

FAMILY LAW AND PATERNITY PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

Updated December 1, 2024

Family Law Docket

- All family law cases/hearings must comply with LSPR 94.04.
- Hearings:
 - Hearings will be held on a hybrid platform. Parties can appear in-person in the courtroom or by video on Zoom. Permission is not required to appear by video on Zoom for family law motions, guardianship hearings, child support modifications, protection orders (domestic violence/unlawful harassment/SAPO/VAPO) ITA hearings, paternity/child support contempt hearings. Parties must request to appear by telephone via Zoom prior to the hearing by filing a motion in courtroom 202. Parties must get permission to appear telephonically or by video on Zoom for any ex parte hearings.
 - Anyone lacking access to a device or the internet should inform the court by contacting the Family Law center 509-477-5702 x 0 (zero) two days before their hearing to get their hearing time and location.
 - All assigned cases must be set on the correct docket day for the assigned Commissioner. If the case is unassigned, it may be set on any family law motion docket.
 - Absent good cause, all bench conferences shall be held prior to the confirmation deadline.
 - Cases must be confirmed by the moving party as ready by 4:00 p.m. three court days before the hearing date. Any motions not confirmed by the deadline will be struck and sanctions may be entered. If the non-moving party fails to appear, the requested relief may be granted.

- Cases can be confirmed as “ready” by calling 509-477-5702 x 0 (zero) or emailing familylaw@spokanecounty.org.
 - Parties/counsel shall indicate any conflicts on hearing date and the nature of the conflict in the email confirmation, not the motion status form. Priority will be given to parties/counsel who are required to be in another court proceeding.
 - Parties/counsel shall submit a Motion Status Report (MSR) noting any objections by the confirmation deadline.
 - Parties shall make ALL efforts to send only one email per case.
- Parties/counsel must provide bench copies of any pleadings filed within 5 court days of the confirmation date to: familylaw@spokanecounty.org. If it was filed in the court file more than 5 days ago, DO NOT email a bench copy.
- Family law motion dockets will be posted at noon two days before the hearing date at <https://www.spokanecounty.org/1397/Family-Court>. Parties are responsible for knowing the time and location of their hearing. Parties without internet access may call 509-477-5702 x0 two days before their hearing to get their hearing time and location.
 - Once set, the docket cannot be changed without permission of the court.
- Emails sent that include conversations about the case or conversations between the parties and the lawyers will be deleted and result in sanctions by the court.
- Documents submitted to the court must be typed or printed legibly and follow page limits.
- Contempt Motions Requesting Imprisonment: If the motion is for contempt with imprisonment requested, or if there is an Order allowing oral

testimony, counsel/parties must so advise the court when the case is confirmed ready-

- Counsel/parties should be ready for hearing at the time the matter is set. If parties/counsel on a case are not present, the Court may strike the hearing or grant the relief that is requested.
- In the event that the number of cases reporting as ready exceeds the time that the Court has available that day, cases may be assigned to another day and/or another judicial officer, at the discretion of the court.
- Any attorney or party acting in bad faith with regard to these requirements will be subject to terms and sanctions.

State Parentage and Child Support Contempt Docket Calls

- Docket call for paternity and child support contempt cases begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. on Friday for cases filed by the State.
- Participants can participate by video on Zoom or appear in courtroom 205. Please see attached information sheet regarding participation by video on Zoom. Parties must request to appear by telephone via Zoom prior to the hearing by filing a motion in courtroom 202.
- If hearing time is needed after docket the hearing will be scheduled for the same day before noon.

Orders and Disputes

- Counsel/parties are expected to enter orders immediately after hearing. If counsel/party is unavailable immediately after the hearing, orders must be presented to the Court by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the hearing or delivered to the Family Law Center as directed by the assigned commissioner. If the judicial officer is appearing remotely, the parties shall get instructions from that judicial officer about submission of proposed orders.
- For hearings heard by pro tem commissioners, the proposed orders should be brought to the Family Law Center unless instructed otherwise by the pro tem.

- If, after a contested hearing, the parties cannot agree to what the court found and ordered, individual proposed orders may be submitted in-person to the Family Law Center IF the disagreements are clearly designated. Sanctions are always reserved for any party that submits a proposed order with language the court did not find or order. Anyone submitting a proposed order must state any knowledge of if or why the other party objects.
- No presentment hearings will be set without the specific approval of the court.

Petition for visitation – RCW 26.11

- Petition for visitation cases filed under RCW 26.11 shall be assigned to a Family Law Judge at the time of filing.
- The moving party shall provide a bench copy of all pleadings at filing to the assigned judge's department.
- A review date will be set in 30 days to review for service and response. Parties and/or counsel are not required to appear for this Court review.
- The Court can set its own show cause hearing if service is not completed timely.
- The parties will be notified of the Judge's decision by mail.
- If the Court does not find good cause exists, the Petition will be denied and the case will be dismissed.
- If the Court finds that good cause does exist, a hearing date will be set with the assigned judge and the parties will be notified of a status conference date and/or mailed a scheduling order.

Petition for De Facto Parentage – RCW 26.26A.440

- Petition for de facto parentage of a child under RCW 26.26A.440 shall be assigned to a Family Law Judge at the time of filing.
- The moving party shall provide a bench copy of all pleadings at filing to the assigned judge's department.
- The assigned judge will review the pleadings for service, response and to determine whether good cause exists.
- The parties will be notified of the Judge's decision by mail.
- If the Court does not find good cause exists, the Petition will be denied and the case will be dismissed.
- If the Court finds that good cause does exist, the parties will be notified of a status conference date and/or mailed a scheduling order.
- The Court may also assign the matter to a commissioner as necessary.

**ATTENDING A FAMILY LAW/PATERNITY/CHILD SUPPORT CONTEMPT HEARING
BY VIDEO VIA ZOOM
TWO WAYS TO JOIN**

On-line

Go to: <https://zoom.us>
Click: "join a meeting"
Enter: your assigned
commissioner's ID number
(below)

App (mobile or desktop)

Download: Zoom App (free)
Click: "join a meeting"
Enter: your assigned
commissioner's ID number
(below)

COMMISSIONER	ID Number
Commissioner Chavez	461 683 7190
Commissioner Cruz	785 953 3691
Commissioner Pelc	523 109 8521
Commissioner Ressa	382 218 4754
Commissioner Rugel	680 342 2980
Commissioner Scharosch	823 091 1413
Commissioner Stewart	968 843 4881
Commissioner Swennumson	409 955 7821
State Parentage/Child Support Contempt	212 053 3468

Tips for Attending Hearings

- Log on 10 minutes before your hearing
 - You will be placed in a "waiting room" and the judicial officer will let you into the meeting
- Have this sheet handy in case your video fails and you need to call in
 - If you have an attorney, have their phone number handy in case you get disconnected
- Find a quiet space so you can hear and be heard
- Be aware of what is behind you – everyone will be able to see it