

Navigating the First 48 Hours

The period immediately following a separation is often chaotic and emotionally charged. However, the decisions you make—and the actions you take—in these first 48 hours can define the trajectory of your family court proceedings for years to come.

1. Do Not Leave the Family Home Voluntarily

Unless there is an immediate threat of violence, do not pack your bags and leave. Voluntarily vacating the family home can establish a new "status quo" where the children reside primarily with the mother. It also makes returning incredibly difficult. If tensions are high, sleep in a spare room.

2. Secure Your Communications

Assume that every text message, email, and voicemail you send from this moment forward will be read by a judge.

- Do not send angry or emotional messages.
- Do not beg, plead, or threaten.
- Keep all communication strictly focused on the logistics of the children.
- Use the BIFF method: Brief, Informative, Friendly, and Firm.

3. Document the Current Routine

Family courts prioritize the established routine of the children. Begin documenting exactly what you do for your children. Do you do the school run? Do you cook dinner? Do you take them to football practice? Write this down. It will be vital evidence if your involvement is later minimized or denied.

4. Secure Your Financial Independence

Do not empty joint accounts, but ensure your personal income is routed to an account solely in your name. Cancel joint credit cards to prevent retaliatory spending.

5. Seek Professional Advice Immediately

Do not rely on pub talk or internet forums. Book a consultation with a family law solicitor or an experienced McKenzie Friend. Understanding your actual legal standing will reduce your anxiety and prevent you from making reactionary mistakes.