

SUPREME COURT OF YUKON

PRACTICE DIRECTION
GENERAL- 36

*Use of a Support Person in Civil
and Family Law Proceedings*

Many self-represented persons (that is, a person who does not have a lawyer) find that the presence of a trusted friend or family member in court to support them is helpful. This Practice Direction describes who a support person can be, when they can attend court, what they can do and cannot do.

Support Person

A support person is someone who sits beside a self-represented person to help them quietly during a court hearing.

Who Can be a Support Person

A support person can be anyone, including a friend or relative. It should be someone whom the self-represented person can trust with personal or private information that may be shared in court. It could be a person who has helped the self-represented person to prepare for the court hearing. The best kind of support person is someone who will help the self-represented person stay focussed on the judge, the court procedure, the evidence, and the issues in the case.

A support person may NOT be

- Someone who may be a witness or may submit an affidavit for the court hearing
- Someone who is paid by the self-represented person for their services as a support person

When Can a Support Person Attend Court

Unless a judge decides otherwise, a support person can sit beside a self-represented person at any civil or family law hearing in court.

A support person may not normally attend at a case management conference, a family law case conference or a judicial settlement conference, even if they are held in a court room, unless the presiding judge grants permission, in exceptional circumstances.

You must let the other side know 48 hours in advance of the court hearing that you intend to bring a support person with you and who that support person will be. If the other side objects to the support person, the parties shall attempt to discuss and resolve the matter

in advance of the court hearing. If they cannot resolve it, the party may raise their objections with the judge at the beginning of the court hearing and the judge will decide whether or not the support person may remain in the courtroom.

What Can a Support Person Do

A support person may assist by:

- Taking notes
- Organizing documents
- Making quiet suggestions to the self-represented person
- Providing emotional support
- Doing any other task approved by the judge

What a Support Person Cannot Do

A support person cannot speak to the judge or speak on the self-represented person's behalf, unless the judge gives permission and the circumstances are exceptional.

How to Introduce a Support Person in Court

When the case is called, the judge will ask the self-represented person to identify themselves. When they provide their name, they should tell the judge they have a support person who they would like to sit next to them during the hearing. They should then provide the support person's name and state whether they are a friend or family member.

The judge may then ask the other side whether they have any objection. The self-represented person will have the opportunity to respond and explain why they want that support person to assist them. The judge will decide whether to allow it or not.

When a Judge May Refuse to Allow a Support Person

A judge may refuse to allow a support person to sit with a self-represented person if their presence is distracting or disruptive to the proceedings or would otherwise be unfair to the other side.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Duncan C.J.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Duncan C.J.
July 21, 2026