

THE TIMELINE FOR

DIVORCE

ANSWER

The **Defendant** must respond to the Complaint within 21 days, **admitting or denying** allegations in the Complaint.

DISCOVERY

Parties trade **documents**, answer **questions**, disclose **witnesses**, conduct **depositions** and **subpoena** third parties. starting 30 days after the Complaint is served.

CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

A hearing is held where the **Judge** sets dates for **trial** and the end of **discovery**.

PRETRIAL

Discovery closes 30 days before trial. During this 30-day period, parties exchange **pretrial memos**, **proposed exhibits**, and a list of **witnesses** who will testify at trial.

DECISION

After trial, the Judge will issue a **final order** or decree of divorce. Judges sometimes issue the decision verbally at the end of trial and sometimes issue written decisions.

COMPLAINT

The Plaintiff files a **Complaint** which briefly states their **legal claims** and **relevant facts**. The complaint starts the case. It must be **served and filed**.

TEMPORARY ORDERS MOTION(S)

If Parties cannot agree upon how to handle issues such as temporary custody, child support, and alimony during divorce proceedings, they will file a **Motion** with their requests. The other party must file an **opposition** within 14 judicial days.

MOTION HEARING / TEMPORARY ORDERS

If a motion is filed, about a month later a **hearing** will be held where the judge will issue **temporary orders**.

MEDIATION, RETURN HEARING

The Judge may send parties to **mediation** to try to reach an **agreement on custody and visitation** and set a return hearing to see if any issues were **resolved**. If resolved, the parenting agreement may be signed in court at the return hearing.

TRIAL

Both parties present **evidence** (documents, testimony, photos) and **argue**.



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