

What is Family Duty Counsel?

Family Duty Counsel are lawyers paid by the Legal Services Society (Legal Aid) for up to three hours of free advice to help with family law issues.

What services CAN Family Duty Counsel provide?

- Give you only verbal advice about your legal rights, obligations, and court procedures.
- Review and help you prepare court documents.
- Help you negotiate and settle issues.
- Help you prepare or review consent orders or family agreements that can be filed in court.
- Attend court with you to ask for an adjournment, an unopposed or consent order, or an emergency restraining order.
- Inform you on what to do when you go to court, and refer you to other resources.

What services CAN'T Family Duty Counsel provide?

- Follow up with written advice.
- Go to court for any contested trial or hearing with complicated issues.
- Help you with complex property dispute, or give you tax advice.
- Help you if you already have a lawyer.
- Prepare your court documents.
- Help you with any non-family-law legal problems.
- Serve or accept court documents for you; or become your lawyer while acting as duty counsel.

How can I prepare for my meeting with a Family Duty Counsel Lawyer?

Gather and take basic information and documents to your meeting. If you're going to meet with family duty counsel, take the following with you:

- Your phone number(s) and other contact information.
- Full names and birth dates of all your children.
- Full name and current address, if you know it, of the other party (this could be your spouse, ex-spouse, ex-partner, or child's other parent).
- All documents you have that relate to your case, such as any agreements you have made with your spouse before or after the separation, any court orders, or any new applications.
- A list of incidents in your relationship that explain any need for a protection order (for example, incidents of physical or mental abuse).
- Your story, including important dates; and some idea of what you want to have happen.
- A summary of your current parenting arrangement.

Write down your questions

- Before meeting with family duty counsel, write down the questions you want to discuss so that you won't forget anything.

How can I find Family Duty Counsel?

Call Legal Aid: 604-408-2172 (Greater Vancouver) | 1-866-577-2525 (free in BC).

For a list of locations, go to: [lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/whereProvincialCourtDutyCounsel.php](https://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_aid/whereProvincialCourtDutyCounsel.php).

What if I don't speak or understand English?

Interpreters are only available for Family Duty Counsel at the Vancouver Justice Access Center: 290 – 800 Hornby St. Vancouver Law Courts Robson Square Vancouver, B.C. Phone: 604-660-2084. Online: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/justice-access-centre/vancouver.

Material is taken directly from a Legal Services Society fact sheet covering Family Duty Counsel.
For more information visit: www.lss.bc.ca/assets/legalAid/FDCPoster.pdf.

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