

HOW TO START A CONTESTED CASE

- 1) Fill out your *Complaint* and other required documents in BLACK ink and sign in BLUE ink. Make 2 copies – one for you and one for the other party.
- 2) File the original *Complaint and required documents* at the Courthouse and pay the \$200 [filing fee](#). If you cannot afford the fee, complete *Request for Exemption from Payment of Fees*, [TF-920](#) [Fill-In PDF].
- 3) The Clerk will open your case with your *Complaint*. The Clerk will issue you 2 copies of a [Summons](#) and a [Standing Order](#). One copy is for your records and the second copy is for the other party. You will also be given a case number. If you filed for a *Request for Exemption from Payment of Fees*, the procedure may be different. Check with your local Court.
- 4) Now it is time to SERVE the other party which means delivering a copy of every document you file. You MUST serve the other party with 1) a copy of the *Complaint and the required documents*, 2) the copy of the *Summons*, and 3) the copy of the *Standing Order*. You MUST serve these documents by Certified Mail/Restricted Delivery/Return Receipt Requested (the green card from the post office) or by a Process Server. If you have specific questions on how to serve the other party, see <http://courts.alaska.gov/shc/family/serve.htm> or How to Serve a Summons, [CIV-106](#).
- 5) Now you wait. The other party has 20 days after being served to file an *Answer*. If you get the green card back in the mail, keep it in a safe place. Likewise, if you used a process server, keep their *Return of Service* in a safe place. Either of these documents is called a *Proof of Service*.
- 6) After 20 days pass from the day the other party was served (this is the date signed for on the green card, or indicated as served on the *Return of Service*) and the other party DOES NOT file an *Answer*, you may file for a [Default](#). This means you are going to finish your case without the other party being involved. For forms and information, please read the [default section](#).
- 7) If the other party files an *Answer*, the case will go forward as a contested matter and be set on for trial.



THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ✓ Make TWO copies of everything you file with the court: one for you and one for the other party. File the original documents with the court.
- ✓ Always have your case number handy when calling the court so the court staff can help you more quickly.
- ✓ Keep your *Proof of Service* in a safe place.

For more information call the Family Law Self-Help Center's Helpline (907) 264-0851 or (866) 279-0851 (outside of Anchorage) or visit <http://courts.alaska.gov/shc/family/selfhelp.htm>.