

Cause Number: _____

(The Clerk's office will fill in the Cause Number and Court Number when you file this form.)

IN THE MATTER OF THE MARRIAGE OF

Petitioner: _____
Print first, middle and last name of the spouse filing for divorce.

And

Respondent: _____
Print first, middle and last name of other spouse.

In the _____
(Court Number)

- District Court
- County Court at Law

_____ County, Texas

AND IN THE INTEREST OF: *(List all children you and your spouse have together who are under 18 or still in high school.)*

- 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
- 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Original Petition for Divorce

Print your answers.

My name is: _____
First Middle Last

I am the **Petitioner**, the person asking for a divorce.

The last three numbers of my driver's license number are: ____ ____ _____. My driver's license was issued in *(State)* _____.

or I do not have a driver's license number.

The last three numbers of my social security number are: ____ ____ ____.

or I do not have a social security number.

My spouse's name is: _____
First Middle Last

My spouse is the **Respondent**.

1. Discovery Level

The discovery level in this case, if needed, is Level 2.

2. Legal Notice *(Check one box.)*

I think my spouse will sign a *Waiver of Service* (or *Answer*). Do not send a sheriff, constable, or process server to serve my spouse with a copy of this *Petition for Divorce* at this time.

I will have a sheriff, constable, process server or clerk serve my spouse with this *Petition for Divorce* here:

_____ *Street Address City State Zip*

If this is a work address, name of business: _____

I ask the clerk to issue a *Citation of Service* (the form necessary to provide legal notice to my spouse by "Official Service of Process"). I understand that I will need to **pay the fee** (or file a *Statement of Inability to Afford Payment of Court Costs* if I am unable to pay the fee) and **arrange for service**.

I cannot find my spouse. I ask that my spouse be served by publication. I understand I must file an *Affidavit for Citation by Publication* and hire a lawyer to serve as attorney ad litem for my spouse.

3. Jurisdiction

3A. County Residence Requirement

(Check all boxes that apply.)

- I have lived in this county for the last 90 days.
- My spouse has lived in this county for the last 90 days.
- I am serving in the armed forces or other government service outside of Texas, but this county has been the home county of either my spouse or me for at least 90 days.
- I have accompanied my spouse who is serving in the armed forces or other government service outside of Texas, but this county has been the home county of either my spouse or me for at least 90 days.

Note: You cannot file for divorce in Texas until you or your spouse has lived in the county where you are asking for a divorce for at least the last 90 days and in Texas for at least the last six months.

There are special rules for military families and others who are absent from the state due to government service. Get more information at www.TexasLawHelp.org.

3B. Texas Residence Requirement

(Check all boxes that apply.)

- I have lived in Texas for the last six months.
- My spouse has lived in Texas for the last six months.
- I am serving in the armed forces or other government service outside of Texas, but Texas is the home state of either my spouse or me and has been for at least 6 months.
- I have accompanied my spouse who is serving in the armed forces or other government service outside of Texas, but Texas is the home state of either my spouse or me and has been for at least 6 months.

Note: If you or your spouse do not live in Texas, you must complete and attach the Exhibit: Out-of-State Party Declaration. Get it at www.TexasLawHelp.org.

3C. Personal Jurisdiction over Spouse

(Check one box.)

- My spouse lives in Texas.
- My spouse does not live in Texas. (Check any boxes that apply below.)
 - My spouse agrees that a Texas court can make orders in this divorce, including orders regarding conservatorship (custody), visitation, and financial support of our children and orders regarding our property and debts. My spouse will file a *Waiver of Service* (or *Answer*).
 - Texas is the last state where we lived together as a married couple. This *Petition for Divorce* is filed less than two years after we separated.
 - The children live in Texas because of my spouse's actions.
 - My spouse has lived in Texas with the children.
 - My spouse has lived in Texas and provided prenatal expenses or support for the children.
 - My spouse had sexual intercourse in Texas, and the children may have been conceived by that act of intercourse.
 - Our child was born in Texas and my spouse registered with the paternity registry maintained by the bureau of vital statistics or signed an acknowledgment of paternity.
 - My spouse will be personally served with citation (official service of process) in Texas.

4. Dates of Marriage and Separation

My spouse and I got married on or about: _____
Month Day Year

We stopped living together as spouses on or about: _____
Month Day Year

5. Grounds for Divorce

I ask the Court to grant me a divorce. The marriage has become insupportable due to discord or conflict of personalities that destroys the legitimate ends of the marital relationship and prevents any reasonable expectation of reconciliation.

6. Children

6A. Children Husband and Wife have Together

My spouse and I are the parents of the following children who are under 18 years old or over 18 years old and still in high school.

(You **MUST** list all children you and your spouse have together (adopted or biological) who are under 18 or over 18 and still in high school.)

	Child's name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	State where child lives now
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

6B. Jurisdiction over Children

(Check one box.)

- The children live in Texas now and have lived in Texas for at least the past 6 months or since birth.
- The children do not live in Texas now but they have been gone from Texas less than 6 months. The children lived in Texas the 6 months before they moved. A parent or person acting as a parent continues to live in Texas.
- None of the above apply. (**Note:** Talk to a lawyer if none of the above apply.)

(Check box below only if true.)

- There are **no court orders** about any of the children listed above. No other Court has continuing jurisdiction over this case or the children.

Note: Do not use this form if there is already a court order in place for any of the children (such as a child support order.). Get information about filing for divorce when there is already a court order at www.TexasLawHelp.org.

6C. Children's Property

(Check one box.)

- The children do not own any property of significant value in their own name.
- The children own the following property of significant value in their own name:

_____.

6D. Children's Health Insurance

The children: (Check all that apply.)

- have **private health insurance**.
 Name of insurance company: _____
 Policy number: _____ Cost of premium: \$ _____
 Name of person who pays for insurance: _____
 The insurance policy is is not available through the parent's work.
- have health insurance through **Medicaid**.
- have health insurance through **C.H.I.P.** Cost of premium (if any): \$ _____
- do not have health insurance.

If the children **do not** have private health insurance also complete the following:

- Private health insurance is is not available to Father at a reasonable cost.
- Private health insurance is is not available to Mother at a reasonable cost.

6E. Conservatorship (Custody) of the Child/ren

I ask the court to make conservatorship (custody) orders as follows: (Check **a, b, or c.**)

- a. Mother and Father should be **Joint Managing Conservators** of the child/ren and:
 (If you checked **a**, check **a-1, a-2, or a-3.**)
 - a-1. Father should have the exclusive right to designate the primary residence of the child/ren within the following geographic area: (Check one box below.)
 anywhere. this county. this county or county adjacent to this county.
 Texas. other: _____.
 - a-2. Mother should have the exclusive right to designate the primary residence of the child/ren within the following geographic area: (Check one box below.)
 anywhere. this county. this county or county adjacent to this county.
 Texas. other: _____.
 - a-3. Neither parent should have the exclusive right to designate the primary residence of the child/ren but both parents should be ordered not to move the child/ren out of the following geographic area: (Check one box below.)
 this school district: _____ this county.
 this county or county adjacent to this county. other: _____.
- b. Mother should be the **Sole Managing Conservator** of the child/ren.
- c. Father should be the **Sole Managing Conservator** of the child/ren.

6F. Possession of and Access to the Child/ren (Visitation)

I ask the court to make possession and access (visitation) orders as follows: *(Check a, b, c, or d.)*

- a. Father should have "standard visitation." *(See Texas Family Code Chapter 153, Subchapter F.)*
- b. Mother should have "standard visitation." *(See Texas Family Code Chapter 153, Subchapter F.)*
- c. "Standard visitation" would be unworkable or inappropriate. Possession and access to the child/ren should be as follows:

- d. I am concerned about the safety of the children with the other parent: I ask that:
(If you checked d, check all that apply below.)

- d-1. exchanges of the child/ren be supervised, or in the alternative, be in a public place.
- d-2. the other parent's possession of the child/ren be limited to day visits.
- d-3. the other parent's possession of the child/ren be supervised.
- d-4. the other parent have no right to possession or access to the child/ren.
- d-5. the other parent be ordered not to use alcohol or illegal drugs 24 hours prior to or during possession of the child/ren.
- d-6. the other parent's possession and access to the children be restricted as follows:

(Check only if you are asking that a different possession order be in place while a child is under 3 years old.)

- One or more of the children is under 3. Until the child turns 3, possession should be as follows:

After the child turns 3, possession should be as checked above.

(Check only if applicable.)

- I am concerned that the other parent may take the child/ren to another country and refuse to return them. I ask the Court to determine if there is a risk of international kidnapping by the other parent and to take such measures as are necessary to protect the child/ren.

6G. Child Support and Medical Support for the Child/ren

I ask the court to make appropriate orders for the financial support of the child/ren, including regular child support and medical support and, if supported by the evidence, retroactive child support.

7. Is the Wife Pregnant?

(Check one box.)

- The wife in this marriage **is not** pregnant.
- The wife in this marriage **is** pregnant. I understand that I cannot finish the divorce until after the child is born.

(If the wife is pregnant, also check one box below.)

- The husband **is** the father of this child. I ask the court to include orders for custody, visitation, child support and medical support for the child in the *Final Decree of Divorce*.
- The husband **is not** the father of this child. I understand that paternity of the child must be established before I can finish the divorce. (Get information about establishing paternity at www.TexasLawHelp.org.)

8. Did the Wife have a Child with Another Man while Married to the Husband?

(Check one box. Fill in the requested information, if applicable.)

- The wife **did not** have a child with another man while married to the husband.
- The wife **did** have a child with another man while married to the husband. All of the children born during the marriage that are not the Husband's adopted or biological children are named below:

	Child's name	Age	Date of Birth	Sex
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

(If the wife had a child or children with another man during the marriage, check one box below,)

- Paternity of the child/ren named above **has not** been established. I understand that paternity of the child/ren must be established before I can finish my divorce. (Get information about establishing paternity at www.TexasLawHelp.org.)

- Paternity of the child/ren named above **has** been established:

(Check one box.)

- A court order has established that another man is the biological father and/or the Husband is not the biological father of the child/ren listed above. I understand I must attach a file-stamped copy of the court order to my *Final Decree of Divorce*.
- An *Acknowledgement of Paternity* was signed by the biological father and a *Denial of Paternity* was signed by the Husband for the child/ren listed above. I understand I must attach a copy of these documents to my *Final Decree of Divorce*.

9. Protective Order Statement (Check the appropriate boxes. Fill in the requested information.)

Note: You **must** provide information about any protective order or pending application for protective order involving you and your spouse or a child of either you or your spouse. This includes information about any: (1) family violence protective order, (2) sexual assault, sexual abuse, trafficking or stalking protective order and/or (3) emergency protective order issued after an arrest.

You **must also** attach to this petition a copy of any protective order (even if it's expired) in which one spouse or child of either spouse was the applicant or victim and the other spouse was the respondent or defendant.

9A. No Protective Order

- I **do not** have a protective order against my spouse and I have not asked for one.
- My spouse **does not** have a protective order against me and has not asked for one.

9B. Pending Protective Order

- I **have** filed paperwork at the courthouse asking for a protective order against my spouse, but a judge has not decided if I should get it. I asked for a protective order on _____
Date Filed
in _____ County, _____. The cause number is _____.
County *State* *Cause Number*
If I get a protective order, I will file a copy of it before any hearings in this divorce.
- My spouse **has** filed paperwork asking for a protective order against me, but a judge has not decided if my spouse will get it. My spouse asked for a protective order on _____
Date Filed
in _____ County, _____. The cause number is _____.
County *State* *Cause Number*
If my spouse gets a protective order, I will file a copy of it before any hearings in this divorce.

9C. Protective Order in Place

- I **do have** a protective order against my spouse. I got the protective order in _____
County County, _____ on _____.
State *Date Ordered*
The cause number for the protective order is _____.
Cause Number
Either I have attached a copy of the protective order to this petition or I will file a copy of it with the court before any hearings in this divorce.
- My spouse **does have** a protective order against me. The protective order was made in _____
County County, _____ on _____.
State *Date Ordered*
The cause number for the protective order is _____.
Cause Number
Either I have attached a copy of the protective order to this petition or I will file a copy of it with the court before any hearings in this divorce.

10. Waiver of Waiting Period Based on Family Violence (Check only if applicable.)

- I ask the Court to waive the 60-day waiting period for divorce because: (Check one box.)
 - My spouse has been convicted of or received deferred adjudication for a crime involving family violence against me or a member of my household.
 - I have an active protective order or an active magistrate's order for emergency protection against my spouse because of family violence during our marriage. The order includes a finding that my spouse committed family violence.

11. Property and Debt

Note: It is very important to talk with lawyer if you or your spouse has a house, land, business, retirement funds, other valuable property or debt. Getting advice from a lawyer now can save you time and money in the long run.

About community property: Texas is a community property state. This means that any new property that either spouse gets from the minute they are married until the minute the judge grants the divorce is probably community property, even if the property is only in one spouse's name. **About separate property:** Property owned by a spouse before the marriage is that spouse's separate property. In addition, if either spouse receives a gift, an inheritance, or a recovery for personal injuries that occurred during the marriage (not including a recovery for lost wages or medical expenses); it is that spouse's separate property. There are exceptions to these general rules. If you have questions talk to a lawyer.

About retirement: Retirement funds (such as 401k, pension, profit sharing, stock option plans and IRAs) earned by either spouse during the marriage are usually considered to be community property that can be divided by the court. This is true even if you or your spouse has not yet retired. If you want the Court to divide retirement funds (other than an IRA), you will need to have the Court sign an additional form, usually called a "Qualified Domestic Relations Order" (QDRO), to make the division effective. You should have the QDRO prepared before you go to court, so the judge can sign it when you finish your divorce. A QDRO form is not included with this divorce set. You may be able to get a sample QDRO form from the employer or retirement fund administrator. If not, you should hire a lawyer to draft the QDRO form. If you use the employer or retirement fund administrator's QDRO form, you should still have a lawyer review it to make sure you are not giving up important benefits. **Note:** If you and your spouse plan to keep your own retirement funds or do not have retirement funds, you do not need a QDRO.

About debt: A creditor's right to collect a debt is not affected by a divorce decree. So, if the Court orders your spouse to pay a debt (such as a mortgage) that is in both of your names but your spouse doesn't pay it, the creditor can still seek payment from you. Ask a lawyer how to protect yourself in this situation.

11A. Community Property and Debt

If my spouse and I can agree about how to divide the property and debts we got during our marriage, I ask the Court to approve our agreement. If we cannot agree, I ask the Court to divide our community property and debts according to Texas law.

11B. Separate Property

I own the following separate property. I owned this property before I was married or I received this property as a gift or inheritance during my marriage or I received this property as recovery for personal injuries that occurred during the marriage (not including any recovery for lost wages or medical expenses). I ask the Court to confirm this property as my separate property.

(Fill in all lines. If you have no property to list in a particular category, write "none.")

House located _____
Street Address City State Zip

Land located at: _____
Street Address City State Zip

Cars, trucks, motorcycles or other vehicles

Year	Make	Model	Vehicle Identification No. [VIN]-
_____	_____	_____	_____

Other money or personal property I owned before I was married, received as a gift or inheritance during my marriage or property I purchased during my marriage with separate property funds: _____

Money I received as recovery for personal injuries that occurred during the marriage that was not for lost wages or medical expenses: _____

16. Certificate of Service to Attorney General

I will deliver a copy of this *Petition for Divorce* to the Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division* as follows:

If I file this document electronically, I will deliver it through the electronic file manager if possible. If not possible, I will deliver it in person, by mail, by commercial delivery service, by fax, or by email.

If I file a paper copy of this document, I will deliver it in person, by mail, by commercial delivery service, by fax, or by email.

Note: Fill out and sign this Certificate of Service **only** if your child/ren get Medicaid or TANF now or got it in the past. It tells the court that you will give a copy of this completed form to the Office of the Attorney General as required by the law.

→

Petitioner's Signature

Date

* Get contact information for the Attorney General Child Support Office in your county at www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/fieldoffices.php. Bring proof of delivery when you go to Court to finish your divorce.

Note: For a referral to a lawyer call your local lawyer referral service or the State Bar of Texas Lawyer Referral Information Service at 1-800-252-9690.

For information about free and low-cost legal help in your county go to www.TexasLawHelp.org or call the Legal Aid office serving your area:

Legal Aid of Northwest Texas 1-888-529-5277 (serves Dallas / Ft. Worth area & Northwest Texas)

Lone Star Legal Aid 1-800-733-8394 (serves Houston area & East Texas)

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid 1-888-988-9996 (serves Austin / San Antonio area, El Paso area & South Texas)

If you have been the victim of family violence, or if at any time you feel unsafe, get help by calling the:

National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or

Texas Family Violence Legal Line at 1-800-374-HOPE (4673) or

Advocates for Victims of Crime (AVOICE): at 1-888-343-4414.