



FAMILY LAW

*Written by John Stocks
Attorney at Law*

Client: I want this divorce over with, right now! I can't stand dealing with my spouse anymore. Why do I have to wait 90 days to get divorced? What is the average time for people to get divorced anyway?

Attorney: In Washington State, the law indicates that you have to wait 90 days after the service and filing of the Summons and Petition for Dissolution (divorce). This is sometimes referred to as the "cooling off period" and it permits parties to reconcile if they changed their minds as opposed to having to get remarried. The record for the fastest divorce in Washington (in recent years) is on the 91st day after filing (and service). However, I have been in court when I have seen couples (even some represented by lawyers) try to get divorced sooner by stating, "but it has been 90 days since I filed," (but they served the documents later) because you have to wait 90 days after both filing and service. If you are in a hurry to get a Decree that separates all property and debts, and deals with any children (visitation, custody and child support), you can obtain a Legal Separation Decree sooner and do not have to wait the 90 days, but then you add the additional task of having to convert this Legal Separation Decree into a Divorce Decree (which takes 6 more months). Most divorces settle between the 91st day and 300th day, so the average time for most divorces is 5-6 months.

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



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