasonable monthly amount and tell the court how long the money should be paid. Base the amount of any request on the receiving party's need and the income of the spouse paying this money. If you have questions about spousal maintenance, see a lawyer for help.
- C. **Community Property.** This requests the court divide the community property as requested in the petition.
- D. **Community Debt.** This tells the court that your division of the debt is fair, and that the court should divide the debts as requested by you in your Petition. **If you have been separated from your spouse for enough time that you or your spouse may have additional debts, write the date of separation on the line provided if you want each spouse to pay the debts acquired after you separated.**
- E. **Separate property.** This states that you will keep the property you owned before the marriage and that your spouse will keep the property he or she owned before the marriage.
- F. **Other Orders:** Tell the court anything else you may want ordered that has not been covered in your Petition.

OATH AND VERIFICATION OF PETITIONER: Sign this form in front of a Clerk of the Superior Court or a notary public. By doing so, you are telling the court that everything contained in the Petition is true, under penalty of perjury.