

your form be a standard typing paper size 8 1/2 x 11.

Also, do not hand in a form that actually has white-out on it, Your "Petition for Dissolution of Marriage" should be completed, except for your signature,

You need to sign the form in front of a notary public, who will then notarize it, Banks, and even many drugstores, provide this service for a small charge,

Now make 2 photocopies of your notarized document,

What you do next depends on whether your spouse lives in or outside of St, Joseph County:

a) If your spouse lives inside St. Joseph County, the divorce papers will be served by the Sheriff. In this case, You are ready to take your three copies of the Petition to the Courthouse.

b) If your spouse lives outside St, Joseph County, then the papers will be sent by Certified Mail, and you need to make a trip to the Post Office before going to the Courthouse, At the P.O., tell them you will be mailing some papers from the courthouse by Certified Mail, and that you need a green card and a white paper for this purpose (see pg 9 for samples), This will not cost anything. Also, you'll need a business envelope (about 4" X 9"), on which is typed (not printed) your spouse's name and address, (Actually you might as well get two of all these things while you're at it, since later you'll be sending a Notice of Hearing by the same method.) Once you've got all this, and your three copies of the Petition, you are ready to go to the Courthouse.

5. FILING THE PETITION

Take all your papers, and your filing fee (in cash) to the County Clerk's office (Room 30), in the basement of the St. Joseph County Courthouse. Here you will be assigned a Cause Number, and you will fill out a Summons. The Summons then needs to be copied (by hand is OK)--2 copies if your spouse lives in St, Joe County; 1 copy if he/she lives outside St. Joe County,

The Clerk will then send you and all your papers up to the first floor, to the counter labelled "Superior Court". Here is where arrangements will be made to serve the summons and a copy of the Petition on your spouse, either by the Sherrif or by Certified Mail. The cost for this is covered by your filing charge. (These people may refer to the "Pro se", or the "Petitioner pro se"--that's you.)

Note: However the papers are served, you will be getting a receipt in the mail with your spouse's signature on it, Do not lose this--it is your proof that he/she received those papers.

These Clerks of the Superior Court (235-9648) can tell when the service is good, that is to say, when your spouse has been notified, If service is by the Sheriff, this will take a few days. If service is by Certified Mail, it