The Move to an Online Family Court: How Covid-19 has Influenced the Way Divorce Lawyers Represent their Clients

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The prevalence of Covid-19, the coronavirus, has catapulted the Family Courts into rapid digital transformation. At first, the Courts began to switch from face-to-face court events to telephone conferences on a dial in basis. By the beginning of April, the Courts began to conduct Hearings by Microsoft Teams, a program that allows video conferencing so that parties, their divorce lawyers and judicial officers may all see each other in a “virtual courtroom”.

Alongside the transition to online Court hearings was the introduction of the Digital Court File. Previously, parties and their divorce lawyers had the option to file court documents in hard copy, particularly if the matter was urgent. This system proved challenging during the pandemic particularly for Judges and Registrars operating from remote locations. To allow matters to be heard in any location during the pandemic, every new Court file is now completely electronic and able to be downloaded using the Court portal.

Procedural Practice Directions were also implemented in a timely manner permitting the filing of unsworn affidavits and financial statements and electronic access to material produced on subpoena.

While safety is at the forefront of the Family Courts response to Covid-19, divorce lawyers and the Court have worked together to ensure that family law matters continue to be progressed and heard during this time.

For advice about your family law matter contact one of our divorce lawyers on 1800 300 170 or email us at famlaw@matthewsfolbigg.com.au

Disclaimer

Family law situations can be complex and sometimes they can involve serious issues. Information outlined is proposed to provide general guidance only. Due to the seriousness of legal matters as well as the uniqueness of your individual situation, professional advice should be sought. For advice, please contact one of our Family Lawyers.