

## **RULE 1915.3          CUSTODY ACTIONS**

- (a) Commencement of Custody Actions
1. A custody action shall be commenced by the filing of an original and one copy of either a Custody Complaint or a Divorce Complaint or Counterclaim that contains a custody count with the Prothonotary in accordance with Pa.R.C.P. 1915.3.
  2. In addition to the filing fees assessed for the filing of complaints, an additional administrative fee in the amount of \$150.00 shall be paid to the Prothonotary simultaneously with the filing of the Custody action.
- (b) A Custody Action shall include the following attachments:
1. A Seminar Attendance and Custody Conference Scheduling Order in accordance with Local Rule 1915.15(c).
  2. Prior Court Involvement Statement in accordance with Local Rule 1931. This form is available at [www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center](http://www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center)
  3. A Criminal or Abuse History Verification in accordance with Pa.R.C.P. 1915.3-2. This form is available at [www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center](http://www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center).
  4. Self-Represented Party Entry of Appearance, if not represented by legal counsel, in accordance with Local Rule 1930.8. This form is available at [www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center](http://www.dauphincounty.org/government/Court-Departments/Self-Help-Center).
- (c) The Prothonotary shall promptly forward the original Custody Complaint with the attachments listed above to the Court Administrator's Office for assignment to a Custody Conference Officer and scheduling of the Seminar.
- (d) The Court Administrator's Office will contact a Custody Conference Officer to establish the date, time and location of the Custody Conference which will generally be scheduled after the dates for the parties' attendance at the mandatory four hour educational seminar (Seminar for Families in Change and Conflict) in accordance with Local Rule 1930.
- (e) The Court Administrator's Office will insert the assigned dates, times and location on the Seminar Attendance and Custody Conference Scheduling Order.
- (f) The Court Administrator's Office shall file the Order with the Prothonotary and promptly notify the Plaintiff(s) or their legal counsel, if represented, that the Custody action, attachments, Seminar Attendance and Custody Conference

Scheduling Order are ready to pick up for service on the other parties in accordance with the applicable rules of civil procedure.

- (g) Plaintiff(s) or their legal counsel, if represented, shall promptly file a Certificate of Service with the Prothonotary verifying that they have served the Complaint, attachments and Order on all parties before the date of the scheduled Seminars and Custody Conference.
- (h) If the parties do not reach an agreement at the Custody Conference (see Local Rule 1915.4-2), the case will be assigned to a Family Court Judge.
- (i) As a general rule, if a Judge has handled a contested family law case for that family, the matter will be assigned to that Judge.