

## **What to expect from the Courts**

We have set forth below a thumbnail sketch of what to expect from the Courts in Pennsylvania. There are minor variations in the application of the law from county to county. Moreover, judges and masters have discretion in the application of the law. In most cases, the calculation of alimony is fairly formulaic. Each party submits their financial documents, like W-2, bank and stock account statements, vehicle and property appraisals, etc. to a court appointed Master who will input the information into the guidelines under Pennsylvania law.

**Short term marriages** - In short term marriages without children the Court generally seeks to restore the parties to where they were before the marriage. In the run of the mill case, property acquired during the marriage is split 50/50 and alimony, if appropriate, is ordered for only a short period of time.

**Mid-length marriages with children** - The court, in this type of marriage, will seek to protect the children. The court may order more than 50% of the assets to the less wealthy custodial spouse. Child support, medical coverage, and alimony may be appropriate and ordered in these cases. Alimony is generally awarded for a limited period of time (frequently one (1) year for every three (3) years of marriage) depending on the length of the marriage and the age of the parties' children. Health, earning capacity and possible inheritance, among other factors, will be considered and may result in deviations from the common pattern.

**Late in life marriages** - In late in life marriages the court tends to revert to a 50/50 split of assets and provide alimony, if appropriate, until the parties retirement age (in some circumstances after retirement). These cases generally involve division of pension interests which can be time consuming and technically complex. Health insurance is an important consideration in these cases.

We make it a point to be available to our clients, and we can often meet the day you call. We invite you to [contact](#) our family law and alimony attorneys today. Often, we are able to meet with you the same day you contact us. Our address is 1908 Allen Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 18104. Our phone number is (610) 432-7040.