

SimpleDivorce™ Filer

Introduction

Video Tutorial Script

1. Welcome to SimpleDivorce Filer Video Tutorial created by Main Line Family Law Center.

The tutorial you are viewing is for spouses who wish to obtain a divorce decree and need assistance filing. We designed this tutorial with you in mind – someone who may have never dealt with the Court system or has had very little experience with the Courts.

With a little effort and patience, you and your spouse will save hundreds of dollars because you won't need to hire a lawyer to file the paperwork for you. You will also eliminate hours of frustration or doing research online. And you don't have to take time out of your schedule to set foot in a Courthouse.

Remember, if at any time during this tutorial you have additional questions, we encourage you to contact us or refer to the FAQ page. We want this to be as smooth as possible for you.

2. First thing's first. Once you sign on to SimpleDivorce Filer, we'll have all your forms and instructions stored in our secure online document storage service. You can access your documents from anywhere and not have to worry about losing them. We'll direct you to download your forms to fill out during each step. To use this feature, you will receive an email invitation to set up your account.
3. You will also want to have your SimpleDivorce Filer action planning worksheet in front of you while viewing this tutorial. This tool will help you plan and keep track of all the important dates and information you will need, so you can get everything in on time and not miss any deadlines.

4. If you live in Montgomery County, you have the option to file by mail or electronically. To file electronically, you will need access to a scanner and printer. Also for Montgomery County, you will receive a link to the county Court's website so you can track the status of your case.
5. OK. Let's get started. We'll begin with some Court vocabulary.
6. First is the term "file." When we say file something, it means to provide documents to the Court so the Court can enter it on record.
7. Second is "service." This is a term used when you are giving your spouse papers to review, sign and return in the correct timeframe.
8. Third, "docket number." This is the tracking or ID number used by the Court to refer to your case.
9. Fourth is "time-stamp date." This is the date the Court issues to tell you when they processed your paperwork. It will be very important to track so you don't miss any deadlines.
10. Fifth, is marital settlement agreement. A marital settlement agreement is the legally-binding document that includes all of your terms that you have agreed to upon divorce. This may or may not include a parenting agreement or parenting plan, depending on whether you have children together who are under 18. You may need an attorney to help you with this.
11. If you have chosen not to have a marital settlement agreement, don't worry. It is not required to get your divorce on record with the Court. It's for spouses who want their terms in writing in a legally binding document
12. Sixth, is Court Forms. Often referred to as the "divorce papers," these are the set of forms required by the County Court to get your divorce on record.
13. Note that the required Court forms are not the same thing as a marital settlement agreement.

14. Last, let's discuss the terms Plaintiff and Defendant. You and your spouse must designate yourselves as the 'Plaintiff' or 'Defendant', even in a no-fault divorce. Whether you file as plaintiff or defendant has no effect on your legal rights. Plaintiff and Defendant are standard terms that Courts use. Don't worry - these terms do not imply in any way that one spouse is suing the other.
15. So what is the difference between Plaintiff and Defendant? The Plaintiff takes more of an active role in managing paperwork and has more paperwork to sign.
16. Important Note: The Plaintiff must be a resident of the state of Pennsylvania for at least six months. Therefore, if one spouse has moved out of the state, he/she must be designated as Defendant.
17. Before we discuss the divorce filing process, we would like to let you know about another form you may want to file. PA State law allows a divorcing spouse to take her maiden name back by filing a notice. You may file the notice before or after the Court issues a final divorce decree; however, there is no additional filing fee if you complete the form before the Court issues the divorce decree. We can provide this form during the divorce process with instructions on how to file.
18. Now let's go through an overview of the entire divorce filing process. Then, we will break it down into the three steps in much more detail. There are three main steps to the divorce filing process.
19. Step One is called "filing the divorce complaint." In this step, you will get your case entered into the Court system.
20. Step Two is called "filing acceptance of service." In this step, you are making sure that the Court has on record that your spouse has been notified about the divorce.
21. Step Three is filing final forms. This is where you will apply for your divorce decree.
22. Between Step Two and Step Three is a mandatory 90-day wait period. Now let's get a look at how long things might take. Here we see a timeline.

23. Step One, filing the divorce complaint forms, will take about a week to get into the system.
24. Step Two, filing the acceptance of service, must occur within 30 days or your case will expire. So make a special note.
25. After Step Two, there is the 90-day wait period.
26. In Step Three, you'll file the final forms. It will take about four to six weeks to get your divorce decree that states you're officially divorced.
27. All in all, the whole filing process takes between three to five months. You can speed up the process by up to a month by going together to the Courthouse to file in person.
28. You will have all the forms you need in your online secure document storage account. If you plan to file a Marital Settlement Agreement or MSA, we'll address that specifically in the next few tutorials. The MSA is different from the Court documents. Again, if you have chosen not to have a Marital Settlement Agreement, don't worry. It is not required to get your divorce on record with the Court. It's for spouses who want their terms in writing in a legally binding document.
29. So now that you have a little better understanding of what you are in for, take a moment to digest these pieces.

In our next clip, we will start with going through Step One of the filing process.

Remember we don't want you to get frustrated. Contact us or visit our FAQ page at any time.