

Attachment: Summary of the law about moving with children (Relocation Act, RCW 26.09.430 - .480)

If the person with whom the children are scheduled to reside a majority of their time plans to move (relocating person), s/he **must notify** every person who has court-ordered time with the children.

Move to a different school district

If the move is to a different school district, the relocating person must complete the form *Notice of Intent to Move with Children* (FL Relocate 701) and deliver it at least **60 days** before the intended move.

Exceptions:

- If the relocating person could not reasonably have known enough information to complete the form in time to give 60 days' notice, s/he must give notice within **5 days** after learning the information.
- If the relocating person is relocating to a domestic violence shelter or moving to avoid a clear, immediate and unreasonable risk to health or safety, notice may be delayed **21 days**.
- If information is protected under a court order or the address confidentiality program, it may be withheld from the notice.
- A relocating person who believes that giving notice would put her/himself or a child at unreasonable risk of harm, may ask the court for permission to leave things out of the notice or to be allowed to move without giving notice. Use form *Motion to Limit Notice of Intent to Move with Children (Ex Parte)* (FL Relocate 702).

The *Notice of Intent to Move with Children* can be delivered by having someone personally serve the other party or by any form of mail that requires a return receipt.

If the relocating person wants to change the *Parenting Plan* because of the move, s/he must deliver a proposed *Parenting Plan* together with the *Notice*.

Move within the same school district

If the move is within the *same* school district, the relocating person still has to let the other parent know. However, the notice does not have to be served personally or by mail with a return receipt.

Notice to the other party can be made in any reasonable way. No specific form is required.

Warning! If you do not notify...

A relocating person who does not give the required notice may be found in contempt of court. If that happens the court can impose sanctions. Sanctions can include requiring the relocating person to bring the children back if the move has already happened, and ordering the relocating person to pay the other side's costs and lawyer's fees.

Right to object

A person who has court-ordered time with the children can object to a move to a different school district and/or to the relocating person's proposed *Parenting Plan*. If the move is within the same school district, the other party doesn't have the right to object to the move, but s/he may ask to change the *Parenting Plan* if there are adequate reasons under the modification law (RCW 26.09.260).

An objection is made by filing the *Objection about Moving with Children and Petition about Changing a Parenting/Custody Order (Relocation)* (form FL Relocate 721). File your *Objection* with the court and serve a copy on the relocating person and anyone else who has court-ordered time with the children. Service of the *Objection* must be by personal service or by mailing a copy to each person by any form of mail that requires a return receipt. The *Objection* must be filed and served no later than **30 days** after the *Notice of Intent to Move with Children* was received.

Right to move

During the 30 days after the *Notice* was served, the relocating person may not move to a different school district with the children unless s/he has a court order allowing the move.

After the 30 days, if no *Objection* is filed, the relocating person may move with the children without getting a court order allowing the move.

After the 30 days, if an *Objection* has been filed, the relocating person may move with the children **pending** the final hearing on the *Objection unless:*

- The other party gets a court order saying the children cannot move, or
- The other party has scheduled a hearing to take place no more than 15 days after the date the *Objection* was served on the relocating person. (However, the relocating person may ask the court for an order allowing the move even though a hearing is pending if the relocating person believes that s/he or a child is at unreasonable risk of harm.)

The court may make a different decision about the move at a final hearing on the *Objection*.

Parenting Plan after move

If the relocating person served a proposed *Parenting Plan* with the *Notice*, **and** if no *Objection* is filed within 30 days after the *Notice* was served (or if the parties agree):

- Both parties may follow that proposed plan without being held in contempt of the *Parenting Plan* that was in place before the move. However, the proposed plan cannot be enforced

by contempt unless it has been approved by a court.

- Either party may ask the court to approve the proposed plan. Use form *Ex Parte Motion for Final Order Changing Parenting Plan – No Objection to Moving with Children* (FL Relocate 706).

Forms

You can find forms about moving with children at:

- The Washington State Courts' website:
www.courts.wa.gov/forms,
- The Administrative Office of the Courts – call: (360) 705-5328,
- Washington LawHelp:
www.washingtonlawhelp.org, or
- The Superior Court Clerk's office or county law library (for a fee).

(This is a summary of the law. The complete law is in RCW 26.09.430 through 26.09.480.)