

How Long Will It Take for Your California Divorce to Finalize?

When you decide you want to [divorce](#) your spouse to work your way towards a happier tomorrow, it is a huge step — and the beginning of an intimidating legal process. You will probably and understandably start counting the days until you are officially and legally unbound from your spouse. If you file in California, just how long are you going to be adding X's to your calendar until your divorce is finalized, though? Are there specific timelines you need to follow?

California's Divorce Filing Requirements & Waiting Period

Before you are even allowed to file for divorce in California, you need to be an official resident in the state for six months. This means if you moved together to California in December, you need to wait all the way until June for your divorce petition to be eligible in the eyes of the court. Once your divorce is finally filed, you have to serve it to your spouse, who will have 30 days after official service to respond.

Brace yourself for another waiting period, though. California has a six-month waiting period after the official service date of your divorce papers, not the filing date. The California family law court will not hear your divorce case or finalize the divorce with a judge's signature until this period has passed. Although a divorce can be finalized within six months, the more highly contested cases can take longer, even several years, to finalize. A challenge for couples eager to split.

Time for the Rest of the Divorce Process

During the six-month waiting period mandated by California law, you should be working with a divorce attorney about all the details of your divorce. You may need to consider [child custody](#), [child support](#), [spousal support](#), and [property division](#). Getting started on these considerations early can allow you and your spouse to have everything in order by the time the waiting period ends.

Do not be too surprised, though, if you are not immediately divorced when the waiting period concludes. There are plenty of complications that can arise that may delay things a bit longer, including your own spouse's refusal to readily cooperate. Each legal motion or inquiry has a response deadline, and a jilted spouse may intentionally wait until those time periods are about to end before reacting.

In general, if you and your spouse are cooperative throughout your divorce, you might be able to expect for your divorce to be finalized in about 9 to 12 months. On the other hand, if there are contests or complications in your divorce, it could take up to two years, or perhaps longer. It is crucial to work with an experienced divorce attorney to eliminate as many unnecessarily delays as possible.

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Ever since Sullivan Law & Associates was founded in 1978, we have been providing diligent and compassionate representation for divorcees in Irvine and beyond. We know what you are going through, and what it takes to get through it. Call us at **(949) 565-2793** or use an [online contact form](#) to learn more about our services and your options.