



# How to Work Effectively With Your Family Law Lawyer

Thank you for trusting CBM Lawyers to help you with your family law matter. For many people, having to engage a lawyer in this area can be stressful. First, family law-related issues can be very emotional and challenging. Next, you aren't sure how much it will cost and that can be worrisome. The purpose of this article is to help you work with a family lawyer to make this process as easy on you and as financially efficient as possible.

***Read the retainer letter carefully.***

The first thing we do in a new legal relationship is to clarify our respective responsibilities through a retainer letter. This letter outlines what you've asked us to do and how we will be compensated for that work. We are not able to do any work until this letter is signed and returned to us, so please read it and return it as promptly as you can. If you have any questions about the agreement, please address them with your lawyer before signing.

***Time and cost estimates are good guesses, not guarantees.***

While we have many years of experience in resolving family issues, each case is truly unique and there is no "cookie-cutter" approach to resolution. Further, the courts have a wider berth than in most areas of law in which to use their discretion in deciding a case. We will do our very best to predict outcomes and costs, but please understand that there are too many variables involved for us to be completely accurate in these predictions. We can only provide our best educated guesses on how long it will take to resolve a matter, and how much it will cost.

***We can only predict legal solutions.***

We are dedicated to serving your needs. That said there may be a limit to what we can accomplish for you from a legal standpoint. For example, family law has been "no-fault" for many years so if you are seeking to *punish* the other side for wrongs committed, it is unlikely we can make that happen. If you want to pursue reconciliation with the other side that would be more of a counselling issue than a legal one. We are here to help but we are no substitute for a good friend who can be near you and supportive throughout the process.

***Settlement is often the better financial solution.***

The court's primary concern in a family law matter is for the welfare of any children involved, and then to make sure that money, income, maintenance, debts and assets and other financial matters are fairly determined. Our objective is to get you a fair settlement in the most cost-efficient manner possible. *If there needs to be a fight over an issue, we're there for you;* however, we do urge you to explore settlement at every opportunity, including through matrimonial mediation. For this reason, we encourage our clients to think in terms of what might be a reasonable or acceptable solution.

***Keeping costs down.***

98% of family matters in BC settle well before a trial. But whether your matter can resolve quickly or requires a court battle, there are many ways to keep costs down. For more information, please refer to the article entitled, "How to Keep Your Legal Costs Down" from the family section of our website.

To learn more, visit us at  
[www.cbmlawyers.com](http://www.cbmlawyers.com)

