

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
FAMILY COURT  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH - ADOPTIONS**

**GENERAL ORDER CONCERNING PRIVATE ADOPTION CASES**

To promote the best interests of children by the expeditious and efficient management of private adoption cases, the procedures for private adoption cases are as follows:

**Filing the Petition:**

1. When initiating a private adoption case, counsel or *pro se* petitioners shall file the following documents:

- a. A Petition (with one copy);
- b. A Vital Records Form in compliance with D.C. Code §7-209 (2001);
- c. An Adoption Information Form;
- d. A "copies to" list, consisting of the names and addresses of all parties (including petitioner) or their counsel, if they are represented by counsel, and the social worker, and social worker agency.
- e. Mailing labels or addressed envelopes for all the persons on the "copies to" list.

A separate petition and related documents are required for each child who is to be adopted.

Please note that the Adoption Information Form replaces the requirement for submission of a proposed Order of Reference.

2. Counsel must comply with Super. Ct. Adoption R. 10, which requires counsel's signature; name; office address; telephone number; fax number, if any; and District of Columbia Bar number on the adoption petition and all other pleadings. Please also provide an email address, if any. Please note, however, that a praecipe and proposed Final Decree is no longer required at the time of filing of the adoption petition.

3. In addition to the Petition for Adoption and items set forth above, the following documents/attachments should also be filed in particular types of private adoption cases.

- a. Foreign Readoption Cases
  - Foreign Adoption Decree (originals or copies);

- Certified translation documents (originals or copies); and
  - A proposed Final Decree of Adoption.
- b. Independent Adoption Cases
- The original sworn consent, if any, of the biological parent;
  - If applicable, a certified copy of the death certificate, if any, of any biological parent;
  - Biological Mother's Affidavit Concerning Paternity; and
  - If applicable, proof of compliance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children ("ICPC").
- c. Private Agency Cases
- Original relinquishment(s) of any biological parent (including ADR numbers – if applicable);
  - If applicable, a certified copy of the death certificate of any biological parent;
  - If applicable, a certified copy of any court order terminating a parent's rights; and
  - Biological Mother's Affidavit Concerning Paternity.
  - If applicable, proof of compliance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children ("ICPC").
- d. Step-Parent/Second-Parent Adoptions
- Notarized consent, if any, of the non-spouse biological parent.
  - Notarized consent of biological parent/spouse (unless the biological parent/spouse has joined in the petition);
  - Notarized consent of adoptee (if adoptee is 14 years old or older);
  - If applicable, Biological Mother's Affidavit Concerning Paternity;
  - If applicable, a certified copy of the death certificate of the non-spouse biological parent; and
  - If applicable, proof of artificial insemination.

**After the Petition is Filed:**

1. The court will issue the appropriate Order of Reference or Order Waiving Investigation, and, if applicable, a Notice of Pending Adoption Proceeding and Order to Show Cause for each biological parent or putative parent. The court's orders will delineate the further filing requirements for the home-study report, references, post-placement reports, and requisite clearances (medical, FBI, police, and child-protection) or any other documents or affidavits that the court may require. Samples of revised orders are available in the Adoptions Clerk's office.

2. Unless otherwise ordered by the assigned judicial officer, counsel are no longer required to submit proposed supplemental show cause orders.

3. All pleadings and reports shall be filed in the Adoptions Clerk's office.

4. Except for the Petition, Adoption Information Form and Vital Records Form, a chambers copy of all pleadings and reports shall be filed in the Adoptions Clerk's office at the time the pleading or report is filed. On the front page of the pleading or report, the chambers copy shall be marked "chambers copy" and shall state the name of the judicial officer to whom the case is assigned.

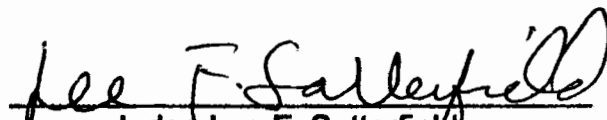
The Adoption Clerk's office will distribute the chambers copy of all documents to the assigned judicial officer by no later than the next business day after filing. Counsel, social workers, and parties shall no longer deliver chambers copies directly to chambers unless the assigned judicial officer directs otherwise.

5. All motions shall be accompanied by a proposed order. All proposed orders shall contain a "copies to" list, consisting of the names and addresses of all parties (including petitioner) or their counsel, if they are represented by counsel, and the social worker and social work agency. Mailing labels or addressed envelopes for all persons on the "copies to" list shall accompany all proposed orders.

**Access to Forms:**

Copies of revised forms for use in private adoption proceedings, including the Adoption Information Form and the Biological Mother's Affidavit Concerning Paternity, are available on the court's web site, <http://www.dccourts.gov/>. The forms are also available upon email request to [BRIERWA@dcsc.gov](mailto:BRIERWA@dcsc.gov).

SO ORDERED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2004.

  
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Judge Lee F. Satterfield  
Presiding Judge, Family Court