**I want to move—what do I have to do?**

You want to move and you already have a custody order in place. What do you do? You must follow Missouri law with respect to relocation. This means that you must give the other parent a certified letter at least 60 days in advance of your proposed move. The certified letter must state where you want to move (include address), why you want to move (state good reasons), your new phone number (if it’s new), and a proposal about how custody and visitation should be changed. The exact requirements of the notice you must provide are included in your Judgment and oftentimes also in the Parenting Plan that you agreed to. You need to think through exactly how your move will affect the custody schedule and then offer a proposal that takes into consideration your move. You also need to propose how transportation will be handled in light of your move.

The other parent then has 30 days to file an objection with the court regarding your relocation. If the other parent files an objection then the court must decide whether or not you can relocate. In Missouri, relocations are highly disfavored by the court. It is very difficult to move. Before you decide to move you need to think long and hard about the decision. Talking to the other parent early is always the best thing that you can do. Explain why you need to move. We live in a global world today and relocations are common. However, when the relocation is a surprise and unexpected then you should expect a fight. Further, if you haven’t adequately explained why you want to move you should also expect a fight.

You must provide notice of relocation even if you are just moving across the street.

What if the person relocating doesn’t have custody of the children? If custody and visitation rights will not be affected or if by virtue of relocation the custodial parent will just have more time than they had before then there is no reason to file an objection with the court regarding relocation.

The 60 and 30 day time standards are very strict. If you think you might relocate you should contact me immediately to discuss it so that you can get your letter out regarding relocation early. You also should know that your failure to file a timely objection and provide a copy to the other side could result in the requesting party being able to move.