ALA LAW

YOUR FAMILY & ESTATES LAWYERS

FAMILY LAW CHECKLIST

Preparing *for Court*

A practical checklist for your family law hearing in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia – in person or by video.



Going to court can feel overwhelming. This checklist walks you through what to do before your hearing, on the day and afterwards, so you can focus on what matters.

Use it alongside the advice of your lawyer and any directions from the Court.

Before your court date

Tick each item off as you go. Your lawyer will help you with anything you're unsure about.

✓	Task
	Know your hearing details
☐	**Check your orders and any emails from the Court** for the date, time and whether your hearing is in person or electronic (video or phone).
☐	**Check the Commonwealth Courts Portal and the daily court list,** which is usually published around 4pm the day before.
☐	**No hearing details seven days before your listing?** Contact the Court (or your lawyer) straight away.
☐	**Make sure the Court has your email address** (in your Notice of Address for Service) so you receive joining instructions.
	Get your documents in order
☐	**Confirm the documents you rely on have been filed and served** by the deadlines in your orders or directions.
☐	**Comply with any orders and directions,** including any Notice to Produce served on you.
☐	**Prepare copies:** bring the relevant documents and note which ones have already been filed. If you want to hand up a photocopy, bring **three copies** (for you, the other party and the Judge or Registrar).
	Safety and support
☐	**Tell the Court before you attend if you have a family violence order** (including an interim order) so safety arrangements can be considered.
☐	**Raise any special needs early,** such as an interpreter, accessibility needs, or difficulty with internet or a device.
☐	**Arrange care for your children.** Children under 18 cannot go into the courtroom, and should not be present or within earshot during an electronic hearing.
☐	**Meet with your lawyer** to talk through what will happen at the hearing and what you want to achieve.

> **Tip:** If you can't attend your hearing, contact the Court as soon as possible. The case may go ahead without you.

On the day

Whether you attend in person or online, the Court expects the same courtesy and respect.

✓	Attending in person
☐	**Arrive at least 45 minutes early** to allow time for security screening and to find your courtroom.
☐	**Dress neatly.** There are no set rules, but the Court is a formal place. Remove hats, caps and sunglasses before going in.
☐	**Bring your documents,** copies, and a pen and paper for notes.
☐	**Turn your phone off** before entering. No food or drink in the courtroom.
☐	**Bringing a support person?** If you don't have a lawyer, a support person can usually sit at the back of the courtroom.

✓	Attending by video or phone (Microsoft Teams)
☐	**Test your device and connection beforehand.** A browser works on a computer; on a smartphone, install the free Teams app. A headset helps avoid echo.
☐	**Join at least 15 minutes early** using the link in the Court's email (or earlier if the Court asks).
☐	**Choose a quiet, private, well-lit room** with your devices charged and your filed documents ready to hand.
☐	**Dress as you would for court** and have only water with you.
☐	**Keep your microphone muted** unless you are speaking to the Court. Don't use loudspeaker or put the call on hold.
☐	**If you are giving evidence,** you must be alone in a secure room with the door closed.
☐	**Safety concerns?** Use a blurred or neutral background, switch off caller ID if dialling in, and ask whether you can join by audio only.

In the courtroom

The same rules apply whether you are in the courtroom or online.

✓	Courtroom etiquette
☐	**Address a Judge as "Your Honour"** and a Registrar as "Registrar".
☐	**In person, stand** when you speak to the Judge or Registrar or they speak to you. **Online, stay seated.**
☐	**Don't interrupt.** Wait until you are given the chance to respond.
☐	**Never record the hearing** (including with AI tools). Recording is prohibited without the Court's express approval.

After your hearing

✓	Task
☐	**Write down the orders as they are announced.** If anything is unclear, you can ask for it to be repeated or explained.
☐	**Download your sealed orders** from the Commonwealth Courts Portal once they are finalised.
☐	**Diarise your next court date** and every deadline for filing, serving or doing something under the orders.
☐	**Debrief with your lawyer** about what the orders mean for you and your next steps.
☐	**Don't post about your case.** Publishing an account of family law proceedings that identifies the people involved is an offence under the *Family Law Act 1975*.

Ready to prepare for court?

Our Accredited Specialists in Family Law and senior family lawyers can guide you through every step of the court process and advocate for you at each hearing.

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This checklist contains general information only about family law proceedings in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, current as at November 2026. It is not legal advice and does not take your circumstances into account. Court procedures change from time to time, so always follow your orders and the Court's directions. For advice about your situation, please contact ALA Law.