



What the FAMILY LAW COURTS STAFF

CAN

AND

CANNOT

do for clients

Family Law Courts staff are here to help clients but there are limitations on what help we can provide. This brochure summarises what we can and cannot provide or do.

WE CANNOT

We cannot give you legal advice.

We cannot tell you what words to use in your court papers or whether you have given enough information.

We cannot tell you what to say in court.

We cannot tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court. We recommend you seek legal advice before you start a case.

We cannot recommend a certain lawyer to act on your behalf.

We cannot tell you what the decision of the court will be or give you an opinion about what the decision might be.

We cannot interpret orders made by a judicial officer.

We cannot change an order once it has been made by either court. Only a judicial officer can do this. You would have to either make another court application or file an appeal or review of the decision. You should seek legal advice before taking this step.

We cannot enforce a court order. However, we can tell you what forms you may need to file to apply to enforce an order.

We cannot let you communicate with a judicial officer, other than at the hearing of your court case.

WE CAN

We can tell you how to get an interpreter.

We can tell you the courts' policy on issues of family violence and personal safety.

We can refer you to services that help people with particular needs, including the Australian Government's Family Relationship Advice Line and Family Relationships Online.

We can tell you what forms you may need to file.

We can check your papers for completeness (for example, we check for signatures and that attachments are present and signed by an authorised person).

We can give you forms, brochures or the court's website address where you can get forms, brochures and other information. Many family law registries have computers where you can access the court's website.

We can briefly explain and answer questions about how the courts work, their practices and procedures.

We can inform you how your case is managed and the processes at each step along the pathway to a hearing or trial.

We can provide court lists (that is, details of the date, time and location of hearings) and information on how to get a case listed.

If you are already a party to a case it is likely that you have been given the direct telephone number of a person who can help you. This person can:

- answer questions about court requirements, such as when certain documents need to be filed or returned to the Court
- estimate when your matter is likely to go to a hearing or trial
- explain how to go about seeking to change an existing order.

If you do not have a direct telephone number you can get this information by calling 1300 352 000 for the cost of a local call.

PERSONAL SAFETY

If you have any concerns about your safety while attending court, please call 1300 352 000 before your court appointment or hearing. Options for your safety at court will be discussed and arrangements put in place.

By law people must inform the court if there is an existing or pending family violence order involving themselves or their children. More detail is in the fact sheet 'Do you have fears for your safety when attending court'.