



What Can I Expect If My Lawyer Is Given a Family Contract?

What is a family contract and why has my lawyer been given one?

A contract is what we call the instructions that the Legal Services Society (LSS) gives to a lawyer when they start a legal aid case. A **family contract** is intended to allow your lawyer to help you under specific circumstances; for example, if:

- your safety or your children's safety is at risk;
- you've been denied access to your children on an ongoing basis; or
- there's a risk that your child will be permanently removed from the province.

What can my lawyer do for me?

Your lawyer may spend up to 25 hours to:

- review your case;
- discuss your case with you and give you legal advice;
- draft court documents;
- negotiate with the other side;
- prepare for a case or settlement conference;
- prepare for interviewing witnesses and/or expert witnesses; or
- prepare for hearings in Supreme or Provincial Court (but, in addition, will have enough time to go to court for you).

Your lawyer may also spend up to:

- 10 extra hours to prepare for hearings in Supreme Court;
- 10 hours to prepare for mediation or collaborative processes; and
- 15 hours to attend mediation or collaborative processes.

What can I do to help my lawyer?

Your lawyer only has a limited number of hours in which to help you. Here are some things you can do to help:

- Only contact your lawyer if necessary, and keep your conversations as short as possible.
- Gather any relevant documents and put them in chronological order to give to your lawyer.
- Before you meet or call your lawyer, make a written list of your concerns or questions.
- Make sure your lawyer deals with the matter on your Family contract and only helps with other matters if time is available within the contract.

What if my lawyer is out of hours and I still need help?

If you have ongoing family issues, your lawyer can ask for additional hours from LSS, called **extended family services**. LSS might not grant additional hours in all cases; it depends on available funding.

If LSS doesn't approve your lawyer's request for extended family services, you may be eligible for legal advice services from [Family Duty Counsel](#) or the [Family LawLINE](#).