

Common Spousal Support Orders

Some common forms of spousal support orders include the following:

- **Modifiable Amount for Indeterminate Duration.** This order requires a change of circumstances to terminate support in the absence of death or remarriage, and is often appropriate when the marriage was of long duration or the supported spouse does not possess the capacity to become self-sufficient.
- **Modifiable Amount for Specific Duration.** This order is most common when the marriage was of short duration, but generally is not appropriate if the marriage was of long duration.
- **Modifiable Amount for Specific Duration With Reservation of Jurisdiction (a “*Richmond*” order).** Typically for medium- or longer-term marriages, this order (1) terminates spousal support after a fixed period based on a reasonable inference that the supported spouse will be self-supporting by the end of the period, and (2) retains jurisdiction to modify the amount or term of support, conditioned on the supported spouse filing a motion and showing good cause before termination why the support order should be modified.
- **Step-Down Order.** This order automatically decreases the support amount at specified intervals. It’s appropriate only if the record includes evidence that the supported spouse’s needs will decrease in line with the steps down. A step-down order may also be based on the supported spouse’s earnings, for example, reducing spousal support \$1 for every \$2 earned over a specified period. If you find that changed circumstances justify an immediate decrease in spousal support, a step-down may also be appropriate to ease the impact on the supported spouse, but you should state your intent on the record.
- **No Spousal Support But Jurisdiction Reserved.** This order may be appropriate when there is no current justification for an award of support, but termination may not be in order. Either party would have to bring a motion (for support or termination) before you terminate jurisdiction.