



Michigan Supreme Court

State Court Administrative Office

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DATE: December 22, 2005

TO: Friends of the Court
cc: Chief Circuit Judges
Circuit Court Administrators
Family Division Administrators

FROM: Steven D. Capps, Friend of the Court Bureau Deputy Director

RE: SCAO Administrative Memorandum 2005-09
MCR 3.211 Amendments Effective January 1, 2006

Effective January 1, 2006, amendments of MCR 3.211 will require courts to enter child support and spousal support orders on a Uniform Support Order (USO). The amendments also require the person obtaining a judgment or order to summarize custody, parenting time, or support provisions on a Judgment Information Form (JIF) and file it with the friend of the court office (FOC).

These amendments of MCR 3.211 will ensure that trial court orders include all state and federal requirements. MCR 3.211 was adopted in 1992. It listed all the state and federal requirements that existed at that time, and it required that those provisions appear in all support orders. The requirements are numerous and potentially easy to overlook, and a failure to include those requirements in support orders could jeopardize federal funds that are provided to the state to enforce child support orders. Since 1992, the state and federal governments adopted new requirements so frequently that the rule amendment process could not keep up. Most courts tried to ensure that the latest requirements were included in orders by requiring that their FOCs review and approve every support order. Using a standard order that contains all the currently required provisions will ensure that all orders are complete. In addition, use of a standard form:

1. Makes practitioners aware of changes in state and federal requirements.
2. Allows the FOC to review the order more quickly.
3. Standardizes support order language, making interpretation easier and more uniform statewide.
4. Reduces paperwork and saves file space.

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5. Provides an easy-to-read format for FOC offices that will reduce the time required to enter an order in the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES) and improve support processing at the beginning of cases.
6. Enables technological improvements that will make it possible to enter child support orders in MiCSES through scanning or e-filing. In turn, support orders can be implemented more quickly and arrearages at the beginning of a case can be avoided.
7. Improves efficiency in processing interstate cases by reducing unnecessary paperwork.

The USO will apply in most cases without any changes. If the USO is not sufficient, an addendum can be attached to the order to cover special situations. Four USO versions are available on the Supreme Court's website at

<http://www.courts.mi.gov/scao/courtforms/domesticrelations/drindex.htm>. They are:

1. USO for child support only (FOC10).
2. USO for child support only but with no FOC services (FOC10a). This version takes out those provisions that are FOC-specific.
3. USO for spousal support only (FOC10b).
4. USO for spousal support only without FOC services (FOC10c).

Amended MCR 3.211 requires the JIF because state and federal laws increasingly require that sensitive personal information regarding parties and their families be provided to the FOC. This information could be abused if it appears in the judgment, which becomes a public record. The JIF allows the required information to be provided to the FOC without exposing it in the public file. The JIF also collects important information about the judgment in one place to expedite its entry into MiCSES. The JIF is available on the Supreme Court's website at

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/domesticrelations/focgeneral/foc100.pdf>.

Further details and answers to common questions concerning the forms and their use can be found at <http://www.courts.mi.gov/scao/resources/publications/focbnewsletters/faq.htm>.

Courts or friend of the court offices may contact Steve Capps at 517-373-4835 or by e-mail at cappss@courts.mi.gov with questions.