



FAMILY LAW

*Written by John Stocks
Attorney at Law*

Client: I am going to get a divorce and I am worried about attorney's fees and costs. I have never dealt with a lawyer before. My wife and I are somewhat on friendly terms, but I heard that lawyers can be expensive. Can a lawyer work on the divorce on a contingency fee? What is the normal fee?

Lawyer: Attorneys are governed by Rules of Professional Conduct (called RPCs), and one of the rules addresses fees. Lawyers cannot charge a fee contingent upon obtaining a dissolution for a client. Therefore, lawyers charge by the hour or a flat fee. In the Puget Sound area, lawyers will charge between \$150 to \$350 per hour as a general range depending on their experience, reputation, and ability. The normal fee usually involves an advance payment called a retainer or advance fee deposit. In a dissolution with children, the standard retainer is between \$2,500 and \$10,000 depending on the lawyer and the issues. In every case, the lawyer's fee shall be reasonable, which can be measured by what the fee customarily charged in the locality for similar services is. To answer your question, yes, lawyers can be expensive, but you can minimize your fees and costs by staying on friendly terms with your wife throughout the divorce. Also, most lawyers offer a free consultation, which gives you a chance to meet with a lawyer face-to-face and ask questions, including questions about fees. Lawyers shall communicate to the client the basis and rate of his or her fee in writing, if requested. The best thing is to talk to the lawyer and discuss these issues.

Lawyer, John S. Stocks, answers questions posed to him by clients and/or by e-mails on the subject of FAMILY LAW.

Feel free to submit your family law question to John via e-mail. There is no charge for this and your question may appear in a future column. E-mail your question to: jstocks@vansiclen.com



RIVERBEND
OFFICE PARK
721 BUILDING

VAN SICLEN, STOCKS & FIRKINS P.A.
KEN SCHOENFELD P.A.
LAKESIDE-MILAM RECOVERY CENTERS P.A.

**Van Siclen,
Stocks
& Firkins**

**721 45th Street NE
Auburn, WA 98002**

253-859-8899

www.vansiclen.com