

Emancipation

What is emancipation?

Emancipation is the process that legally stops current child support payments because the child is no longer a minor, has graduated from high school, or has achieved some other legally recognized independent status. Support payments stop when your child is emancipated.

When is my child emancipated?

When your child is emancipated depends on which Court issued your child support order.

If your child support order was issued by the Court of Domestic Relations...

- Your child emancipates when he or she turns 18 or graduates from high school, whichever comes last.
- If your order was issued after 1/1/98, your child will emancipates when he or she graduates from high school or turns 19, which ever comes first.

If your child support order was issued by Juvenile Court...

- Your child emancipates when he or she turns 18 and graduates from high school.
- If your child reaches age 19, he or she emancipates regardless of his or her high school status.

Regardless of which Court issued your child support order your child can be emancipated if he or she

- Marries
- Dies
- Enlists in the armed forces
- Is adopted

How does the emancipation process work?

Approximately 90 days before your child's 18th birthday you and the non-custodial parent will receive an Emancipation Questionnaire from child support.

1. Complete the questionnaire and return it to Child Support Services. If your child is still in school when you return this questionnaire, you will need to send proof of his or her graduation to your worker as soon as your child graduates. Proof can be a copy of the diploma, a letter from school or a copy of the graduation program.
2. Once your child meets any one of the criteria for emancipation listed above, Child Support Services will send the paper work requesting emancipation to the Court.
3. It takes approximately 3 to 6 weeks for the Court to process the emancipation. The Court will notify you and the other parent that your child support has been modified or your child support case has been closed.

Once the Court has processed the emancipation, child support payments will stop for this child.

What if I receive a child support payment after the emancipation process has begun?

Check with your worker immediately. You will be asked to pay back child support money you were not entitled to receive.

What happens to child support payments if the non-custodial parent still owes back child support?

Emancipation does not stop the non-custodial parent's obligation to pay any child support that he or she owes. Emancipation stops the payment of current child support. The non-custodial parent is expected and required to make payments until all past due child support is paid.