

LSPR 94.11 ORIENTATION IN FAMILY LAW MATTERS

(a) Description. In an effort to promote less adversarial choices for parties with children in family law actions, the Thurston County Superior Court provides an Orientation Program. This Orientation may include:

- (1) information from a courthouse facilitator on court processes,
- (2) an introduction to the Parenting Seminar regarding how children are affected by their parents' separation, and an opportunity to schedule an appointment for the Seminar required under LSPR 94.06, regarding parenting seminars, and
- (3) a video presentation on mediation and an opportunity to schedule a mediation appointment through the court administration.

Following completion of the Orientation and mediation, if applicable, any unresolved motions or show cause issues that have been properly filed and scheduled will be heard by the court.

(b) Requirement.

- (1) Dissolutions/Legal Separations with Children. The parties to these actions shall be required to complete an Orientation to the Family Court System.
- (2) Out of County or State Residents. A party residing outside of Thurston County may be excused from attending the Orientation, if attendance would be a hardship.
- (3) Represented Parties. Attendance at the Orientation shall be excused for a party who is represented by an attorney, upon filing a declaration that the party shall attend the Parenting Seminar in compliance with LSPR 94.06(c) and mediation in compliance with LSPR 94.05. If an attorney withdraws from a case without substitution of new counsel, then the notice of withdrawal under CR 71 shall provide notice of the party's responsibility to attend the Orientation. The withdrawing attorney shall file a Notice of Issue, scheduling the Orientation for the party.
- (4) Good Cause. Participation in the Orientation may be excused or modified upon a showing of good cause.

(c) Renewal. The court may renew the requirement of attendance at the Orientation at any time in cases where attendance was previously excused.

(d) Scheduling. At the time an action requiring Orientation is filed, the Petitioner shall schedule attendance at the Orientation Program for both parties to occur within 30 days of filing. The parties shall not be required to attend the same Orientation session. The Summons and Petition for Dissolution shall not be accepted for filing by the clerk, unless the Notice of Issue scheduling the Orientation for both parties is filed at the same

time or attendance at Orientation has been excused under section (b) of this rule. Any party requesting or responding to a request for a hearing shall attend the Orientation before the hearing. Attendance at the Orientation is not required prior to emergency hearings.

(e) Service. The Petitioner shall serve the Notice of Issue scheduling the Orientation on the Respondent at the time the Summons and Petition are served. In the event a joinder in the Petition is filed, the Petitioner shall serve the Notice of Issue, scheduling the Orientation, on the Respondent within 7 days of filing.

[Adopted effective January 1, 2004; Amended effective September 1, 2005; September 1, 2006; September 1, 2008; September 1, 2011; September 1, 2017; September 1, 2022.]