

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Bristol County Probate & Family Court



Gina L. DeRossi  
*Register of Probate*

## COMPLAINT FOR SEPARATE SUPPORT

Use these instructions if:

- ✓ You are filing a Complaint for Separate Support.
- ✓ You are married to the other party but are seeking to separate from that person.
- ✓ You may or may not have children by the other party.
- ✓ You are requesting that your spouse provide medical health insurance benefits and/or support for yourself and/or your minor children and/or you are seeking custody.
- ✓ You have not filed and are not seeking to file a Complaint for Divorce at this time.

**STEP 1:** COMPLETE THE FORMS: Fill out all forms completely using permanent black ink. You may also complete and type the forms on line at [www.bristolcountyprobate.com](http://www.bristolcountyprobate.com).

*If there were NO children born or conceived during the marriage you must fill out the following forms:*

- ✓ **COMPLAINT FOR SEPARATE SUPPORT.** You, as the plaintiff, must indicate the particular action you are requesting the court to take. An allowable allegation is, for example, a spouse failing to provide suitable support of spouse and/or child without justification, or desertion. **NOTE: You may NOT use irretrievable breakdown of the marriage as a cause for this Complaint.**
- ✓ **FINANCIAL STATEMENT FORM.** You must complete a Financial Statement form on an original pink court form. This form along with separate Instructions are available at the Registry or on line at [www.bristolcountyprobate.com](http://www.bristolcountyprobate.com).

*If there were children born or conceived during the marriage you must fill out the following form IN ADDITION to the above listed form:*

- ✓ **AFFIDAVIT DISCLOSING CARE AND CUSTODY PROCEEDINGS.** This form along with separate Instructions are available at the Registry or on line at [www.bristolcountyprobate.com](http://www.bristolcountyprobate.com).

*In some cases, you may also want to file the following form:*

- ✓ **MOTION FOR TEMPORARY ORDERS.** If you are seeking immediate relief for child support or alimony/spousal support or custody, you may file a Motion. This form along with separate Instructions are available at the Registry or on line at [www.bristolcountyprobate.com](http://www.bristolcountyprobate.com).

**STEP 2:** MAKE COPIES: Make a copy of all completed forms. Assemble the copies so that you have 2 COMPLETE PACKETS OF THE FORMS – the originals and the copies. Keep the copies for yourself. You may have to make additional copies in the future.

**STEP 3:** FILING FEE: At the time of filing/ mailing the above documents to the Court, you must file a **\$120.00** filing fee.

The fee may be payable by money order or personal check to the Registry of Probate. If the documents are filed in person at the Probate & Family Court Registry at 40 Broadway, Suite 240, Taunton, MA, you may also pay by cash or major credit card.

**STEP 4:** FILE THE PAPERS: Take the original forms listed above and your filing fee and deliver or mail the original documents to the Registry of Probate for processing at 40 Broadway, Suite 240, Taunton, MA 02780.

**IMPORTANT:** **With the above documents, you MUST file a CERTIFIED, CIVIL, LONG FORM MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE. This can be obtained from the City or Town Hall where you applied for your marriage license.**

**STEP 5:** RECEIVE A SUMMONS FROM THE COURT: Once you have filed the appropriate papers with the Registry you will receive a copy of your *Complaint*, original *Summons* and *Track Notice* from the court. **YOU** must arrange for the *Summons* and other forms to be served upon your spouse by a Constable or Sheriff. **YOU MAY NOT** serve them yourself. Separate Instructions on How to Serve a Separate Support Summons are available at the Registry or on line at [www.bristolcountyprobate.com.com](http://www.bristolcountyprobate.com.com).

**STEP 6:** RETURN THE SUMMONS: After your spouse has been served all the necessary papers, **YOU** must return the *original* Summons with *Acceptance or Proof of Service* to the Registry so that a Case Management Conference can be assigned. (Note: If you do not know the current whereabouts of your spouse, you can request notice of the above action by publication in the newspaper. Separate Instructions on How to Serve by Publication are available at the Registry)

Please be advised that the information in this pamphlet is provided as a service of the Bristol County Probate & Family Court Registry and does not constitute legal advice which can only be given to you by an attorney.

Bristol County Probate & Family Court Registry  
40 Broadway, Suite 240  
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[www.BristolCountyProbate.com](http://www.BristolCountyProbate.com)