



# 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](#).